

**DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**

**THE INFLUENCE OF WORKPLACE DIVERSITY ON EMPLOYEE  
PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY OF THE ELECTRICITY DIVISION  
AT ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY**

**SIZWE ANDILE MHLengi NTULI**

**MARCH 2025**



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**SIZWE ANDILE MHLengi NTULI**

**MARCH 2025**

**APPROVED FOR FINAL SUBMISSION**

Supervisor (Prof B.I Dlamini-PhD): \_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **DECLARATION**

I, Sizwe Ntuli, hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work, and that other people's work that I have used has been accurately referenced to the best of my knowledge. This dissertation has not been submitted to any other institution and for any other qualification.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 21 October 2024

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Glory goes to the almighty God for giving me the gift of life and the strength and grit to grind till the end.

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To my lovely wife and kids, thank you for being my pillar of strength, your belief in me is the reason I wake up every morning and try again.

## **ABSTRACT**

Internationally, companies are constantly looking for better ways to gain an edge over their competitors. Part of their competitive strategies involve upskilling human capital in order to enhance their performance, thus achieving increased financial gains through improved organisational performance. This study aimed to illustrate the influence of workplace diversity on employee performance. Firstly, the study investigated the existence of a relationship between workplace diversity and employee performance. Secondly, it explored the extent to which the diversity aspects examined in this study relate to employee performance. Thirdly, it sought to establish employees' perspectives on whether the municipality has employed a diverse workforce for legislative compliance or for organisational benefit.

A quantitative research methodology was adopted in this study. The workplace diversity and employee performance survey questionnaires were distributed to 200 eThekweni Municipality employees in the Electricity department. The participation of respondents for this study was purely voluntary and participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. The data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software. The findings revealed an existing general relationship between workplace diversity and employee performance. Education diversity and ethnicity diversity showed a significant relationship with employee performance, while age and gender proved less impactful on employee performance. The municipality should prioritise two components of diversity, namely ethnicity and education, which have been shown to have a significant association with employee performance when designing strategies to manage diversity. Consequently, the municipality may achieve improved performance, which will ultimately result in better service delivery. It is necessary for the municipality to incorporate diversity management within its affirmative action policy in order to formalise and score the municipality's effectiveness in training and managing diversity at work.

### **Keywords:**

Workplace diversity, Workforce diversity, Age diversity, gender diversity, education diversity, ethnicity diversity, Diversity management

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# CHAPTER ONE

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Organisations worldwide are striving to attain a competitive edge over other organisations. In order for them to remain competitive, they need to devise and implement strategies and systems that will enhance employee performance in the workplace. Post 1994, the South African employment sector has undergone significant transformation to recruit a diverse workforce as called for by the government through legislation. This change necessitates that companies in both the public and private sectors identify the influence of this diverse workforce on the performance of employees at work in order to better manage these diverse factors for organizational value.

## 1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Historically, South African workplaces and organisational structures have been influenced by racial divisions (Zhuwao, 2017). The apartheid local government system effectively sustained significant inequities alongside many social issues and an insufficient provision of critical services. Subsequent to the 1994 elections, the governmental framework was restructured to facilitate the comprehensive restructuring of the public sector and eliminate apartheid-era disparities within the new democratic system (Kaywood, 2025)

Apartheid policies, such as job reservation, were instrumental in establishing disparities within South African society and resulting in unequal economic outcomes (Zhuwao, 2017). To rectify these issues, the current South African national government has implemented legislation that sets targets primarily based on race and gender. Key legislative measures such as the Employment Equity Act of 1998, the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act of 2000, and the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act of 2003 have been established to transform workplaces and ensure equitable access to opportunities.

South Africa is now a unitary state consisting of three levels of government: national, provincial, and local (Christensen and Laegreid, 2021). The national and provincial governments typically concentrate on policy formulation, but the local government sector is predominantly tasked with executing these policies and service delivery (Mnembe, 2022).

Despite these efforts by the government, the focus is often skewed towards a compliance-driven approach that emphasizes short-term targets over meaningful organizational change (Rasila, 2021). Mazibuko and Govender (2017:1) assert that legislation mandates the transformation of South African workplaces and the embrace of diversity. However, not all companies recognise the value of recruiting and effectively managing diverse teams for organisational benefit. It is essential for organisations to view workplace diversity as a crucial element of employee attraction and retention, with the goal of enhancing productivity and improving competitive advantage. Effective diversity management fosters an environment of appreciation, innovation, and creativity, equipping organizations to effectively engage with diverse markets.

South African municipalities continue to encounter challenges in delivering efficient public services (Mnembe, 2022). The introduction of diversity and inclusion legislation has markedly changed the municipal workforce, creating a new dynamic in workforce diversity that could impact employee performance and, subsequently, the quality-of-service delivery.

In South African municipal governance, service delivery constitutes an essential function (Mnembe, 2022). Tenney (2025) asserts that engaged employees generally experience greater job satisfaction compared to their disengaged counterparts. They can more effectively serve clients and deliver superior service when they take pride in their work and have a sense of purpose.

Effectively, there is a dire need for local government to successfully manage workplace diversity in order to enhance employee productivity thus improving service delivery. As such, this study's primary imperative is to highlight workplace diversity aspects that exist at eThekweni Municipality and their level of influence to the dependent variable of employee performance.

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Workforce diversity has become an essential priority for organisations, necessitating that companies understand, embrace, and effectively manage diversity to gain a competitive advantage (Sanyang and Othman, 2019). This study emphasises the significance of exploring this construct in light of the political and workplace transformations that have occurred in the South African local government sector since 1994. These changes have been propelled by

various legislative initiatives aimed at workplace transformation. As noted by Zhuwao (2017), the primary goal of these legal frameworks extends beyond merely recognising the importance of diversity in the workplace or its potential to enhance employee behaviours, such as performance. Instead, the focus is on rectifying historical injustices and discrimination within organisations. As a result, businesses are increasingly prioritising compliance with legislation over understanding the impact of workforce diversity on employee performance. Additionally, there remains a lack of consensus among researchers regarding the relationship between diversity and performance outcomes. For instance, Ahmad (2020) indicates that age diversity, gender diversity, and ethnic diversity may negatively affect employee performance. Conversely, research conducted by Andoh, Ghansah, Okogun-Odompley, and Benuwa (2019) suggests that gender and ethnic diversity do not influence employee performance. While some studies have identified a positive correlation between various aspects of diversity and performance, others have found negative correlations or no significant effects at all.

Performance issues have consistently posed challenges for municipalities worldwide, leading to the development of Performance Management Systems, such as those implemented by eThekweni Municipality. Additionally, public sector performance remains a critical focus due to its significant impact on service delivery and the evolving expectations and priorities of the public (Pillay, 2015). Habib and Safdar (2012) highlight South Africa's longstanding history of service delivery protests, which began in the early 1990s as communities started demanding basic services such as water, sanitation, and electricity. Ngcamu (2019) notes that various commentators have linked the increase in often violent service delivery protests at the municipal level to several factors, including inadequate service delivery, poor performance, poor communication, widespread poverty and unemployment, limited community involvement in decision-making processes, and insufficient access to information. These issues have contributed to perceptions of nepotism, corruption, and mismanagement among officials (Ngcamu, 2019), with eThekweni Municipality facing similar challenges. According to Mmembe (2022), the eThekweni Municipality is experiencing ongoing backlogs in service delivery, with projections suggesting that these backlogs could take between 70 to 105 years to resolve.

According to Bahagia and Astuti (2019), employee performance is a critical factor for organizations in achieving their objectives. Zhuwao (2017) asserts that workplace diversity has not been adequately explored in the context of the variables influencing employee

performance. Much of the research on factors affecting employee performance has concentrated on various elements, including trade organizations, motivation, management systems, key performance indicators, perceived overqualification, leadership, continuous improvement, system dynamics models, implementation of performance management, compensation levels, benefit offerings, and overall job satisfaction (Triansyah, Hejin, and Stefania, 2023).

In light of these considerations, this study aims to investigate the impact of workplace diversity on employee performance within a selected local government entity in South Africa. This will involve examining the effects of age, gender, ethnicity, and educational diversity on employee performance.

## **1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

### **1.4.1 Aim of the study**

This study is aimed at examining the influence of workplace diversity on employee performance in the Electricity division at the eThekweni Municipality.

### **1.4.2 Objectives of the study**

The problem statement triggered the following research objectives:

- To establish the general relationship between diversity in the workplace and employee performance;
- To identify the diversity aspects that have a significant effect on employee performance; and
- To examine whether eThekweni Municipality is recruiting a diverse workforce for legislative compliance or for organisational value.

## **1.5 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

In recent years, various approaches to workforce diversity have emerged, leading to ongoing research by experts in talent management (Croitoru, Florea, Lonsescu, Robescu, Paschia, Uzlau, and Manea, 2022). Poo-Udom and Lertbuasin (2022) indicate that effective diversity and inclusion practices are linked to improved performance and high-quality work. This

quantitative study aims to examine the influence of workplace diversity on employee performance within the Electricity division of the eThekweni Municipality. Within the South African context, the concepts of diversity and inclusion are relatively new. Zhuwao (2017) notes that South Africa initiated its transformation towards constitutional democracy after 1994, thereby making the recognition of diversity a legal necessity, particularly in public organisations. In contrast, the first workforce diversity initiative in the United States, known as affirmative action, was implemented in 1961. This study aims to provide insights for local government management interested in enhancing employee performance through the recruitment of a diverse workforce, moving beyond mere compliance with diversity and inclusion legislation. Additionally, it will highlight emerging trends in diversity and inclusion and contribute to the existing body of literature on the impact of diversity on employee performance.

## **1.6 STUDY SCOPE**

The study primarily focused on employees within the Medium and Low Voltage Operations Department of the Electricity Unit at eThekweni Municipality, located in the KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa. The Municipality comprises various clusters and employs over 22,000 individuals, representing a diverse range of backgrounds, ethnicities, and cultures.

## **1.7 STUDY DELIMITATIONS**

The study examines the dynamics of workplace diversity and its impact on employee performance, encouraging individuals to consider, appreciate, and understand diverse perspectives. It underscores the importance of fostering a diverse workforce that brings varied ideas and solutions to challenges, ultimately enhancing employee performance.

Additionally, the study advocates for the examination of the relationship between workplace diversity and employee performance across different environments. This approach aims to expand the existing body of knowledge and explore emerging aspects of diversity as the concept evolves. Furthermore, the study outlines the advantages of effectively managing workplace diversity, emphasizing its role in enhancing employee performance and, consequently, improving the municipality's primary service delivery function. Ultimately, the research reinforces the notion of workplace diversity as a strategic tool for organizational

performance enhancement rather than merely a compliance measure with affirmative action legislation.

## **1.8 STRUCTURE OF THE MINI-DISSERTATION**

### **1.8.1 Chapter One: Introduction**

The general outline of the mini-dissertation is introduced and stated in this chapter.

The problem and research objectives of the study are also outlined.

### **1.8.2 Chapter Two: Literature Review**

The chapter looks at existing literature on the subject and explores its theoretical foundation.

### **1.8.3 Chapter Three: Research Methodology**

Chapter Three predominantly focuses on the research design; describes the population and sample; drafts the research instrument (questionnaire); and describes the procedures for data collection and analysis.

### **1.8.4 Chapter Four: Findings and Data Analysis**

The findings from the fieldwork and the analysis of data are presented in this chapter.

### **1.8.5 Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations**

Based on the findings and analysis of data, this chapter draws conclusions and makes recommendations.

## **1.9 SUMMARY**

This chapter has provided a synopsis of the study. It outlined the background to the study as well as its general overview. The problem statement was dissected, noting that as workforce diversity became an organizational imperative, organizations responded and recruited a diverse workforce. However, they neglected the area of identifying employee diversity aspects that came with it, as well as how these aspects influence employee performance at work. Therefore, this phenomenon must be examined in order to develop strategies to

enhance employee performance. The research problem then triggered the objectives that were also stated in this chapter. In addition, this chapter provided the research rationale, which is to aid organizations to remain competitive through the mitigation of diversity aspects for improved performance. Finally, the outline of the study was provided, stating what each chapter discusses. The subsequent chapter (Chapter 2) reviews extant literature relevant to the topic under study.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents a review of the literature that connects workplace diversity to employee performance. Based on the Bleu Index homogeneity, South Africa occupies a prominent position amongst the global rankings of nations characterised by significant diversity. This is evidenced by its diversity index surpassing 0.85 (Zhuwao, 2017). According to Sharma and Srivastava (2022), if diversity in the workplace is managed effectively, it may lead to stronger organisational performance in terms of values, perceptions, creativity and innovative thinking. On the other hand, if diversity in the workplace is not managed appropriately, it may lead to greater contentions across groups, which in turn results in higher employee turnover.

This review of the literature will look at previous literature from two vantage points. It will analyse literature on workforce diversity and its influence on employee performance, and further look at the literature on diversity aspects' relationship with employee performance.

### **2.2 WORKPLACE DIVERSITY DEFINITION**

When individuals from diverse backgrounds, possessing varying perspectives and generational experiences, collaborate in a shared environment, a scenario will inevitably emerge in which these distinct individuals may not reach consensus on a particular issue (Saxena, 2014:78). Akpkip (2017) emphasises that workforce diversity involves the significant differences and similarities among individuals within an organisation. This concept encompasses various aspects of a person's identity, including personality, age, gender, ethnicity/race, religion, marital status, income, work experience, and the viewpoints that underlie and uphold the foundational values of the organisation.

Saxena (2014) points out that no two individuals are alike and notes that workforce diversity includes the similarities and differences among employees in terms of age, cultural background, physical abilities and disabilities, sexual orientation, race, gender, and religion. Workplace diversity can be defined in several ways, resulting in no single definition that captures all its characteristics (Volson, 2020). According to Marquette University (2023), diversity is a broad concept with multiple interpretations that vary depending on specific contexts.

Although there is significant discussion regarding the meaning of diversity, diversity is about respecting, acknowledging, understanding, accepting, valuing and celebrating differences amongst people (Zhuwao, 2017). Diversity management serves as both an organisational imperative and a competitive advantage, playing a crucial role in advancing the strategic objectives of the organization. Businesses encounter failure when they lack diversity, as understanding and valuing diversity extends beyond mere compliance. It should transcend mere regulation and evolve into an essential organisational principle that genuinely recognizes the contributions individuals make to a company, avoiding any stigmatisation or labelling of them as affirmative action hires (Mazibuko and Govender, 2017).

Given the boarder and more complex definition of workplace diversity, this study adopted a narrow definition of workplace diversity that considers the following diversity aspects: Age, gender, ethnicity and education, in order to establish the influence of workplace diversity on employee performance at the eThekweni Municipality's Electricity Division.

### **2.3 THE ORIGINS OF WORKPLACE DIVERSITY**

The Workplace Diversity concept first emerged in the mid-1960s through initiatives by the civil rights movement based in the United States of America. Prior to this, a majority of firms had deep-rooted cultures of discrimination and non-existent cultural diversity, with a lack of training, rules or accountability on the matter. Nowadays, it is a legal imperative for companies to be serious about issues of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) (Wills, 2023).

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for corporate America officially began as a result of anti-discrimination legislation, namely the Equal Act of 1963, the VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967. Although the focus at the time was mostly on affirmative action and discrimination, workplace diversity began to enter the debate in organisations in the United States (Williams, 2020).

