EMPLOYEE RESPONSE TO UNFAIR DISCRIMINATION BY IMMEDIATE SUPERVISORS

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Masebole Paul Nthelebovu declare that the mini-dissertation hereby submitted in partial fulfilment of the Masters Degree in Business Administration is my own work and has not been previously submitted by me for any degree at any University. It is my own work in design and execution. The material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

Signature

Date

18/09/2012
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ABSTRACT
The relationship between an immediate supervisor and an employee is of critical importance in employment relations. This relationship should be founded on trust in order to ensure job satisfaction and productivity. Unfair discrimination is prohibited in South African organisations, and is therefore legally and socially unacceptable. Unfair discrimination by immediate supervisors could lead to lower levels of job satisfaction and other negative forms of work behaviour. Employees who are exposed to unfair discrimination can respond in a number of formal and informal ways. South African labour laws allow for a number of informal and formal procedures for dispute resolution in the workplace, including unfair discrimination disputes. This study investigated white collar employee intended response to unfair discrimination by immediate supervisors. It was found that they will generally resolve such problems through direct communication with supervisors, before invoking more formal procedures. There were no significant differences in intended response of employees from different gender and age groups, but significant differences in the intensity of intended responses of people from different race groups were found.
# TABLES OF CONTENTS

## CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT  1
1.1 Introduction  1
1.2 Nature of the problem  2
1.3 Research objectives  4
1.3.1 Demarcation  4
1.3.2 Limitations  4
1.4 Overview dissertation  5

## CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW  6
2.1 Introduction  6
2.2 Supervision  6
2.2.1 Definition of management and supervision  6
2.2.2 Nature and role of supervision  8
2.2.3 Guidelines for effective supervision  11
2.2.4 The effect of poor supervision  14
2.3 Unfair workplace discrimination  18
2.3.1 Definition  18
2.3.2 Fair and unfair discrimination  19
2.3.3 Dealing with unfair workplace discrimination  19
2.4 The law and unfair discrimination  20
2.4.1 The Constitution of South Africa ((108 of 1996)  20
2.4.2 The Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998)  22
2.4.3 The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination  22
Act (4 of 2000)

2.4.4 Legal implications of unfair workplace discrimination

2.5 Employee response to unfair workplace discrimination

2.5.1 Employment relations at workplace level

2.5.2 Employee response options

2.5.2.1 Ignore a problem

2.5.2.2 Complain to friends and family

2.5.2.3 Request supervisor to stop behaviour

2.5.2.4 File a formal grievance

2.5.2.5 CCMA disputes

2.5.2.6 Resignation

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Research Design

3.3 Sampling

3.3.1 Using secondary data

3.3.2 Advantages and disadvantages of questionnaires

3.3.3 Sample characteristics

3.4 Research instruments

3.4.1 Questionnaires

3.4.2 Research questionnaire

3.4.3 Data selected for this research

3.5 Data analysis

3.6 Statistical testing

3.7 Hypotheses

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Intensity of intended response to unfair discrimination

4.3 Differences intended response to unfair discrimination
4.3.1 Age 46
4.3.2 Gender 47
4.3.3 Race A – African compared to other groups 48
4.3.4 Race B – White compared to other groups 49
4.4 Summary 49

CHAPTER FIVE 50
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 50
5.1 Introduction 50
5.2 Significance of general findings on general response 51
5.3 Significance of findings on age, gender and race 52
5.4 Concluding remarks 53
References 54
Annexure A 59
Annexure B 61
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RSA</td>
<td>Republic of South Africa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEA</td>
<td>Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCMA</td>
<td>Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SARS</td>
<td>South African Revenue Services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBA</td>
<td>Masters of Business Administration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Intensity of employee response to inequitable treatment. 27
Table 2. Sample Characteristics. 36
Table 3. Mann-Whitney Grouping Variables. 43
Table 4. Intensity of employee response to unfair discrimination 46

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 5. Mean response of different age groups. 47
Figure 6. Mean response of different gender groups 47
Figure 7. Mean response of African and other race groups. 48
Figure 8. Mean response of whites and other race groups. 49
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1 Introduction

The dawn of Democracy in South Africa in 1994 brought enlightenment and new expectations to the people of South Africa. All institutions in the public and private sector are now expected to be democratised and to ensure fair and equitable treatment of all employees. Unfair discrimination in the workplace, however, remains a major problem in most South African organisations. It has negative implications for employee satisfaction, performance and productivity. This in turn leads to poor organizational performance, and often causes formal grievances and labour disputes which are not in the best interest of the employee or the employer.

South African employees are specifically protected against many forms of unfair discrimination in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the Employment Equity Act. The Employment Equity Act further places a positive obligation on all employers to promote equality in the workplace by eliminating unfair discrimination in any employment policy or practice.
Immediate supervisors perform a very important function in workplace employment relations. They become the face of employers when they interact with subordinates, and should therefore be aware of, and respect the laws and principles that are related to unfair discrimination in the workplace. The behaviour of supervisors charts the workplace behaviour of the employees that report to them. Organisations would therefore benefit from the positive behaviour of supervisors and be detrimentally affected by negative supervisory behaviour Robbins and Judge (2011). Immediate supervisor relations should therefore be an important focus area in all modern organisations. Unfortunately, many South African supervisors and subordinates lack knowledge, appreciation and sensitivity for fair discriminatory practices, and subsequently many labour disputes arise because of unfair discrimination against subordinates by their supervisors. Organisations should ensure that unfair discriminatory practices are identified and eradicated, in order to promote harmonious employment relations and productivity in organisations.

1.2 Nature of the Problem

Unfair Discrimination can take many forms. The CCMA (2011) defines unfair discrimination as “any employer’s policy or practice showing favour, prejudice or bias against employees on any arbitrary grounds, for example on the basis race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, family responsibility, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age
disability, religion, HIV status, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, and language and which is not fair can be deemed to be unfair discrimination."

Unfair workplace discrimination is an undesirable behaviour form in all South African workplaces. Many employees endure unfair discrimination in silence due to lack of knowledge of their rights, or for fear of victimisation or loss of a job, in the face of employment. Other employees will choose to resign from a job if they are dissatisfied with the employment conditions. In terms