#### **2.3.1 Workplace Diversity history in South Africa**

According to Joubert (2017), South African industry has a history of disregarding demographic diversity, especially throughout the apartheid era. Discriminatory labour regulations prevented women and those with disabilities from pursuing the same career prospects as their white counterparts, as well as people of black African descent, Indian origin

and coloureds (Joubert, 2017). As a result of this discrimination, 70% of the population of the country lived in unsanitary settlements in poverty, and had a lack of access to education, either in rural areas or in informal settlements (Pietersen, 2023).

During the apartheid era, from 1950 to 1994, the government enforced an array of social and economic initiatives that segregated South Africa's four racial groupings (Indians, Coloureds, Africans and Whites). The government sanctioned the reservation of specific manufacturing positions for white individuals. The Industrial Conciliation (IC) Act of 1956 granted whites the authority to dictate the racial distribution of employment opportunities. The IC Act created a framework for trade unions and workers' organisations to negotiate industrial labour contracts that allocated jobs based on racial categories. Moreover, the Act instituted racial segregation within unions and prohibited Africans from formal representation in labour unions. Due to this trade union segregation, white unions successfully negotiated the exclusion of Africans from positions predominantly held by whites, a practice referred to as job reservation (Mariotti, 2012).

Mariotti (2012) asserts that education policies during apartheid prioritised white education, leading to the stagnation of African education. This resulted in a diminishing pool of low-skilled white workers in semi-skilled positions, as whites, especially Afrikaners, advanced to higher-paying, higher-skill roles and sectors. The manufacturing, motor vehicle, clothing, footwear, leather, and furniture sectors had experienced a decline in the representation of white individuals in certain roles. During the re-negotiation of labour agreements, white trade unions consented to classify certain high-demand positions as lower-skilled, thereby permitting non-whites to occupy these roles.

## **2.4 WORKPLACE DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION REGULATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

In 1994, with the advent of democratic governance, the South African government enacted legislation aimed at promoting equal opportunity and affirmative action. This included The Labour Relations Act, 66 of 1995; the Employment Equity Act, 55 of 1998; the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act, 53 of 2003 (Joubert, 2017); and the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act of 2000 (Rasila, 2021). These regulations were formulated to facilitate reparation and reform within South African

workplaces (Grant, 2007). The legislation required a transformation of the workplace, emphasising the importance of embracing diversity (Mazibuko and Govender, 2017).

#### **2.4.1 The Labour Relations Act, 66 of 1995**

Prior to the introduction of the Labour Relations Act, companies in South Africa were run solely on the ethics of their owners. This resulted in the extremely unfair treatment of employees, discrimination, and neglected rights (Dalitso Holdings (Pty) Ltd, 2022). According to Zhuwao (2019), the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 was one of the primary pieces of legislation enacted to ensure that diversity becomes a reality in South African workplaces (Zhuwao, 2019). This Act, together with other labour policies, plays a significant role in regulating company practices to ensure that employees are treated fairly and that their rights are upheld (Dalitso Holdings (Pty)Ltd, 2022). The Labour Relations Act has a major effect on workplace relations as it establishes a foundation for fair treatment and the protection of workers' rights. It also provides a process for resolving disagreements, which aids in the maintenance of peaceful labour relations (Schulenburg, 2023).

#### **2.4.2 The Employment Equity Act, 55 of 1998 and Affirmative Action**

In South Africa, the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 was implemented to guarantee equitable treatment and equal job opportunities for all. This promoted workplace diversity because companies could no longer discriminate against any employee based on their colour, traditional or religious beliefs, and/or origin (Volson, 2020). According to Pietersen (2023), the African National Congress (ANC) claims that one of the most challenging issues the Constitution Committee had to tackle was how to address the massive inequalities that apartheid left behind. Affirmative action would be the answer (Pietersen, 2023). Affirmative action is described in the Employment Equity Act section 15(1) as the “measures designed to ensure that suitably qualified people from designated groups have equal employment opportunities and are equitably represented in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce of a designated employer” (Volson, 2020). Affirmative action alludes to the systematic, diligent efforts to counteract racial discrimination in decision-making, as opposed to any kind of special consideration or preferential treatment. In terms of economic empowerment, it is a corrective measure procedure that aims to achieve true equality and unity through the heart of reconciliation (Pietersen, 2023).

Affirmative action measures in South Africa were created to alleviate discrimination and inequality, as well as manage the broad spectrum of diversity in all aspects of life, especially after apartheid ended in 1994. Years after affirmative action was implemented in South Africa, assessments of its influence or even benefit appear to differ from person to person (Archibong and Adejumo, 2013). According to Volson (2020), there are two competing perspectives on these legislative rules. Some see it as a good thing as they regarded this law as providing possibilities for talented workers who would not have had them in the past. Some see it as a negative thing, calling it "reverse discrimination" (Volson, 2020). Yet others, including Solidarity's Deputy General Secretary Dirk Herman, have claimed that affirmative action has not been entirely successful. According to Dirk and other critics, affirmative action has not succeeded in achieving its goals and has instead divided society into two groups and alienated white people.

The passage of time is no basis for considering that affirmative action is ineffective (Pietersen, 2023). This evaluation can only be made based on whether or not it has more or less fulfilled its purpose, and one could say that the evidence of the small elite black middle-class is an outcome of the modest beginnings of affirmative action! The black majority is still in the 'darkness' and has not seen the 'light' that affirmative action or its outcomes are supposed to offer, namely a sufficiently equal society. Affirmative action stays justifiable in South Africa until this goal is met and becomes a reality for a sufficient number of previously marginalised individuals (Maphaka, 2021; Yende and Yende, 2022).

### **2.4.3 Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act, 53 of 2003**

The notion of Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) may be linked to the Freedom Charter of 1955, which asserted that citizens labouring on the land should partake in South Africa's riches (April and Govender, 2022). The 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa guarantees the right to equality for all individuals and fulfils the statutory criteria of equality by instituting a framework for equitable treatment. The Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act (BEE) seeks to ensure that all individuals in South Africa can fully realise their right to equality by bridging the divide between formal and substantive equality (Kardamilakis, 2018). According to Van de Rheede (2020), Parliament passed the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act 53 of 2003 (B-BBEEA) as one of a few pieces of equality legislation to address the inequalities brought about by apartheid in South

Africa. Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) is defined as "a specific government policy to advance economic transformation and enhance the economic participation of black people in the South African economy". It is a process that is designed to strategically transform the South African economy through integrating previously disadvantaged South Africans, reorganising management structures, and enabling a greater involvement of the majority in the economy in order to attain economic justice (Van de Rheede, 2020).

Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) was established as a strategy to address the racial inequalities present in South Africa. The apartheid regime deliberately created an economic landscape that favoured white individuals. President Cyril Ramaphosa has highlighted that a significant portion of the South African population remains excluded from the mainstream economy, with black entrepreneurs primarily limited to small retail operations in townships (Saba, 2018). Despite the establishment of democracy 28 years ago and the implementation of the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) Act two decades ago, it is evident that further progress is required, as stated by the President. At the end of the apartheid era, black ownership of companies listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) was less than 1%, a figure that has seen minimal improvement over the past 28 years (Writer, 2022). The President also noted a decline in South Africa's efforts to enhance black management representation, promote skills development, strengthen enterprise development, and increase procurement opportunities for black women and youth (Writer, 2022).

## **2.5 EFFECTS OF WORKPLACE DIVERSITY**

The primary objective of the workplace diversity measures implemented by the South African government was to guarantee equitable treatment and the integration of historically marginalised ethnic and gender groups into economic activities. The concept of managing diversity was entrusted to organisations to contemplate and leverage the distinctions amongst different groupings for their prosperity, or to attain a competitive advantage. Consequently, this created a pressing need for diversity management measures for companies to capitalise on the advantages of diversity and effectively address any disadvantages that exist, thereby improving organizations' performance. According to Fulani (2023), numerous empirical studies have shown that workplace diversity has a positive impact on employee performance. Studies indicate that diverse teams have greater levels of creativity and invention in comparison to homogeneous teams. Fulani (2023) additionally asserts that although most of

the empirical research emphasises the positive results of workplace diversity, certain studies have discovered potential negative repercussions. An issue that arises is the possibility of increased conflict and difficulties in communicating amongst heterogeneous teams (Fulani, 2023).

### **2.5.1 The advantages of workplace diversity**

Broderick (2022) asserts that diversity is an inherently valuable objective for any organisation because an organisation that embraces diversity is more financially lucrative, more efficient, and more likely to achieve industry dominance. Broderick (2022) provides an account of some workplace diversity advantages as follows:

#### ***2.5.1.1 Diverse teams resolve obstacles faster***

According to Broderick (2022), diverse teams make 87 percent better decisions and solve problems faster. Teams composed of individuals with diverse backgrounds and with a variety of personality traits are more adept at navigating unfamiliar, unpredictable and intricate circumstances. A diversified workforce is essential for enduring and flourishing, regardless of any changes that occur in any sector (Broderick, 2022). The process of problem-solving and decision-making can be significantly more effective and adaptable when carried out within a team that encompasses a wide range of perspectives and backgrounds. Various and contrasting viewpoints can improve both the comprehension of the issue and the calibre of the resolution (Piercy, 2023).

#### ***2.5.1.2 Diverse organisations are preferred employers***

A significant majority of job-seekers and employees consider a diverse workforce to be a crucial aspect when assessing career prospects and organisations. A survey conducted with a sample size of over 1 300 participants found that 80 percent of respondents consider inclusion efforts to be a crucial aspect in their decision-making process when selecting a prospective employer (Broderick, 2022). Studies reveal that individuals searching for employment are willing to consider job opportunities with lower remuneration when organisations have a higher level of diversity (Reynolds, 2022).

### ***2.5.1.3 Diverse teams are more effective***

Broderick (2022) asserts that diversity can significantly influence the financial performance of the organisation. Companies that prioritise diversity and inclusivity have been found to have several advantages over their competitors. Moreover, they are 35 percent more likely to outperform their competitors; have a 70 percent higher chance of capturing new markets; and tend to generate 2.3 times more cashflow per employee. The author further states that there is a correlation between the level of gender and racial/ethnic diversity within companies and their financial performance. Organisations that are in the top 25% for gender diversity are 15% more likely to have financial returns above the normal range for their sector. Similarly, organisations in the top 25% for racial and ethnic diversity are 35% more likely to have financial returns above the average for their industry (Broderick, 2022).

### ***2.5.1.4 Diverse teams generate more innovative ideas***

According to Broderick (2022), companies that are inclusive are 1.7 times more likely to be creative. People from different backgrounds and experiences will find it easier to solve challenges creatively than those with similar backgrounds and experiences. According to 74% of youthful workers, an inclusive culture fosters innovation within the company (Broderick, 2022). Rock and Grant (2016) examined the extent of gender diversity in research and development teams across 4 277 organisations in Spain. Utilising statistical models, the researchers discovered a positive correlation between the presence of a higher proportion of women in organisations and the likelihood of introducing innovative concepts into the market over a span of two years. A different study published in the journal 'Economic Geography' revealed that heightened cultural diversity had a beneficial effect on innovation (Rock and Grant, 2016). The researchers gathered data from 7,615 firms that took part in the London Annual Business Survey. This poll entailed interviewing executives in the UK capital on their company's performance. The results demonstrated that firms led by culturally diverse management teams showed a greater inclination towards innovation through new product creation, relative to firms with homogenised leadership (Rock and Grant, 2016).

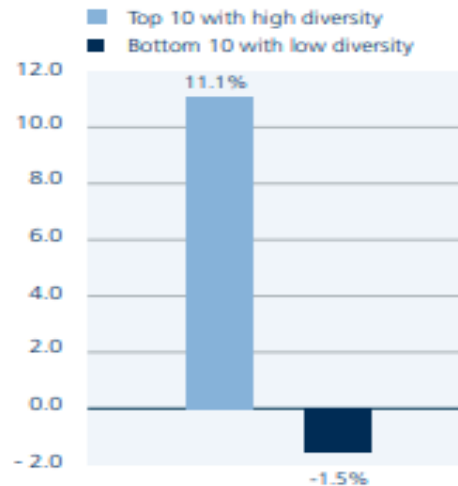
### ***2.5.1.5 Employee engagement is higher in diversified organisations***

According to Broderick (2022), individuals that are part of an inclusive organisation are more inclined to derive satisfaction from their work, achieve higher productivity, and exhibit

greater commitment to the organisation. Broderick (2022) further asserts that in inclusive organisations, there is an 83 percent higher likelihood of millennial workers being engaged at work. When employees perceive that their organisation places importance on diversity and inclusion, they are more inclined to exhibit higher levels of engagement, satisfaction and commitment towards their work. Consequently, this results in increased rates of employee retention and decreased expenditure associated with employee turnover (Loeb leadership, 2023).

#### ***2.5.1.6 More diverse leadership teams are more efficient***

According to Broderick (2022), organisations that have management teams with a wide range of backgrounds and perspectives produce 19 percent higher revenue compared to those with less diverse management teams. A 10 percent rise in gender diversity amongst senior executive teams in the United Kingdom corresponds to a 3.5 percent increase in profitability before interest and taxes. Diversity in the boardroom is not about partisanship. Companies that have boards composed of individuals from various backgrounds and perspectives observe a substantial increase in their financial gains (Broderick, 2022). Additionally, Andersen and Andersen (2016) conducted a comparison between ten organisations with the highest level of management diversity and 10 organisations with the lowest level of diversity in leadership. The researchers assessed and categorised all major and intermediate-sized corporations based on the level of diversity within their management teams across all levels of management using four diversity aspects, namely gender, ethnicity, age range and seniority. The findings indicated that diverse management leads to significantly increased revenues (Andersen and Andersen, 2016).



**Figure 2.1: Operating margin in companies with diverse leadership (Andersen and Andersen, 2016)**

Figure 2.1 above indicates that organisations with the highest level of diversity in their management obtained an additional 12.6 percentage points compared to the 10 companies with the lowest diversity score. This disparity is of significant magnitude for any organisation (Andersen and Andersen, 2016).

In other words, if two organisations both create a turnover of 1 billion, but Company A has a management team with great diversity while Company B has a management team with very low diversity, then Company A has the potential to earn an additional 126 million compared to Company B (Andersen and Andersen, 2016).

### **2.5.2 The disadvantages of workplace diversity**

Whilst there are numerous benefits to having a diverse workforce, there are also certain disadvantages associated therewith (MacDonald, 2019). Empirical data strongly supports the notion that workplace diversity is advantageous for organisations. However, according to Krug, Stegmaier and Buche (2018), the theoretical concept of fault-lines emphasises that diversity can also lead to negative outcomes. This is the scenario where sub-groups exhibit differences not just in terms of one trait, but in relation to multiple attributes concurrently (Krug, Stegmaier and Buche, 2018). According to Miller (2017), certain professionals believe that the ideal team is composed of individuals who share the same culture, ethnicity, educational background or socio-economic standing. When a team member possesses a distinct array of life experiences, the resulting uncertainties can evoke feelings of uneasiness.

When individuals experience anxiety, their attention shifts towards ensuring their survival rather than maximising their performance (Miller, 2017). Kokemuller (2019) and others provide an account of some workplace diversity disadvantages as follows:

#### ***2.5.2.1 Problems with communication***

According to Kokemuller (2019), increased workplace diversity presents employees with more communication challenges. The primary and evident obstacle to effective communication in a diverse organisation comprising personnel from different nationalities is language. Communication can also be affected by differences in culture. Employees with diverse points of view typically struggle to comprehend the viewpoints of others when conflicts emerge in the workplace. Gender and age disparities might also pose obstacles to achieving good communication (Kokemuller, 2019).

#### ***2.5.2.2 Acts of discrimination***

Although some employers often offer training to prevent discrimination, the more diverse the workplace, the higher the likelihood of encountering discriminatory behaviour. This can lead to the establishment of a hostile work environment, wherein individuals may experience feelings of oppression if their emotional well-being is not safeguarded. If bias and discrimination are introduced and influence the decisions made by managerial staff, the company could potentially encounter legal problems. Managers who base their decisions about personnel on their personal attributes may expose the organisation and themselves to potential legal action for discrimination (Kokemuller, 2019).

#### ***2.5.2.3 Costs associated with Diversity Management***

In order to reap the rewards of diversity and prevent potential issues, it is necessary to implement Diversity Management. Managers and leaders are generally required to allocate time and focus on coaching employees in developing relationships and resolving conflicts with colleagues from diverse backgrounds. Companies often hire external service providers to offer training on effectively co-existing with diversity. These expenses are frequently recurring, as new personnel may join and experienced staff may require continuous training refreshers (Kokemuller, 2019).

#### ***2.5.2.4 Resistance to Change***

According to Johnson (2019), although workplace diversity has overall advantages for an organisation, certain individuals and supervisors may exhibit negative reactions towards implemented changes. Employees that are resistant to workforce diversity typically refuse to accept fresh ideas, and contribute to creating more challenging work conditions. The inadequate management of resistance within the organisation may hinder the effectiveness of workplace diversity programmes, thus preventing the organisation from reaping its desired benefits (Johnson, 2019).

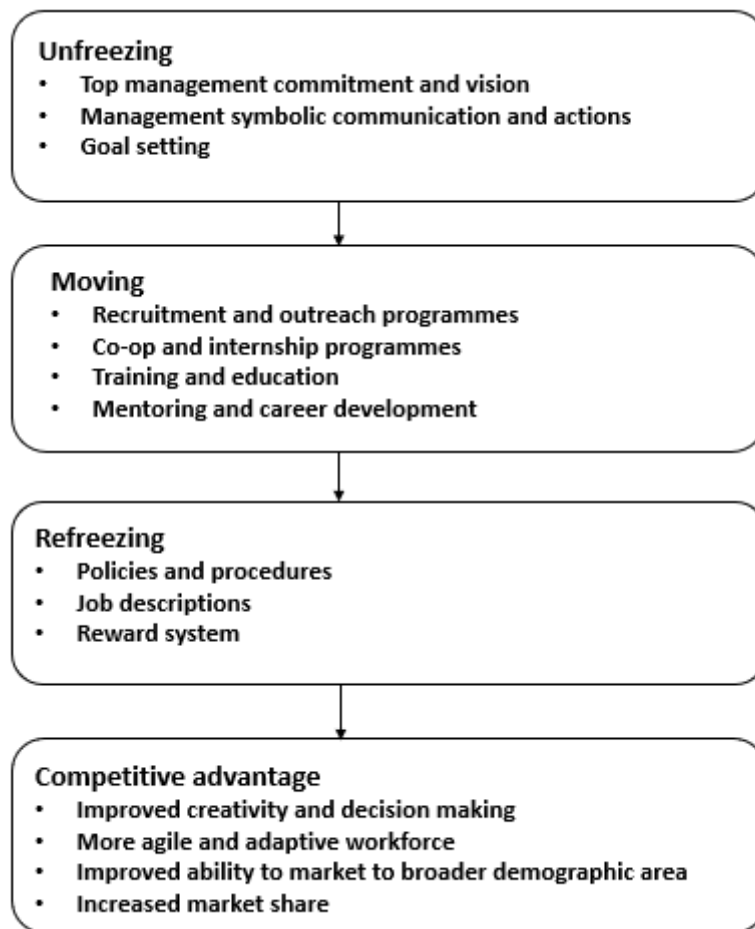
#### ***2.5.2.5 Myriad requests for consideration***

Whilst workplace diversity is based on the principle of mutual respect, the need to accommodate the expectations of multiple different individuals can become overwhelming for employers, hence making Diversity Management challenging. Moreover, the presence of a highly diversified workforce can lead to an overwhelming number of employee demands and work limitations related to religion, nationality, gender and race. In fact, the extent of diversity may necessitate the employment of a dedicated human resources staff member to effectively manage and address the needs of these diverse groups in the workplace. Typical examples of accommodating a wide range of diverse groups are the translation of materials into multiple languages and the provision of interpreters during meetings with employees. Additionally, accommodation is extended to employees who require leave due to religious practices or disabilities, and business hours are adjusted to align with the preferred schedules of employees with varying work styles and personal responsibilities to fulfil (Mayhew, 2019).

### **2.6 CULTURE CHANGE MODEL (BECOMING A MULTICULTURAL ORGANISATION)**

According to Grobler, Wörnich, Carrell, Elbert and Hatfield (2011), organisations that excel in diversity while enjoying the greatest advantages are categorised as multicultural organisations. These are organisations that promote intergroup learning and encourage individuals from different groups to learn from one another. These organisations highly appreciate the diversity they have established in the labour force. As opposed to pluralistic organisations that require minority groups to conform to the norms and values of the dominant majority groups, these organisations embrace the norms and values of minority communities. These behaviours foster

an atmosphere that appreciates and incorporates diverse perspectives (Grobler et al., 2011). Allen and Montgomery (2001) argue that transitioning from Monolithic (the least developed level with regard to diversity) or Pluralistic organisations to multicultural ones requires a fundamental change in organisational culture. The authors propose that this can be achieved by the application of the Lewin-Schein Change Model (Allen and Montgomery, 2001), which serves as a framework to systematically structure prevalent diversity practices into an integrated programme of deliberate organisational transformation. The three phases of the change model as indicated in Figure 2.1 will be discussed.



*Figure 2.2: A model for creating diversity (Grobler et al., 2011:86)*

### **2.6.1 Unfreezing**

Grobler et al.(2011:86) argue that top management should initiate the unfreezing of the existing culture by modifying the operational system. An indication of effective diversity initiatives is the presence of diversified leadership within an organisation, such as the

establishment of diverse senior management teams and boards of directors. After completing the initial task, senior executives must thereafter formulate a forward-looking vision and effectively disseminate it to the rest of the company (Grobler et al., 2011:86). In order to accomplish these goals, leaders must be armed with the necessary tools and approaches to actively engage with and appreciate diversity within their areas of influence (Marquette University, 2023).

### **2.6.2 Moving**

After the initial activities have been implemented to unfreeze the culture, management must thereafter progress through a series of processes to accomplish a complete cultural transformation. This would encompass initiatives aimed at minority groups, namely recruitment and outreach initiatives; cooperative and internship programmes; training and educational programmes; and mentorship and career development activities. Nevertheless, it is important to note that each of these practices, when used individually and not as part of a deliberate strategy for organisational transformation, is significantly less likely to effectively alter the organisational culture. Implementing the aforementioned techniques in this phase will result in a noticeable transformation in the organisational culture (Grobler et al., 2011:87).

### **2.6.3 Refreezing**

In order for the entire process to be effective, it is crucial that the modifications made during the moving phase are institutionalised. This objective can be achieved by synchronising the organisational rules, processes and rewards systems with the new culture. Failure to undertake this crucial step may result in the company reverting to its previous practices. The process of refreezing can commence by thoroughly examining current policies and processes to ensure that they align with, rather than contradict, the new culture of diversity. Additionally, it is important to consider the performance appraisal and compensation programmes. Upon successful completion of these phases, the business will be well-positioned to fully capitalise on the advantages of a genuinely multicultural organisation (Grobler et al., 2011:87).

The implementation of a cultural shift is a crucial step for an organisation to transition into a multicultural organisation. Additionally, effective management is essential to ensure the successful implementation of the shift and to uphold the organization's multiculturalism

status. Amidst the ongoing changes, it is imperative to consider the existing personnel of the organisation. Grobler et al. (2011) suggest that establishing a diversity steering committee would greatly assist the company by overseeing the impact of its diversity efforts. For instance, in addition to its Human Resources Department, Microsoft maintains a dedicated diversity department that strives to maintain the company's vision of diversity (Grobler et al., 2011)

## **2.7 WORKPLACE DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT**

Diversity management in the workplace is the systematic process of creating an atmosphere that includes different individuals and fosters inclusivity. Effective management of diversity is essential in modern workplaces. The incorporation of equality and diversity in the workplace can lead to improved team performance, improved satisfaction among workers, and ultimately, higher earnings (Personio, 2019). Patrick and Kumar (2012) define workplace diversity management as a deliberate process aimed at establishing and sustaining a favourable work environment that appreciates the unique characteristics and backgrounds of individuals. Their study focuses on identifying obstacles to workplace diversity and proposing strategies for effectively managing diversity and fostering inclusiveness. Patrick and Kumar's (2012) findings corroborated the preceding definition, indicating that effectively managing diversity can result in employees who are more dedicated, more content and more proficient, ultimately leading to potentially enhanced financial performance for an organisation.

There are many definitions of workplace diversity management (Zhuwao, 2017). According to Smith, Babich and Lubrick (2020), diversity management in the workplace is the process by which leaders take measures to guarantee that all members of an organisation or workplace are treated equitably, and that they are respected within the organisation or workplace. The successful management of diversity by leaders and managers can yield significant social and financial benefits (Smith, Babich and Lubrick, 2020). Zhwao (2017) concludes that diversity management is a business-oriented concept that aims to leverage the advantages of a diverse workforce and enhance the financial gains of organisations by creating a supportive atmosphere for optimal performance.

### **2.7.1 Workplace Diversity Management strategies**

The initial stage in managing diversity in the workplace is the recruitment process (Bhuwal, 2022). In South Africa, diversity hiring is primarily influenced by the objectives of affirmative action. Zhuwao (2017) states that dysfunctional workplace diversity management occurs when there is a lack of communication between management and employees regarding the benefits of workplace diversity for the organisation and how achieving these goals can be advantageous for both employees and the organisation as a whole.

Simply recruiting for diversity is not sufficient (Bhuwal, 2022). In addition, proficient management alone does not guarantee the ability to work efficiently with a diverse workforce (Berkeley, 2019). Although hiring methods play an essential role in cultivating a diverse and inclusive workplace culture. It is also important to implement additional diversity management strategies for existing employees (Bhuwal, 2022). Bhuwal (2020) and Marquette University (2023) posit the following workplace Diversity Management strategies:

#### ***2.7.1.1 Commitment from the leadership***

It is imperative for leaders at all levels of the organisation, from managers to executives, to have a comprehensive understanding of the objectives of Diversity Management programmes (Marquette University, 2023). Without the leadership team actively demonstrating and advocating diversity from the beginning, it will be unattainable for every employee to acquire diversity. Leadership must comprehend the significance of diversity for their businesses and understand how it influences the actions, attitudes and perspectives of the organisation. The success of Workforce Diversity Management greatly depends on the alignment of senior leadership towards a shared objective, as the responsibility for developing policies is within the domain of the organization's leaders (Bhuwal, 2022).

#### ***2.7.1.2 Effective communication strategy***

Establishing effective communication at all levels is essential for fostering engagement and ensuring alignment amongst team members whilst managing workplace diversity. Bhuwal (2022) states that the Human Resources Management Department must:

- Prioritise communication and take input into consideration;
- Utilise the data to promote diversity and cultivate a positive work environment;

- Ensure that the employee is fully informed on the procedures, policies, security requirements, and any other pertinent information;
- Prioritise the resolution of linguistic and cultural barriers;
- Ensure that crucial documents, such as security information, are translated if needed; and
- Ensure a thorough comprehension of a warning by all individuals, including both visual representations and symbolic representations displayed on the sign (Bhuwal, 2022).

#### ***2.7.1.3 Bias and discrimination zero-tolerance***

According to Bhuwal (2022), when managing workplace diversity, the company must not tolerate any tribal or culture-sensitive instances. Organisations must promote workplace diversity with adequate sanctions. If employees are encouraged to disclose prejudice and workplace biases, such situations may dwindle. Every worker deserves a prejudice-free workplace. Therefore, jokes that involve derogatory verbal or non-verbal race cues must be banned (Bhuwal, 2022).

#### ***2.7.1.4 Benchmark successful Multicultural Organisations***

Understanding becomes easier when applied practically, similar to any other newly acquired knowledge. There is an abundance of literature on the subject of managing diversity in the workplace. However, without a thorough comprehension of how these concepts are really implemented, it can be challenging to apply them effectively. Therefore, organisations should draw inspiration from companies that are devoted to and resolute in promoting workplace diversity. They must also contact educational institutions that can provide training for the company and train staff on how to foster a culture that embraces diversity instead of avoiding it (Bhuwal, 2022).

#### ***2.7.1.5 Maintain Transparency***

Organisations must ensure that their employee procedures align with the equality documentation, which ought to include areas such as recruitment, remuneration and promotion. Furthermore, the staff handbook should prioritise diversity and encompass the following subjects (Bhuwal, 2022):

- The company's diversity plan should be clearly defined in the code of conduct;
- Incorporating non-discriminatory communication is essential for inclusion in the communication plan;
- An anti-discrimination policy serves to elucidate the law and delineate its prohibitions for individuals;
- Compensation and reward strategies; and
- Enforcement of policies about unemployment and dismissal contingent on conduct (Bhuwal, 2022).

#### ***2.7.1.6 Encourage diversified teams***

According to Bhuwal (2022) organisations should leverage the aesthetic and robustness of having a diverse workforce to effectively manage workplace diversity. Encouraging collaboration amongst various personnel in mixed teams will promote their individuality. Teams comprising individuals from various backgrounds cultivate an atmosphere of mutual respect and friendship amongst its members. In addition, diverse groups enhance the team's perspectives and convictions, recognising the importance of their inherent abilities and insights. The foundation lies in fostering inclusivity and ensuring equitable chances for every employee (Bhuwal, 2022).

#### ***2.7.1.7 Continuous sensitivity training***

Companies new to workplace diversity must provide ongoing training. However, older personnel may resist the new standards since they are used to homogeneity. Hence, organisations must invest in sensitivity training and create a respectful and equitable atmosphere for workplace diversity management. They must train employees on how to respect the ideas of others in a diversified working culture through online awareness training. The training must also include how to respond to offenders and how one can be adaptable to the beliefs of different groups (Bhuwal, 2022).

### **2.7.2 Failed Workplace Diversity Management**

According to Chron (2020), poorly managed diversity has a substantial impact on the company's financial performance, resulting in a high rate of employee turnover. Disgruntled employees who perceive the work environment as hazardous will resign. The continuous turnover of employees due to animosity or a pervasive sense of dissatisfaction incurs

significant expenses for the organisation as it necessitates the recruitment and training of new personnel. If the workplace fails to establish a secure and inspiring culture that embraces employees from different backgrounds and treats them equitably, the business faces the potential of losing its most skilled individuals to rival companies (Chron, 2020).

From a business standpoint, the benefits of diversity must surpass the effort and costs associated with its management. Implementing diversity training and fostering a collaborative culture require the continuous dedication of both time and management. Several companies employ trainers to provide instruction on diversity and inclusion, emphasising the significance of embracing others and appreciating their viewpoints. Moreover, the use of time and financial resources may be futile if the organisation fails to successfully manage diversity (Chron, 2020).

## **2.8 EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE**

The topic of employee performance has garnered significant attention over the past few decades and is regularly highlighted in social circles (Omar, Che Cob, Sakarji, Thani and Abu Bakar, 2022). According to Silitonga and Sadeli (2020), employee performance is often seen as a reflection of the organisation's performance and has a direct influence on the organization's reputation. Performance is a quantitative measure employed by prosperous enterprises to evaluate their achievements in the workplace (Silitonga and Sadeli, 2020). According to Rusmiati, Harjadi and Fitriani (2021), performance is commonly defined by experts as the result of an individual's work or the execution of their tasks and obligations.

Multiple definitions of employee performance have been highlighted by various studies (Zhuwao, 2017). Employee performance, as described by Donohoe (2019), encompasses both the behaviour and the efficiency with which employees carry out their assigned tasks and responsibilities within an organisation. It is generally anticipated that employees meet performance targets that have been set up in most organisational settings. In addition, the organisation as a whole also establishes targets in order to provide goods and services effectively and on time (Donohoe, 2019). Ratnasari and Sutjahjo (2019) assert that employee performance plays a significant role in enhancing organisational performance. The authors provide a more specific definition of employee performance as the outcome of an employee's job in terms of the quality and quantity attained whilst carrying out their assigned

obligations (Ratnasari and Sutjahjo, 2019). The success of an organisation is heavily influenced by the performance of its employees. Therefore, the active participation, dedication and drive of employees are crucial factors in enabling an organisation to successfully attain its vision and strategic objectives (Nduati and Wanyoike, 2022).

### **2.8.1 Performance as a multifaceted construct**

Employee behaviours that have an impact, whether positive or negative, on job performance are known as job performance contributors and play a crucial role in achieving the organization's goals. Employees are the most important resource of an organisation. The organisation relies on the creativity, dedication and innovative thinking of its employees, making their performance crucial for its success. Key strategies for an organisation to enhance its value proposition and improve competitiveness, hence increasing performance, include fostering creativity, driving innovation and using technology (De Padua, 2021).

Ramos-Villagrasa, Barrada, Fernández-del-Río and Koopmans (2019) define job performance as a concept that encompasses behaviours within the control of employees that contribute to the achievement of organisational objectives. The authors suggest that performance is a collection of actions, rather than the factors that influence these actions or their results. They further suggest that the definition is intrinsically broad as it is the only way of describing a phenomenon that exhibits significant variations across different jobs and times. However, there is agreement regarding the multifaceted aspect of performance. While several dimensions have been suggested, such as safety performance and adaptive performance, there are three main dimensions of job performance, namely task performance, contextual performance and counterproductive work behaviour. Collectively, these variables offer a relatively thorough and concise approach to evaluating the entirety of job performance (Ramos-Villagrasa et al., 2019). The three dimensions are discussed below.

#### ***2.8.1.1 Task performance***

Task performance pertains to an employee's capacity to accomplish tasks efficiently, effectively and precisely (Walkme, 2019). Volson (2020) defines task performance as the specific behaviours that an employee is required to exhibit, including their allocated responsibilities and job description. Zhuwao (2017) posits that an individual's contribution to an organisation can manifest in two ways: direct and indirect. Direct contribution refers to

actively participating in the production of products, while indirect contribution pertains to overseeing or managing the process. He asserts that task performance in and of itself is multifaceted. The performance components encompassed in this include job-specific task performance, non-job-specific task competence, written and spoken communication competency, supervision and management (Zhuwao, 2017).

### ***2.8.1.2 Contextual performance***

Contextual performance refers to acts that go beyond an employee's prescribed job requirements, such as assisting others, actively engaging in meetings, or upholding the organization's values (Walkme, 2019). Koopmans, Bernaards, Hildebrandt, Schaufeli, de Vet Henrica and Van Der Beek (2011) describe contextual performance as the individual actions that contribute to the functioning of the organisational, social and psychological environment in which the technical core must operate. Volson (2020) emphasises that contextual performance refers to a form of cooperative behaviour exhibited by employees within a workplace setting. Pro-social behaviours, also known as extra-role behaviours, are implicit expectations that are not explicitly stated in an employee's job description (Volson, 2020). De Padua (2021) states that contextual behaviours in a hierarchical organisation are identical, as compared to task behaviours. Moreover, contextual performance is contingent upon an individual's disposition and empathy towards others, rather than their talent or skills. He asserts that in recent years, contextual performance has become an essential element of overall work performance. Practitioners and scholars are increasingly recognising that job performance goes beyond meeting the minimum requirements for task completion. Due to shifts in the global competitive landscape, employees are increasingly required to exceed the expectations outlined in their job descriptions (De Padua, 2021).

### ***2.8.1.3 Counterproductive work behaviour***

Counterproductive Work Behaviour, which according to Koopmans et al. (2011) can be defined as behaviour that negatively impacts the overall welfare of the organisation, has witnessed a rise in recent years. It encompasses actions like absenteeism, tardiness, engaging in unproductive behaviour, theft and substance abuse (Koopmans et al., 2011), all of which impede an employee's performance (Walkme, 2019), hence hindering the achievement of organisational objectives (De Padua, 2021).

De Padua (2021) defines counterproductive work behaviour as employee actions that intentionally impede the achievement of organisational objectives. He argues that the term "intentionally" is essential in this definition as it refers to counterproductive tasks that employees deliberately engage in, rather than those that are done by accident (De Padua, 2021). According to De Padua (2021), despite the existence of several counterproductive behaviours, studies have revealed that they can be classified into more precise categories, such as task performance and other related behaviours. Counterproductive behaviour in business refers to inefficacious absenteeism, unacceptable work performance, high turnover, and harmful behaviours. Counterproductive conduct includes anti-social activities such as theft, violence, substance abuse and sexual harassment. Whilst not common, such practices can have a profoundly detrimental and costly impact on businesses (De Padua, 2021).

## **2.8.2 The significance of Employee Performance**

Organisations require workers who are capable of executing tasks effectively, as employee performance is essential to the company's overall success. Organisations must comprehend the fundamental advantages of employee performance to establish consistent and objective evaluation procedures (Leonard, 2019). This helps in identifying strengths, weaknesses, and probable managerial deficiencies inside the company. Despite the inherent discomfort of performance reviews, they assist corporate leaders in assessing the performance levels of each employee (Leonard, 2019). Leonard (2019), outlines the benefits of employee performance as follows:

### ***2.8.2.1 Successful employees accomplish their goals***

A key factor in employee performance is the successful attainment of goals (Leonard, 2019). High-performing employees consistently meet deadlines and complete tasks accurately on their first attempt. For instance, if an employee tasked with generating customer reports frequently misses deadlines, it could reflect poorly on the customer service department, leading to perceptions of unprofessionalism and inefficiency due to clients' ongoing delays (Leonard, 2019).

### ***2.8.2.2 A Positive Work Environment is formed***

When individuals carry out their responsibilities effectively, it contributes to an improvement in workplace morale. Conversely, employees lacking motivation to perform their duties can

have a negative impact on the entire organisation (Leonard, 2019). It is crucial to cultivate a positive and dynamic work environment. High-performing workplaces not only attract top talent during recruitment but also radiate enthusiasm and showcase progress towards organizational goals (Leonard, 2019).

### ***2.8.2.3 Employee Growth is measured***

The consistent implementation of employee assessments allows staff members to monitor their progress and take pride in their achievements over time (Leonard, 2019). This practice also aids them in setting new goals and sustaining high levels of motivation within the team. Recognizing and rewarding high-performing employees often inspires them to exceed their previous accomplishments. While it is commendable to have skilled individuals who perform well, it is advantageous to cultivate their capabilities into a more significant asset that benefits the entire organization (Leonard, 2019). Monitoring employee development provides insight into their potential for further growth and their readiness for leadership roles.

### ***2.8.2.4 Trends of the Team are determined***

Underperforming employees can negatively affect productivity and, ultimately, the organization's profitability (Leonard, 2019). It is essential to understand that poor performance does not necessarily indicate an employee's lack of capability. The focus should be on identifying trends that highlight areas where teams excel and where challenges arise. Organizations must then evaluate these challenges to determine whether they are due to a skills gap or deficiencies in management and development practices. This assessment can inform team training strategies and future recruitment initiatives (Leonard, 2019).

Overall, a skilled workforce contributes to increased productivity, fosters a positive work environment, and enhances overall efficiency. Regular evaluations are crucial for identifying opportunities for staff development to improve performance

## **2.9 EMPIRICAL LITERATURE**

### **2.9.1 Workplace diversity and its effects on employee performance**

Employees are the foundation of any organisation, and research shows that happy employees are more engaged, productive and devoted (Martin, 2005). According to Aijaz (2023), a

company cannot fulfil its goals or remain competitive in the market without a focused and motivated team.

South Africa is a melting pot of diverse groups. To construct a productive and equitable workplace, diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) are the most important factors to consider (Barry, 2022). According to Mazibuko and Govender (2017), employee engagement is a positive influence created through diverse recruiting and retention, which necessitates employees taking ownership of change. Employees are thus encouraged to propose solutions to problems by assisting one another.

According to Dike (2013), managers face challenges in understanding the variables that contribute to efficient diversity management and the specific duties of leadership required to address workplace diversity issues quickly and effectively. She further posits that workplace diversity significantly contributes to the success of certain companies. Dike (2013) also suggests that insufficient mentoring and coaching might result in lower revenues for an organisation. The presence of diverse employees in the workplace has been shown to enhance productivity. However, the proper implementation of workplace diversity can be impeded by issues such as discrimination, which may ultimately affect the overall profitability of the company. Hence, it is imperative to continuously enhance strategies for efficiently handling workplace diversity in response to ongoing global changes. The author further emphasises that it is crucial to understand the effects of workplace diversity on companies in order to foster a productive working environment through effective workplace diversity management (Dike, 2013). Ahmad and Rahman (2019) conducted a study aimed at assessing the effects of workplace diversity on the performance of employees. The researchers examined different diversity aspects and found that age diversity, gender diversity and ethnicity diversity have negative relationships with the performance of employees. Furthermore, experience diversity has a positive effect on employees' performance.

Andoh, Ghansah, Okogun-Odompley, and Benuwa (2019) conducted a study on the effect of workplace diversity on the relationship between employees and their performance. Their results demonstrated that workplace diversity generally has an impact on employee performance. However, they found that educational diversity plays a more prominent role in influencing employee performance in university settings compared to other diversity factors evaluated in the study. Additionally, age and educational diversity were found to significantly

affect employee performance at universities, while the influences of gender and ethnicity diversity were minimal or negligible. In a separate study, Zhuwao (2017) examined the effects of workplace diversity on employee performance in a South African higher education institution. The findings indicated a partial divergence from the results of Andoh et al. (2019) concerning the relationship between specific diversity factors and employee performance. Zhuwao's research revealed a notable correlation between gender diversity, ethnic diversity, and educational diversity with employee performance. This contrasts with Andoh et al. (2019), which found no significant relationship between age diversity and employee performance, even though it was also conducted in a higher education context.

Researchers have found conflicting results on the effect of diversity on performance. Some researchers have shown a positive relationship between diversity factors and performance, while others have discovered negative relationships (Sanyang and Othman, 2019). According to Fulani (2023), many research studies have presented conflicting findings on the influence of workplace diversity on employee performance, indicating that the correlation between diversity and performance may be more intricate than previously presumed. Fulani (2023) makes an example of Nishii and Mayer (2019), who conducted a study that revealed a non-linear association between gender diversity and team performance. This study demonstrated that both exceptionally homogeneous and highly diversified teams exhibited decreased performance. The authors proposed that maintaining a reasonable amount of diversity could be advantageous to striking a balance between the advantages of having different perspectives and the potential struggles of managing diverse teams.

The concept of diversity in the workplace can be understood in a variety of ways (Volson, 2020). As a result, it is critical to focus on the diversity elements as they relate to the theoretical framework or model that the researcher wishes to investigate. Institutions and countries define diversity in relation to their own reality. This study will help South African local government entities and businesses to determine which elements of diversity they may leverage to increase employee performance. More research is needed on the topic of workplace diversity because it is a constantly changing and growing concept.

## **2.10 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

According to Sreekumar (2023), a theoretical framework is a structural framework that provides support and description for a theory. Sreekumar (2023) describes a theory as a

coherent framework of interrelated definitions and concepts that offers a systematic viewpoint on phenomena by clarifying the links between variables to explain these occurrences. A theoretical framework in research denotes a compilation of concepts, ideas, theories, and assumptions that facilitate the understanding of a specific occurrence or circumstance (Sreekumar, 2023). According to Volson (2020), a theoretical framework is characterised by its deductive nature, as it follows a logical and well-structured approach.

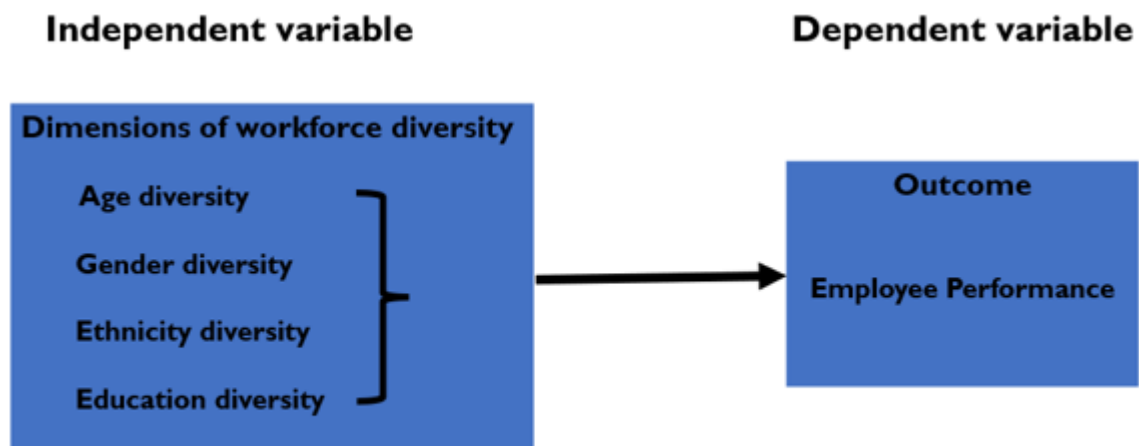
According to Volson (2020), a theoretical framework holds significant importance for two primary reasons. Firstly, it serves to prevent bias. A researcher may possess pre-existing notions regarding the research subject that could potentially impact the research outcomes. Theoretical frameworks ensure that the researcher maintains clarity in their judgment. Furthermore, it will direct the researcher's attention to certain areas of focus. The research problem can be narrowed down to prioritise and address only the essential aspects that are relevant to the theoretical framework (Volson, 2020).

This study will be guided by the Social Identity theory framework developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979), which encompasses several diversity aspects including age, ethnicity, gender and education. These dimensions will also be examined in this study. Vinney (2019) defines social identity as the aspect of an individual's self that is determined by their affiliations with various groups. She further states that Social Identity theory elucidates the circumstances under which social identification supersedes one's individual identity. The notion of social identity was first articulated by Henri Tajfel in 1972, stemming from his research on the perceptual processes that contribute to the development of social biases and stereotypes. Tajfel and his associates executed a series of research projects in the early 1970s, referred to as minimal-group research. In 1979, Henri Tajfel and his student John Turner formulated Social Identity Theory. The concept aimed to clarify the cognitive mechanisms involved in the establishment of group affiliations and the motivating factors that support the preservation of a positive social identity through advantageous comparisons between one's own social group and others. The theory also outlines the mechanisms via which social identity can have an effect on intergroup behaviour (Vinney, 2019).

This concept prompts this study to investigate the extent to which diversity factors like age, ethnicity, gender and education can impact employee performance in the Electricity division of eThekweni Municipality.

## 2.11 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework presented in Figure 2.3 below illustrates the connection between workplace diversity and employee performance. This framework is based on the work of Zhuwao (2017), who utilised the Social Identity Theory proposed by Tajfel and Turner (1979). This theory emphasises various diversity attributes, including age, gender, ethnicity, and education. According to Zhuwao (2017), the theory suggests that employees have a tendency to categorise themselves based on their group affiliations. These groups can be formed around several criteria, such as age, gender, ethnicity, and educational background. Such group affiliations can foster feelings of egotism and self-confidence, leading to discriminatory or prejudiced behaviours towards individuals from different groups. Consequently, the theory indicates that an employee's work behaviour is shaped by the internal norms and values of their respective group, directly influencing their performance (Zhuwao, 2017).



*Figure 2.3: Proposed conceptual framework*

### 2.11.1 Age diversity and employee performance

Age diversity in the workplace, as defined by Pytlovany and Truxillo (2015), pertains to differences in the distribution of ages amongst employees. It serves to characterise the overall composition of an organisation or the composition of workgroups within the company. Many scholars, according to Zhuwao (2017), have suggested that age diversity can have both

positive and negative effects on an organisation. Heaslip (2023) states that employees of different ages possess different skillsets. Younger generations have greater proficiency in social media and technology, but older generations contribute valuable expertise in leadership, interpersonal skills and their unique problem-solving methods. Heaslip (2023) further identifies several major advantages of age diversity in the workplace, including: (i) Enhanced productivity, (ii) Increased range of skills, (iii) A more inclusive organisation, (iv) Opportunities for mentorship, and (v) Improved employee retention.

According to Kamara (2019), and contrary to the aforementioned, empirical research has shown a negative effect of age diversity on performance. He further cites a study conducted by Milliken and Martins (1996) indicating that teams composed of personnel from diverse age groups experience greater rates of employee turnover. Furthermore, the presence of individuals of different ages might result in subordinates facing increased uncertainty about their roles, ultimately resulting in a decreased perception of support from the organisation. This viewpoint also suggests that age diversity can lead to an increase in task conflict.

### **2.11.2 Gender diversity and employee performance**

Reeves (2023) defines gender diversity as the broad range of gender expressions that go beyond the traditional binary paradigm. He suggests that promoting gender diversity in an organisation involves hiring employees from different gender identities. According to Skills4 (2020), gender diversity in the workplace refers to the equal and consistent hiring of both women and men, as well as ensuring equal pay and opportunities for both genders, including access to resources, promotions and salary.

According to Hapompwe, Mulenga and Siwale (2020), organisations that establish an inclusive atmosphere for all employees regardless of gender and implement rules that eradicate workplace discrimination can reap the advantages of gender diversity. The authors suggest that research has demonstrated a notable correlation between gender diversity and work performance, indicating that employees prefer to collaborate with individuals of the opposite gender as long as they demonstrate professional ability in their job responsibilities. Their study determined that age diversity is a vital asset for companies seeking to have a resilient workforce. Furthermore, Hapompwe, Mulenga and Siwale (2020) assert that gender diversity is an important influencer of organisational performance.

Organisations that lack gender diversity risk missing out on a broad range of perspectives, viewpoints, life experiences and abilities. A diverse range of viewpoints contributes to unconventional thinking and the creativity that organisations require to thrive in the fiercely competitive modern-day economic landscape (Aperian, 2021).

### **2.11.3 Ethnicity diversity and employee performance**

Ethnicity is the classification of people into distinct groups or categories based on cultural characteristics that are judged to be notably different from those of other groups (Benson, 2020). One's ethnicity encompasses their values, nationality, language or ancestry, all of which contribute to their unique sense of belonging within a certain group. Diversity refers to the deliberate inclusion and recognition of individuals from a broad spectrum of origins, encompassing factors such as race, ethnicity and gender. Hence, the concept of ethnic diversity is typically defined as the integration of individuals from different ethnic backgrounds within a common setting (Skidmore, 2023).

According to Ahmed (2019), literature has consistently demonstrated favourable attributes and consequences stemming from more diversity within an organisation. Additionally, it implies that there are disadvantages associated with ethnic diversity. Ahmed (2019) further mentions recent literature indicating that the concept of diversity within a group may pose a threat to the group's efficacy, rather than the actual composition of the group. The author additionally proposes that ethnic diversity has a favourable impact in the workplace, leading to (i) higher job satisfaction, (ii) improved financial performance and (iii) improved decision-making abilities. Ahmed further states that some research suggests that ethnic diversity in the workplace can have negative effects. The effects can be classified into three distinct categories, namely (I) individual performance, (II) cohesion and (III) turnover. Regarding individual performance, the author cites a study by Chatman and Flynn (2001) that investigated team performance, along with other factors. It was discovered that when work group members had different cultures, they were less socially connected at a personal level, resulting in decreased individual performance. Regarding cohesiveness, Ahmed (2019) references a study by Leslie (2016) that carefully investigated the influence of cohesion in diversified groups. The findings of the study revealed that it is expected that having a diverse ethnic composition within a work unit is likely to limit the level of cohesion amongst its members. This in turn is expected to result in poor performance of the work unit, particularly when the unit consists of two ethnic groupings that

are significantly different in terms of social standing. Diverse groups have been shown to have more challenges in communication, and these issues can contribute to higher rates of employee turnover. Ahmed (2019) also cites a study by Leonard and Levine (2006) that examined the correlation between ethnic diversity and turnover rates, concluding that there is no significant connection between the two. In contrast, Leonard and Levine (2006), research indicates that the negative consequences of diversity, such as reduced interpersonal attraction and challenges in communication, result in an increased rate of turnover amongst ethnically diverse groups.

#### **2.11.4 Education diversity and employee performance**

Employees have diverse educational backgrounds, ranging from individuals who did not complete high school to those with doctoral degrees (Glynn, 2022). Tuor Sartore and Backes-Gellner (2020) suggest that when a workforce is highly diversified in terms of education, individuals are likely to possess specific knowledge that can be shared amongst them. The authors argue that higher educational diversity within a group is likely to enhance the possibility of achieving better team performance.

According to a study by Guo, Gan and Wang (2021), a team member's standing is determined by their performance expectations. These expectations are influenced by the resources they have and how significant these resources are for achieving tasks and goals. The authors further suggest that when an individual is anticipated to attain superior performance, they will be assigned a more prominent position, and their opinions are likely to be widely recognised and thoroughly considered. Their educational level is also expected to have an impact on performance expectations and the position within a team. As educational level disparity diversity increases, the allocation of educational resources becomes centralised, resulting in a wider gap amongst individuals of "higher" and "lower" standing.

According to Guo, Gan, and Wang (2021), the Status Characteristics Theory posits that a diverse educational background within a team can result in unequal status among team members, which negatively affects divergent thinking, effective communication, and knowledge utilisation. Members who hold higher status within the team often prioritise the maintenance of their influence and authority over task completion. They achieve this by controlling key resources, dominating team dynamics, and imposing their viewpoints on others. Conversely, individuals with lower status tend to have their perspectives overlooked

and are therefore more likely to refrain from expressing differing opinions, often yielding to those of higher status (Guo, Gan, and Wang, 2021).

## **2.12 SUMMARY**

This literature review examined the various definitions and origins of workplace diversity. It also analysed several affirmative action strategies and their effects on enhancing workplace diversity in South Africa. Furthermore, the review outlined the advantages and disadvantages associated with workplace diversity. Subsequently, it provided an overview of diversity management practices and discussed the consequences of unsuccessful diversity initiatives. Additionally, the review explored employee performance as a multidimensional concept. Finally, it introduced the theoretical and conceptual frameworks designed to illustrate the relationship between workplace diversity and employee performance. The following chapter will detail the methodology used in this study.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explores the research methodologies employed in the study and the execution of the investigation itself. This chapter encompasses the following fundamental topics: study design, population, sampling, measurement, data collection and analysis, its reliability and validity (pertaining to quantitative research), and ethical considerations.

### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

A research design, also referred to as a research strategy, serves as a systematic approach for addressing a specific set of questions (McCombes, 2019). It provides a comprehensive framework that includes methods and procedures for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The research design specifies the methodology the researcher intends to utilise to investigate the primary issue at hand in the study (Bouchrika, 2022).

This study employed a quantitative research design. As noted by DJS Research (2020), the purpose of a quantitative research design is to ascertain the extent to which individuals think, act, or feel in particular ways. While there are various types of research design strategies, this study specifically utilised a correlational research design. Correlation indicates the strength and direction of the relationship between variables, which can be either positive or negative (Singh, 2023). The correlational research design was applied to examine the relationship between two variables: the independent variable (workplace diversity, encompassing age, gender, ethnicity, and education) and the dependent variable (employee performance). Consequently, the correlational research design was deemed the most suitable approach for this study.

### **3.3 POPULATION**

A research population generally refers to a significant group of individuals or entities that forms the main focus of a scientific investigation (Adam, 2015). In this study, the subject population consists of employees based at the head office of eThekweni Electricity, a local government organisation located in Stamford Hill, Durban. The total staff count is approximately 250 employees engaged in Medium Voltage/Low Voltage (MV/LV)

operations. To determine the sample size, a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error were applied. The sample size estimation tool (Calculator.net) was utilised to accurately calculate the sample size, resulting in the selection of 152 participants from the total population of 250 (N=250).

### 3.4 SAMPLING

Probability sampling was used to select the participants for this study. Nikolopoulou (2022) defines probability sampling as a process that entails the random selection of a sample from the population under investigation. It is occasionally referred to as random sampling. This study employed stratified random sampling to categorise personnel into gender-homogeneous strata of females and males. This was due to the gender representations of employees within the Medium Voltage/Low Voltage (MV/LV) Operations Department of the Electricity division at the Municipality. All employees within each stratum had an equal chance of getting chosen for the study. This sampling strategy also aided in mitigating bias related to participant selection. A hyperlink was generated and disseminated to participants by email.

To ascertain a more suitable sample size for the whole population of N=250 employees, the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size formula was employed, as demonstrated in the calculation below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: N = Total Population, n = sample size, e = margin of error

Therefore:

$$\begin{aligned} n &= \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} \\ &= \frac{250}{1 + 250(0.05)^2} \\ &= 152 \end{aligned}$$

The sample size of 152 is sufficient for the researcher to gather comprehensive information from the participants concerning the phenomena. To account for the potential of unreturned questionnaires, 200 questionnaires were distributed.

### **3.5 MEASUREMENT**

The workforce diversity questionnaire adapted by Elsaid (2012) will be employed in this study to assess employee perceptions regarding the impact of workplace diversity on performance within a local government entity. This questionnaire, originally developed to evaluate the effects of workforce diversity on employee performance in Egyptian pharmaceutical organisations, consists of 38 items categorised into four sub-scales: gender diversity, age diversity, ethnic diversity, and educational diversity. Responses are measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The reliability of Elsaid's questionnaire was determined using the Cronbach alpha coefficient, with a satisfactory coefficient value set at 0.70 or higher for each item.

### **3.6 DATA COLLECTION**

The researcher used a questionnaire to collect primary data from the target population within the municipality. The workforce diversity survey questionnaire, demographic questionnaire and personally administered questionnaire were used to collect data. The survey questionnaire was distributed electronically via email correspondence. A total of 200 questionnaires was distributed. Additionally, secondary data was obtained from books, published articles and internet sources related to the research being conducted in order to support the researcher's arguments, findings and provide evidence of related studies that have been done previously.

### **3.7 DATA ANALYSIS**

Data analysis plays a crucial role in structuring and evaluating information. It examines raw data to draw conclusions relevant to the research study (Volson, 2020). Quantitative data analysis is a systematic approach that evaluates and interprets numerical data to derive meaningful insights. This process employs statistical methods, mathematical models, and computational tools to identify patterns, correlations, and key themes within the datasets (Eteng, 2022).

In this study, data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27.0 for Windows. SPSS is a widely recognised statistical software utilised in quantitative research (Masuadi et al., 2021). The software facilitated the graphical representation of data through the use of bar graphs and pie charts. Correlation analysis was performed to evaluate the strength of the relationship between the independent variables (workplace diversity factors: age, gender, ethnicity, and education) and the dependent variable (employee performance). This analysis allowed the researcher to determine both the magnitude and direction of the correlations between the variables.

### **3.8 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY (FOR QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH)**

Morrison (2019) identifies consistency and accuracy as two essential criteria of surveys, akin to all measuring instruments. The assessment is conducted by evaluating the survey's reliability and validity. Reliability and validity are interrelated concepts. Consequently, if a survey exhibits low reliability, it will also demonstrate low validity. Nonetheless, high reliability does not inherently imply that a survey will possess strong validity (Morrison, 2019).

#### **3.8.1 Validity**

Validity refers to the degree to which an instrument, such as a survey, accurately measures its intended construct; thus, validity serves as an evaluation of its precision (Morrison, 2019). The researcher guaranteed validity by supervision. The research supervisor scrutinised and evaluated the data analysis process. Conclusions and interpretations were monitored to guarantee alignment with the gathered data. A pilot study was done to assess the validity of the questionnaire.

#### **3.8.2 Reliability**

This study utilised internal consistency reliability, referring to the consistency of the measuring instrument (Zhuwao, 2017). The study's questionnaire reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient ranges from 0 to 1, nearing 1 when internal consistency is elevated (Sürücü and Maslakçı, 2020). Statistically, a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.70 or higher is deemed necessary for reliability. Consequently, in this investigation, a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.70 or higher was deemed reliable and thereafter accepted.

### **3.9 PILOT STUDY**

A pilot study is characterised as a preliminary investigation that assesses the adaptability and feasibility of the research study, including its procedures, tactics, and data collection systems (Ikart, 2019). This study included a pilot investigation to assess the feasibility of the approach intended for a larger-scale study. The feedback obtained from the pilot study was utilised to rectify grammatical errors, instructional inaccuracies, the presentation of the questionnaire, the layout, and any identified ambiguities. The pilot study had 10 participants chosen from the designated population strata within eThekweni Municipality (Electricity).

### **3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethics is a branch of philosophy focused on human behaviour, especially within societal contexts, originating from the Greek term "ethos," signifying "way of living." Ethics examines the theoretical foundation of moral choices and assesses what is ethically right or wrong, unjust or just (Government of Canada, 2015). Bhandari (2021) asserts that ethical issues in research comprise a set of criteria that regulate study designs and methodologies. The methodology employed in research encompasses critical ethical issues that safeguard the rights of study participants, enhance research validity, and maintain scientific or academic probity (Bhandari, 2021).

The Institutional Research Ethics Committee at the Durban University of Technology granted the necessary ethical clearance to carry out this study on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April 2024 (Ethics clearance number: IREC 247/23). The gatekeeper permission was obtained on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2024. The participants completed the questionnaire online by clicking on a link that was sent to them via email. The design of the survey ensured that access to the questionnaire was restricted unless confirmation of voluntary participation was explicitly provided. The letter of information guaranteed participants' protection by stating that their anonymity and confidentiality would be maintained. They were not required to provide any personal information, and the questionnaire did not contain any biographical questions that would reveal their identity. Additionally, the information gathered cannot be connected to the participant in any manner. Participants were advised that they had the choice to withdraw from the study at any time, and that they would continue to receive appropriate treatment. Only the researcher and supervisor have access to the acquired data, which will be safely

locked away. Furthermore, the data collected would be utilised solely for research purposes, retained on DUT premises for five (5) years, and then deleted.

### **3.11 RESEARCH PROCEDURE**

Prior to the commencement of data collection, formal permission was obtained from the Deputy Head of the Medium Voltage and Low Voltage Department of the Electricity Division at eThekweni Municipality through a written request. A copy of the research proposal was shared with all department heads. A letter of permission to conduct the research was granted to the researcher on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2024. Following this, the researcher sought and received full ethics clearance from the University's Ethics Committee on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April 2024 (IREC 247/23).

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of April 2024, the survey questionnaire was developed utilising Google Forms and distributed via email to the targeted participants. The researcher monitored the response rate and noted that it was slower than anticipated. Data collection occurred from the 12<sup>th</sup> of April 2024 to the 12<sup>th</sup> of July 2024. To address the low response rate, the researcher implemented a strategy of sending weekly reminders to participants, which proved effective as the response rate improved, ultimately exceeding the expected participation level. The collected data was then exported to an Excel spreadsheet for analysis.

### **3.12 SUMMARY**

Chapter Three provided an overview of the research methodology employed for data collection. Additionally, it outlined the organisation and analysis of the collected data. The various tools utilised for data collection, organisation, and analysis were discussed in detail. Essentially, this chapter delineated the systematic approach undertaken in gathering and analysing the data, ultimately leading to the research findings. The study was conducted within a local government institution in the eThekweni Municipality, specifically within the Electricity division, using a quantitative research approach. The subsequent chapter will present the results and discussion.

## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to offer a comprehensive and concise overview of the research study by providing statistics on the acquired data, discussing the analysis methodologies used, and addressing the handling and interpretation of the data. This chapter further provides discussions of data, presenting the conclusions and findings.

The data collected was intended to fulfill the aim and objectives of the study. The responses to the questionnaire furthermore sought to provide substance to the study's objectives.

### 4.2 RESPONSE RATE

	<b>Number of participants</b>	<b>Percentage response rate</b>
<b>Distributed Survey questionnaires</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Survey unreturned questionnaires</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES RECEIVED</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>85%</b>

*Table 4.1: Response rate*

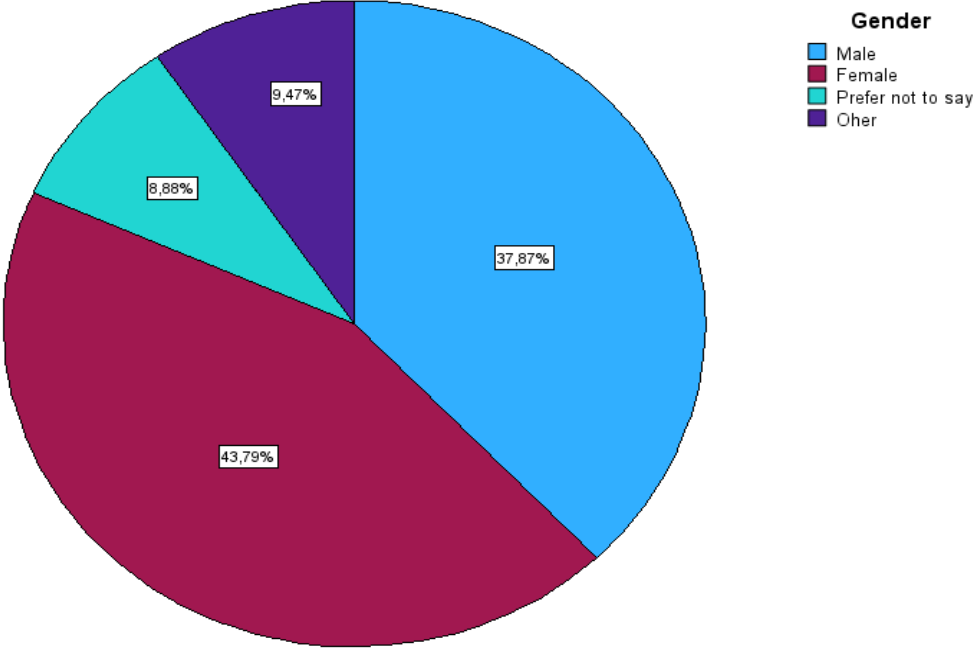
The table above depicts the total survey questionnaires distributed. The researcher received 169 responses, representing a 85% response rate. According to Booker, Austin and Balasubramanian (2021), there is currently no universally agreed-upon standard for determining a high response rate. However, a response rate of 80% or more is often regarded as excellent. High response rates are a crucial characteristic of a high-quality research study as they contribute to the delivery of valid, reliable and prospective observational studies. Therefore, based on the above statement, an 85% response rate is sufficient to present reliable results that are representative of the sample population's views.

### 4.3 DATA ANALYSIS

**4.3.1 Analysis of the demographic information**

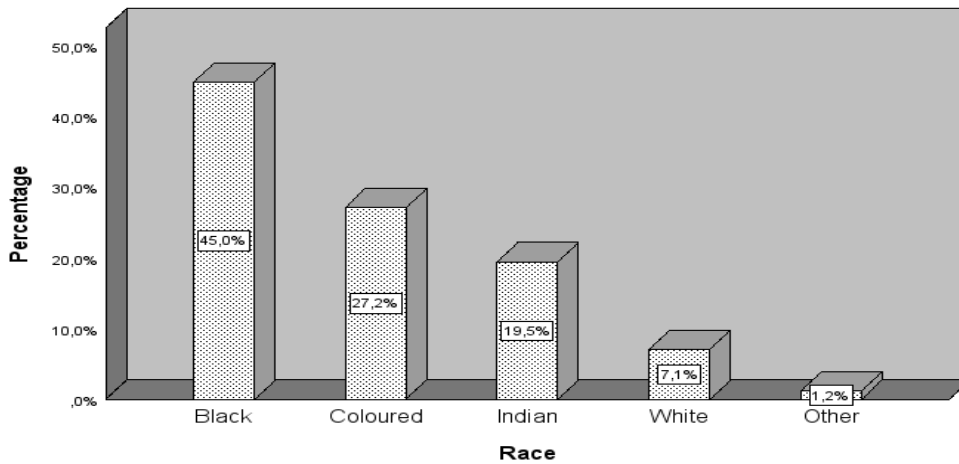
This section summarises the demographic information of the respondents in terms of gender, age group (years), ethnicity and highest level of education.

More females (43.79%) participated in the study than males (37.87%). About 18.35% of the respondents decided not to disclose their gender (Figure 1).



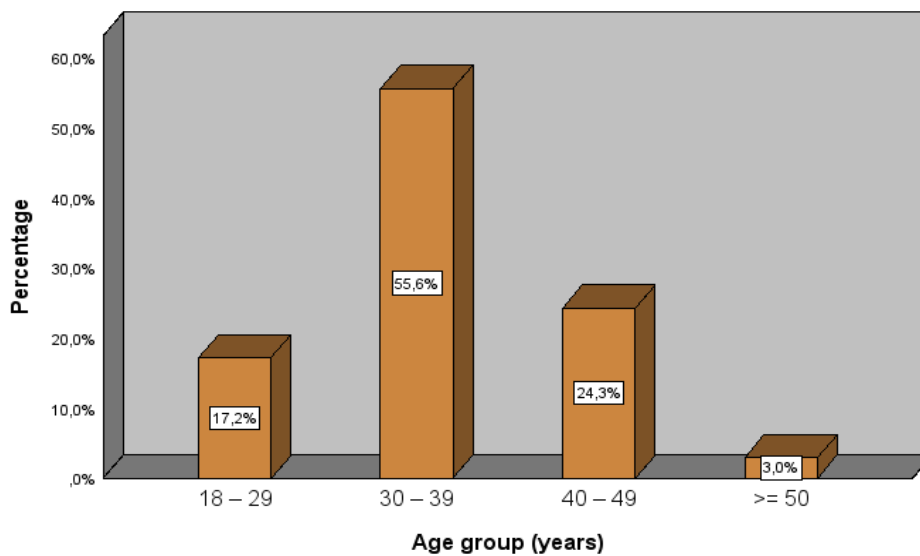
**Figure 4.1: Gender of respondents**

In terms of racial distribution, a majority of respondents (45%) were Blacks, followed by Coloured (27.2%), Indian (19.5%), White (7.1%) and other (1.2%) (Figure 4.2).



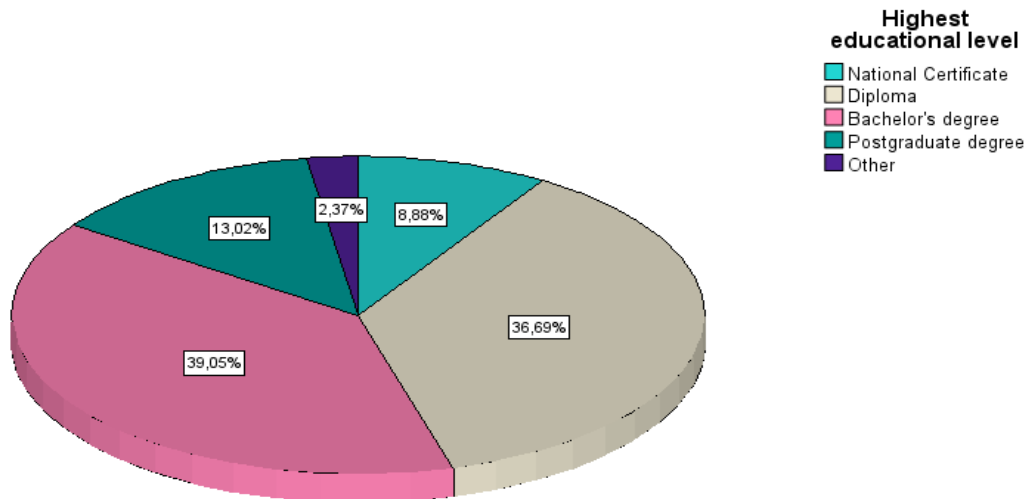
**Figure 4.2: Race of respondents**

The researcher observed that more than half (55.6%) of the respondents were between 30-39 years old, followed by those who were between 40-49 years (24.3%), 18-29 years (17.2%), and 50 years and older (3%) (Figure 4.3).



**Figure 4.3: Age group (years) of respondents**

Figure 4.4 represents the highest level of education achieved by the respondents. The majority reported that they have a Bachelor’s degree (39.05%) and 36.69% indicated that they have diplomas.



**Figure 4.4: Highest education level of the respondents**

Furthermore, the researcher found that 11.8% of the respondents had 0-5 years' work experience; 54.4% had 6-10 years' work experience; 26.6% had 11-15 years' work experience; and 7.1% had more than 15 years of work experience, as seen in Figure 4.5 below.



**Figure 4.5: Work experience of the respondents**

### 4.3.2 Reliability Analysis

This research study examined 38 items using an ordinal measurement scale. The questionnaire was organised into four sections that addressed various themes, as detailed below:

- Section A: Demographic Data
- Section B: Workforce Diversity
- Section C: Employee Performance
- Section D: Leadership Diversity Competence

Section B was further divided into four sub-sections focusing on gender, age, ethnicity, and education diversity. Responses were recorded on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The internal consistency and stability of the constructs were evaluated using Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ), as outlined by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). Reliability refers to the measurement instrument's ability to produce consistent outcomes from identical inputs. A reliability coefficient of 0.6 or higher is deemed "acceptable" for newly developed constructs (Bell et al., 2022; Bougie and Sekaran, 2019; Bagozzi and Yi, 1988).

Table 4.1 presents the Cronbach's alpha scores for all items included in the questionnaire. In each section, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient exceeded the threshold of 0.6, indicating a satisfactory level of consistency and reliability for data analysis. These findings align with the results reported by Weiliang et al. (2011) and Zhuwao (2017).

**Table 4.2: Reliability statistics of the items in the sections**

SECTION		Items	$\alpha$
B. WORKFORCE DIVERSITY	B1. Gender diversity	8	0.763
	B2. Age diversity	4	0.691
	B3. Ethnicity diversity	7	0.716

	<b>B4. Education diversity</b>	7	0.647
<b>C. EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE</b>		10	0.844
<b>D. LEADERSHIP DIVERSITY COMPETENCE</b>		2	0.654
<b>OVERALL</b>		<b>38</b>	<b>0.867</b>

- $\alpha$  = Cronbach's Alpha

### 4.3.3 Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics of the respondents on each of the constructs, namely gender diversity, age diversity, ethnicity diversity, education diversity, employee performance and leadership diversity competence, were used to describe the data. The mean value for the items in Table 4.3 ranged from 2.74 to 3.15. Based on this result, there is an indication that a majority of the respondents disagreed that “the employees have not been discriminated on gender basis by the employer while hiring and recruiting” ( $\bar{x} = 2.74$ ,  $SD = 0.947$ ); “the organization does a good job in attracting and hiring women” ( $\bar{x} = 2.87$ ,  $SD = 0.883$ ); and that “the performance criteria for success are expected to be higher for men than for women” ( $\bar{x} = 2.95$ ,  $SD = 0.969$ ). The results in Table 4.3 further show that most respondents disagreed that “Fair treatment is given to all employees, whether they are male or female” ( $\bar{x} = 3.07$ ,  $SD = 0.884$ ); “Opportunities for growth and advancement exist for women in our organization” ( $\bar{x} = 3.05$ ,  $SD = 0.971$ ); “Women are involved in the organisation’s decision-making as much as men are” ( $\bar{x} = 3.06$ ,  $SD = 1.062$ ); “I am positive about gender diversity in my workplace” ( $\bar{x} = 3.15$ ,  $SD = 0.930$ ); and that “the organisation’s training and development program is developed to meet the requirement of males and females” ( $\bar{x} = 3.10$ ,  $SD = 0.974$ ).

**Table 4.3: Performance with respect to Gender**

	<b>Statements</b>	$\bar{x}$	<b>SD</b>
<b>Q1</b>	The employees have not been discriminated on gender basis by the employer while hiring and recruiting.	2.74	0.947

<b>Q2</b>	The organization does a good job in attracting and hiring women.	2.87	0.883
<b>Q3</b>	Fair treatment is given to all employees, whether they are male or female.	3.07	0.884
<b>Q4</b>	Opportunities for growth and advancement exist for women in our organization.	3.05	0.971
<b>Q5</b>	Women are involved in the organisation's decision-making as much as men are.	3.06	1.062
<b>Q6</b>	The performance criteria for success are expected to be higher for men than for women.	2.95	0.969
<b>Q7</b>	I am positive about gender diversity in my workplace.	3.15	0.930
<b>Q8</b>	The organisation's training and development program is developed to meet the requirement of males and females.	3.10	0.974

- $\bar{x}$  = Mean; **SD** = Standard deviation

Based on the results presented in Table 4.4, the respondents disagreed that “my team leaders include all members at different ages in problem solving and decision-making” ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.05, SD = 0.987); “the age differences in our work group might cause conflict.” ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.10, SD = 0.911); “I experience a lack of bonding with people of different age groups at my workplace” ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.01, SD = 0.929); and “I am positive about age diversity in my workplace” ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.27, SD = 0.863).

**Table 4.4: Performance with respect to Age**

	<b>Statements</b>	$\bar{x}$	<b>SD</b>
<b>Q1</b>	My team leaders include all members at different ages in problem solving and decision-making.	3.05	0.987
<b>Q2</b>	The age differences in our work group might cause conflict.	3.03	0.948

<b>Q3</b>	I experience a lack of bonding with people of different age groups at my workplace.	3.01	0.929
<b>Q4</b>	I am positive about age diversity in my workplace.	3.27	0.863

When one is looking at the results presented in Tables 4.5 to 4.8, one can tell that most of the respondents were disagreeing with the questions asked because the mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) values are all greater than 3.

**Table 4.5: Performance with respect to Ethnicity**

	<b>Statements</b>	$\bar{x}$	<b>SD</b>
<b>Q1</b>	The organization does a good job in attracting and hiring minorities.	3.11	0.97
<b>Q2</b>	Opportunities for growth and advancement exist for minorities in my organization.	3.10	0.911
<b>Q3</b>	The organization is concerned about employees' customs, cultures and values.	3.04	0.966
<b>Q4</b>	Different languages that are used to communicate do not create problems amongst employees.	3.35	0.914
<b>Q5</b>	I developed a low self-esteem due to my ethnicity at my workplace.	3.12	0.959
<b>Q6</b>	The supervisor includes all members of different ethnicities in problem-solving and decision-making.	3.33	0.783
<b>Q7</b>	I am positive about ethnic diversity in my workplace.	3.39	0.92

**Table 4.6: Performance with respect to Education**

	<b>Statements</b>	$\bar{x}$	<b>SD</b>
<b>Q1</b>	The recruitment plan of the organization is based on the educational background of the employees.	3.36	0.948
<b>Q2</b>	The organization provides paid study leave to employees who further their education.	3.41	0.882
<b>Q3</b>	Opportunities for growth and advancement exist for employees who have lower qualifications.	3.38	0.888
<b>Q4</b>	The difference in education levels does not encourage conflict.	3.42	0.753
<b>Q5</b>	I experience a lack of confidence due to my level of education in my workplace.	3.32	0.928
<b>Q6</b>	The supervisor includes all members of different educational levels in problem-solving and decision-making.	3.41	0.890
<b>Q7</b>	The organization gives equal treatment when it comes to educational diversity.	3.33	0.897

**Table 4.7: Central measurement of the construct of employee performance**

	<b>Statements</b>	$\bar{x}$	<b>SD</b>
<b>Q1</b>	I always perform better than what can be characterized as acceptable performance.	3.46	0.802
<b>Q2</b>	I often perform better than what can be expected.	3.50	0.803
<b>Q3</b>	I always reach my performance targets.	3.53	0.809

<b>Q4</b>	I consider my performance better than the average employee in my organization.	3.50	0.765
<b>Q5</b>	Over all, I am a good performer.	3.63	0.662
<b>Q6</b>	I often expend extra effort in carrying out my job.	3.58	0.821
<b>Q7</b>	I feel that my performance is reflective of my abilities.	3.60	0.861
<b>Q8</b>	I try to work as hard as I can.	3.67	0.829
<b>Q9</b>	The quality of my work is superior.	3.55	0.837
<b>Q10</b>	I intentionally expend a great deal of effort in carrying out my job.	3.60	0.781

**Table 4.8: Central measurement of the construct of leadership diversity competence**

	<b>Statements</b>	$\bar{x}$	<b>SD</b>
<b>Q1</b>	My manager is competent to lead a diverse team.	3.78	0.871
<b>Q2</b>	My manager encourages us all to attend diversity training.	3.53	0.824

#### **4.3.4 Inferential Analysis**

In this section, the researcher utilised inferential statistics to examine the hypotheses. Specifically, Pearson’s correlation coefficient (r) and multiple linear regression analysis were employed. Correlation analysis assesses the relationship between two variables, as well as the strength and direction of that relationship (Hair et al., 2007). The correlation coefficient, r, ranges from -1 to 1, where a value of r=1 represents a perfect positive correlation and a value of r=-1 signifies a perfect negative correlation between the variables (Hair et al., 2007).

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the effects of independent variables on a dependent variable. This approach extends simple linear regression by incorporating multiple independent variables (Brynard et al., 2014; Gray, 2014). The rationale for employing multiple linear regression in this study was the presence of multiple predictors. Regression analysis offers the advantage of illustrating the influence of various independent variables on the dependent variable (Carrie and Kevin, 2014).

The results presented in Table 4.9 indicate a significant relationship between ethnicity diversity and education diversity with employee performance ( $r=0.351$ ,  $p\text{-value} < 0.001$  and  $r=0.456$ ,  $p\text{-value} < 0.001$ , respectively). This suggests that increases in both ethnicity and education diversity are associated with enhanced employee performance. However, the correlation between gender diversity and age diversity with employee performance was found to be insignificant. Additionally, the researcher noted significant relationships between age diversity, ethnicity diversity, and education diversity with leadership diversity competence ( $r=0.267$ ,  $p\text{-value} < 0.001$ ;  $r=0.345$ ,  $p\text{-value} < 0.001$ ; and  $r=0.254$ ,  $p\text{-value} < 0.001$ , respectively). Conversely, leadership diversity competence showed no significant correlation with gender diversity (Table 4.9).

**Table 4.9: Correlations**

		Gender diversity	Age diversity	Ethnicity diversity	Education diversity	Employee performance	Leadership competence
Gender diversity	Pearson Correlation	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)						
	N	169					
Age diversity	Pearson Correlation	0.323	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<0.001*					
	N	169	169				
Ethnicity diversity	Pearson Correlation	0.339	0.391	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<0.001*	<0.001*				
	N	169	169	169			

Education diversity	Pearson Correlation	0.225	0.297	0.550	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.003*	<0.001*	<0.001*			
	N	169	169	169	169		
Employee performance	Pearson Correlation	0.056	0.076	0.351	0.456	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.473	0.327	<0.001*	<0.001*		
	N	169	169	169	169	169	
Leadership diversity competence	Pearson Correlation	0.134	0.267	0.345	0.254	0.343	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.083	<0.001*	<0.001*	<0.001*	<0.001*	
	N	169	169	169	169	169	169

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The researcher conducted a multiple linear regression analysis to assess the influence and variability of each independent variable on the dependent variable, which is employee performance. The model summary presented in Table 4.10 indicates a coefficient of determination (R square) value of 0.236. This value reflects that the independent variables—gender diversity, age diversity, ethnicity diversity, and educational diversity—account for 23.6% of the variance in employee performance. Consequently, there remains a 76.4% unexplained variation attributable to other independent variables not included in the model.

**Table 4.10: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Sig.
1	0.486 <sup>a</sup>	0.236	0.218	0.45527	<0.001*

**a. Predictors:** (Constant), workforce diversity (education, gender, age & ethnicity diversity)

**b. Dependent Variable:** Employee performance

The results displayed in Table 4.11 were derived from an analysis of variance evaluating the statistical significance of the regression model, specifically its effectiveness as a descriptor of the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables. The findings indicate that the independent variables—gender diversity, age diversity, ethnicity diversity, and education diversity—significantly account for the variation in the dependent variable, employee performance (F-value = 12.695, p-value < 0.001).

**Table 4.11: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10.525	4	2.631	12.695	<0.001*
	Residual	33.992	164	0.207		
	Total	44.518	168			

The findings presented in Table 4.12 assist in identifying the predictors that have a significant impact on the dependent variable. For this analysis, the standardised coefficient was utilised for interpretation purposes. The constant demonstrated significance (p-value), indicating that the model differs from the null model. This suggests that at least one of the independent variables significantly accounts for the variation in the dependent variable. Education diversity emerged as the most significant predictor of employee performance (Beta = 0.392, p-value < 0.001), followed by ethnicity diversity (Beta = 0.196, p-value = 0.026). Conversely, gender and age diversity did not serve as significant predictors of employee performance.

**Table 4.12: Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2,032	,282		7,207	<,001

Gender diversity	-,060	,065	-,068	-,920	,359
Age diversity	-,073	,059	-,095	-1,247	,214
Ethnicity diversity	,181	,080	,196	2,254	0.026*
Education diversity	,402	,084	,392	4,769	<0.001*

a. Dependent Variable: Employee performance

**Table 4.13: Rank of the standardised coefficient Beta**

<b>Independent variables</b>	<b>Standardized coefficient Beta</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Education diversity	0.392	1
Ethnicity diversity	0.196	2
Gender diversity	-0.068	3
Age diversity	-0.095	4

#### **4.4 SUMMARY**

In this chapter, the researcher conducted a descriptive statistical analysis to assess the response rates across various demographics, including gender, age group, ethnicity, and education level. Additionally, we performed a correlation analysis to examine the relationships and strength between the constructs. The measure of central tendency, specifically the mean, was calculated for each statement to determine the level of agreement or disagreement among respondents.

Furthermore, the researcher executed a regression analysis to evaluate the potential impact of gender diversity, age diversity, ethnicity diversity, and educational diversity on employee performance.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The preceding chapter presented findings and discussions from the responses provided by the study participants on the distributed study survey questionnaires. The questions on the questionnaires sought to address the following objectives: (1) To establish the general relationship between diversity in the workplace and employee performance; (2) To identify the diversity aspects that have a significant effect on employee performance; and (3) To examine whether eThekweni Municipality is recruiting a diverse workforce for legislative compliance or for organisational value.

This chapter will present the study's conclusions, provide recommendations based on the findings, discuss the study's objectives, the study limitations and proffer the basis for future research.

### **5.2 FINDINGS SUMMARY**

The overall aim of the study was to examine the influence of workplace diversity on employee performance in the Electricity division of eThekweni Municipality. The post-1994 South African government designed legislation prescribing targets for workplace diversity transformation. Many companies have complied with legislation. However, the prevailing situation is that these diversity initiatives are not properly managed by companies, which has the potential to bring about unhealthy work environments that affect employee performance. This study then sought to ascertain the employees' perceptions of the way that workplace diversity initiatives have affected their performance at work. The eThekweni Municipality's Electricity department was used as the study site. A quantitative research methodology was employed in this study and data was collected using survey questionnaires.

The findings revealed an existing general relationship between workplace diversity and employee performance. The diversity aspects examined in this study revealed that education and ethnicity diversity factors have a strong relationship with employee performance, while gender and age diversity aspects proved less impactful on employee performance. This chapter then provides conclusions and documents the researcher's recommendations for eThekweni

Municipality to consider for a more focused workplace diversity management in order to maintain a healthy work environment and as a result improve employee performance, which will further translate to improved service delivery.

### **5.3 RESULTS OF THE STUDY'S OBJECTIVES**

The findings of the research objectives are revisited below:

#### **5.3.1 Objective 1: To establish the general relationship between diversity in the workplace and employee performance**

The results presented and discussed in the previous chapter indicated that the multiple linear regression analysis performed showed a general relationship between the independent variable (diversity) and the dependant variable (employee performance). However, the independent variable explained the variation in the dependant variable by only 23.6% and an R square value of 0.236, thus leaving out 76.4% as being unexplained. This means that there are other independent variables that were not considered in this study that prove rather significant in explaining the dependant variable. The objective has been met as the overall result reveals a general relationship between the diversity (age, gender, ethnicity and education) aspects and employee performance.

These findings are in line with the findings of the 2019 study by Andoh, Ghansah, Okogun-Odompley and Benuwa, that investigated how workplace diversity influences the relationship between employee and performance, which amongst other things revealed that workplace diversity has a general impact on employee performance.

#### **5.3.2 Objective 2: To identify the diversity aspects that have a significant effect on employee performance**

This study considered four diversity aspects (age, gender, ethnicity and education) and measured their effects on the dependant variable (employee performance). The Pearson's correlation coefficient was utilised to indicate the path, strength and the level of significance of the relationship between the variables. According to Williams, Halloin, Löbel, Finklea, Lipke, Zweigert and

Cremašchi (2020), the Pearson's correlation co-efficient is referred to as an correlation coefficient (r-value) and has a value between -1 to 1, with a value of -1 meaning a total negative linear correlation; 0 being no correlation; and + 1 meaning a total positive correlation. The p-value is based on a 99% confidence interval, which then means that if the P-value is lower than 0.01 ( $p < 0.01$ ), it is regarded as significant (Zhuwao, 2017).

The findings presented in Chapter 4 indicate a significant relationship between both ethnic diversity and educational diversity with employee performance, evidenced by correlation coefficients of  $r=0.351$  ( $p\text{-value} < 0.001$ ) and  $r=0.456$  ( $p\text{-value} < 0.001$ ), respectively. This suggests that increases in ethnic and educational diversity correspond with improvements in employee performance. In contrast, age diversity and gender diversity demonstrated insignificant correlations with employee performance, with coefficients of  $r=0.076$  ( $p\text{-value} < 0.327$ ) and  $r=0.056$  ( $p\text{-value} < 0.473$ ), respectively. Consequently, this objective has been achieved, as ethnic and educational diversity have been identified as significant factors affecting employee performance.

These results present a partial contradiction to the research conducted by Ahmad and Rahman (2019), which explored the effects of workplace diversity on employee performance. Their study incorporated various diversity factors, including age, gender, ethnicity, and experience. Although they found a relationship between these diversity dimensions and employee performance, they reported negative correlations specifically concerning age diversity, gender diversity, and ethnic diversity, while experience diversity was associated with positive effects on performance.

This contrasts with the current study, which found that all diversity dimensions examined—age, gender, ethnicity, and education—exhibited positive relationships with employee performance, albeit with varying degrees of significance.

However, the results align with those of Zhuwao (2017), who investigated the impact of workplace diversity on employee performance at a university in South Africa. Their findings revealed significant correlations between gender diversity, ethnic diversity, and educational diversity with employee performance, and indicated no substantial correlation between age diversity and employee performance.

### **5.3.3 Objective 3: To examine whether eThekwini Municipality is recruiting a diverse workforce for legislative compliance or for organisational value**

The aim of the third objective was to seek the employees' perspective on the competence of management in terms of recruiting and managing a diverse workforce for organisational benefit. The results presented in Chapter 4, Table 4.7 have mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) values that are all greater than 3, which means that the employees disagreed with the statements on the questionnaire: "My manager is competent to lead a diverse team" ( $\bar{x}$  =3.78) and "My manager encourages us all to attend diversity training" ( $\bar{x}$  =3.53).

The results above revealed that the employees disagreed with the notion that their leaders are competent to lead a diverse workforce. This objective has been met as the employees believe that eThekwini Municipality is recruiting a diverse workforce for legislative compliance, as opposed to recruiting for organisational value.

In Chapter 2, the researcher discussed that poorly managed diversity has a substantial impact on the company's performance. The presence of diversity in the workplace is not enough to enhance team performance. In addition to recruiting a diverse workforce, the leadership must engage in a deliberate process aimed at establishing and sustaining a favourable work environment that appreciates the unique characteristics and backgrounds of individuals. In order for this to be achieved, management must be proficient in the area of workplace diversity management. The perceptions of the eThekwini Electricity employees reveal that there exists a diverse workforce and leadership, but diversity aspects of the diverse workforce that exist have not been identified and used to formulate strategies to manage diversity and aid the organisation to maintain a healthy and inclusive work environment.

## **5.4 THE STUDY'S LIMITATIONS**

The limitations below were identified by the researcher.

### **5.4.1 Limitations of the study's findings**

The participants in this study were specifically selected from the Electricity division of the eThekweni Municipality due to its critical impact on the municipality's service delivery. Additionally, given the time constraints, conducting the survey across the entire municipality, which has over 22,000 employees, would have been impractical. The MV/LV operations department represents a relevant demographic for this study, showcasing a diverse range of age, ethnicity, gender, and educational backgrounds. While it would have been advantageous to collect insights from the entire municipality, the constraints in time and personnel rendered this approach unfeasible. Consequently, these limitations suggest that the findings of the study may not be applicable to other departments and clusters within the municipality.

### **5.4.2 The study's sample size**

The sample size for the questionnaire was determined based on the department's demographic strata representation. A total of 169 responses were obtained from the distribution of 200 questionnaires. While the survey received 169 responses, which is sufficient for drawing meaningful conclusions, the fact that the full 200 responses were not obtained indicates that the demographic groups are not adequately represented in terms of numbers.

## **5.5 THE STUDY'S IMPLICATIONS**

Numerous studies conducted on diversity and employee performance have suggested that the effective management of workplace diversity is a critical factor in leveraging the advantages of a diverse workforce for the organisations' enhanced performance. This study will contribute to the body of knowledge by clearly outlining the specific diversity aspects that the eThekweni Municipality's Electricity department must focus on in formulating their workplace diversity management strategies. Moreover, the Social Identity Theory proposed by Trajfel and Turner (1979) has made it possible to clarify how perceptual processes led to the formation of social

stereotypes and biases by individual groups. The theory further outlines the mechanisms via which social identity can have an effect on intergroup behaviour. The understanding of this theory provides leadership with insights into why certain groups behave and provide direction in terms of the diversity aspects to explore when managing diversity at work.

## **5.6 THE STUDY'S RECOMMENDATIONS**

From the empirical data and the findings' discussions, the following recommendations are suggested:

The study recommends that the executive leadership of the eThekweni Municipality's Electricity department incorporates workplace diversity management into their business plan. They should recommend to the city's administration that workplace diversity management be added as an extension to the current affirmative action policy.

The study also suggests that the municipality should maintain its efforts to recruit a diverse workforce and prioritise the management of education and ethnicity diversity, as the results of this investigation have demonstrated a significant and positive correlation between these diversity factors and employee performance.

South Africa has a total of 11 official languages. To prevent conflicts caused by miscommunication or breakdowns in communication, the municipality should recommend using one or two languages that are commonly spoken in the province where the municipality is located as the languages to be used in the workplace. Additionally, it is recommended that they offer language courses for employees who wish to receive formal education in a language that is not their native tongue but that has been designated as one of the languages to be used in the workplace.

## **5.7 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The author proposes that future research of a similar nature should be carried out utilising a qualitative methodology. This may contribute to the existing body of knowledge by providing

further advice and ideas for effectively managing diversity and gaining a deeper understanding of the biases and cultural differences amongst various groups of individuals.

The author recommends considering an expansion of the study site to include the entire municipality in future research. This would enable a wider audience and potentially offer a more thorough understanding of the relationship between diversity factors and employee performance. Additionally, it would facilitate a deeper exploration of the issue regarding whether recruitment efforts are aimed at organizational benefit or primarily for compliance with legislative requirements.

## **5.8 SUMMARY**

This chapter included a concise summary of the study findings, discussed the objectives, the study's implications; and made recommendations and suggestions for further research. In conclusion, the author believes that while the eThekweni Municipality Electricity department has adhered to affirmative action policies, it has not fully capitalised on the benefits of workplace diversity due to inadequate focus on workplace diversity management. The performance of the municipality's employees can be enhanced if the management implements the recommendations proposed by the author of this study.

This study recommends that the municipality prioritize two key components of diversity: ethnicity and education. Evidence indicates that these factors are significantly associated with employee performance and should be central to the municipality's diversity management strategies. By focusing on these areas, the municipality can enhance overall performance, leading to improved service delivery. It is also essential to recognize the importance of age and gender diversity, as these elements have been correlated with employee performance in this study, albeit to a lesser degree. Furthermore, the municipality should integrate diversity management into its affirmative action policies to formalize and strengthen its commitment to training and managing diversity in the workplace.

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# APPENDIX A: ETHICS COMMITTEE CLEARANCE LETTER



Institutional Research Ethics Committee  
Research and Postgraduate Support Directorate  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Berwyn Court  
Gate 1, Steve Biko Campus  
Durban University of Technology

P O Box 1334, Durban, South Africa, 4001

Tel: 031 373 2375  
Email: [lvishad@dut.ac.za](mailto:lvishad@dut.ac.za)  
[http://www.dut.ac.za/research/institutional\\_research\\_ethics](http://www.dut.ac.za/research/institutional_research_ethics)  
[www.dut.ac.za](http://www.dut.ac.za)

11 April 2024

Mr S A M Ntuli  
228 Murray Road  
38 Penny Lane  
Lincoln Mead  
Pietermaritzburg  
3201

Dear Mr Ntuli

**The influence of workplace diversity on employee performance: a case study of the Electricity Division at the eThekweni Municipality**  
**Ethics Clearance Number: IREC 247/23**

The DUT-Institutional Research Ethics Committee acknowledges receipt of your notification regarding the piloting of your data collection tool.

Kindly ensure that participants used for the pilot study are not part of the main study.

In addition, the DUT-IREC acknowledges receipt of your gatekeeper permission letter.

Please note that **FULL APPROVAL** is granted to your research proposal. You may proceed with data collection.

Any adverse events [serious or minor] which occur in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration must be reported to the DUT-IREC according to the DUT-IREC SOP's.

Please note that any deviations from the approved proposal require the approval of the DUT-IREC as outlined in the DUT-IREC SOP's.

**It is compulsory for a student or researcher to apply for recertification on an annual basis. The failure to do so will result in withdrawal of ethics clearance. It is the responsibility of the researcher and the supervisor to apply for recertification.**

**Please note that you are required to submit a Notification of Completion of Study form together with an abstract to the DUT-IREC office on completion of your study.**

Yours Sincerely

\_\_\_\_\_  
Prof J K Adam  
Chairperson: DUT-IREC

# APPENDIX B: THE GATEKEEPER'S LETTER OF APPROVAL

**ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY**  
**Trading Services**  
**MV/LV Operations (Electricity)**

1 Jelf Taylor Crescent  
Durban 4001  
PO Box 147  
Durban 4000  
Tel: (031) 311 1111



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15 March 2024

ATT: Chairperson: Prof J.K Adam  
**Institutional Research Ethics Committee**  
Research and Postgraduate Support Directorate  
2nd Floor, Berwyn Court  
Gate 1, Steve Biko Campus  
Durban University of Technology  
P O Box 1334, Durban, South Africa, 4001

RE: GATEKEEPER'S LETTER FOR MR S.A.M NTULI-STUDENT NUMBER 20402885: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

The Electricity MV/LV Operations Division - eThekweni Municipality has acceded to the request from Mr Sizwe Ntuli to use eThekweni Electricity MV/LV Operations Department as a research study site in fulfilment of the degree of Master of Business administration (MBA), under the title, "The Influence of workplace diversity on employee performance: A case study of the Electricity division in eThekweni Municipality".

We are pleased to inform you that his request has been approved. The student is reminded of the ethical considerations he must consider when researching. In return, we require that the student make the results and recommendations available to our unit upon completion.

We wish Mr Ntuli all the best in his studies.

**Yours Sincerely,**

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Ms Luntu Mthethwa - Pr. Eng, GCC  
(Act) Deputy Head: Electricity Unit  
MV/LV Operations  
Tel: 031-3119172  
E-Mail: Luntu.Mthethwa@durban.gov.za

# APPENDIX C: THE MEASURING INSTRUMENT



## **The influence of workplace diversity on employee performance: a case study of the Electricity Division at the eThekweni Municipality**

My name is Sizwe Ntuli, a Master of Business Administration (MBA) student at the Durban University of Technology. I am conducting research on the influence of workplace diversity on employee performance in the Electricity division of eThekweni municipality. This survey collects data that will assist the municipality in learning more about the diversity aspects that negatively and positively affect the performance of the employees. As a result, it will provide the municipality with an opportunity to develop measures to mitigate or manage these aspects for improved service delivery through improved employee performance. The survey is divided into four sections. Section A collects biographical information of the respondents, while section B contains questions on the employees' perception of diversity, its relevance to them as employees, Section C's questions asks whether diversity adds value to their performance and Section D asks about their perception on the calibre of people who are hired into leadership roles. Kindly note that all information collected will be used for academic purposes only and all personal information will be treated confidentially.

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/2024

Place: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please take some time to answer the following questions as truthful as possible.**

### **SECTION A: SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

#### **1. Gender**

Tick the correct box below.

- Male
- Female
- Other
  
- Prefer not to say

## 2. Age

Tick the correct box below. 18

- 29 years
- 30 – 39 years
- 40 – 49 years
- 50 years and older

## 3. Ethnicity

Tick the correct box below.

- Black
- Coloured
- Indian
- White
- Other

## 4. Educational level

Tick the correct box below.

- National Certificate
- Diploma
- Bachelor's degree
- Postgraduate degree
- Other

If Other, please specify:

---

## 5. Work Experience

Tick the correct box below.

- 0 – 5 years
- 6 – 10 years
- 11 – 15 years
- More than 15 years

**SECTION B: WORKFORCE DIVERSITY**

<b>1 = strongly disagree</b>	<b>2 = disagree</b>	<b>3 = Neutral</b>	<b>4 = Agree</b>	<b>5 = Strongly agree</b>
------------------------------	---------------------	--------------------	------------------	---------------------------

<b>No</b>	<b>GENDER</b>	<b>SCALE</b>				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	The employees have not been discriminated on gender basis by the employer while hiring and recruiting.	1	2	3	4	5
2	The organization does a good job in attracting and hiring women.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Fair treatment is given to all employees, whether they are male or female.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Opportunities for growth and advancement exist for women in our organization.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Women are involved in the organisation’s decision-making as much as men are.	1	2	3	4	5

6	The performance criteria for success are expected to be higher for men than for women.	1	2	3	4	5
7	I am positive about gender diversity in my workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
8	The organisation's training and development program is developed to meet the requirement of males and females.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>No</b>	<b>AGE</b>	<b>SCALE</b>				
9	My team leaders include all members at different ages in problem solving and decision-making.	1	2	3	4	5
10	The age differences in our work group might cause conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
11	I experience a lack of bonding with people of different age groups at my workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
12	I am positive about age diversity in my workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>No</b>	<b>ETHNICITY</b>	<b>SCALE</b>				
13	The organization does a good job in attracting and hiring minorities.	1	2	3	4	5

14	Opportunities for growth and advancement exist for minorities in my organization.	1	2	3	4	5
15	The organization is concerned about employees' customs, cultures and values.	1	2	3	4	5
16	Different languages that are used to communicate do not create problems amongst employees.	1	2	3	4	5
17	I developed a low self-esteem due to my ethnicity at my workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
18	The supervisor includes all members of different ethnicities in problem-solving and decision-making.	1	2	3	4	5
19	I am positive about ethnic diversity in my workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>No</b>	<b>EDUCATION</b>	<b>SCALE</b>				
20	The recruitment plan of the organization is based on the educational background of the employees.	1	2	3	4	5
21	The organization provides paid study leave to employees who further their education.	1	2	3	4	5
22	Opportunities for growth and advancement exist for employees who have lower qualifications.	1	2	3	4	5

23	The difference in education levels does not encourage conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
24	I experience a lack of confidence due to my level of education in my workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
25	The supervisor includes all members of different educational levels in problem-solving and decision-making.	1	2	3	4	5
26	The organization gives equal treatment when it comes to educational diversity.	1	2	3	4	5

### SECTION C: EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

<b>1 = strongly disagree</b>	<b>2 = disagree</b>	<b>3 = Neutral</b>	<b>4 = Agree</b>	<b>5 = Strongly agree</b>
------------------------------	---------------------	--------------------	------------------	---------------------------

<b>No</b>	<b>STATEMENT</b>	<b>SCALE</b>				
		1	2	3	4	5
27	I always perform better than what can be characterized as acceptable performance.	1	2	3	4	5
28	I often perform better than what can be expected.	1	2	3	4	5

29	I always reach my performance targets.	1	2	3	4	5
30	I consider my performance better than the average employee in my organization.	1	2	3	4	5
31	Over all, I am a good performer.	1	2	3	4	5
32	I often expend extra effort in carrying out my job.	1	2	3	4	5
33	I feel that my performance is reflective of my abilities.	1	2	3	4	5
34	I try to work as hard as I can.	1	2	3	4	5
35	The quality of my work is superior.	1	2	3	4	5
36	I intentionally expend a great deal of effort in carrying out my job.	1	2	3	4	5

## SECTION D: LEADERSHIP DIVERSITY COMPETENCE

<b>1 = strongly disagree</b>	<b>2 = disagree</b>	<b>3 = Neutral</b>	<b>4 = Agree</b>	<b>5 = Strongly agree</b>
------------------------------	---------------------	--------------------	------------------	---------------------------

<b>No</b>	<b>STATEMENT</b>	<b>SCALE</b>				
		1	2	3	4	5
37	My manager is competent to lead a diverse team.	1	2	3	4	5
38	My manager encourages us all to attend diversity training.	1	2	3	4	5

## **APPENDIX D: STATISTICIAN CERTIFICATE**

To whom it may concern

I am Dr Sizwe V. Mbona, a statistics lecturer at the Durban University of Technology (DUT).

This letter serves to confirm that I did data analysis for the research study by Sizwe Ntuli.

02/09/2024

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Signature

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Date

# APPENDIX E: LANGUAGE EDITOR'S CERTIFICATE

## EDITING LETTER

696 Clare Road

Clare Estate

Durban

4091

21 October 2024

To: Whom it may concern

**Editing of Dissertation: Sizwe Andile Mhlengi Ntuli**

**The influence of workplace diversity on employee performance: A case study of the Electricity division in eThekweni Municipality**

This letter serves as confirmation that the aforementioned dissertation has been language edited. The requisite grammatical conventions have been met/recommended. Suggestions have been made to the candidate where necessary.

Any queries may be directed to the author of this letter.

Regards

MP MATHEWS

Lecturer and Language Editor

[Mercimathews4@gmail.com](mailto:Mercimathews4@gmail.com)

083 676 4778

## APPENDIX F: PLAGIARISM REPORT

The influence of workplace diversity on employee performance: A case study of the Electricity division at eThekweni Municipality

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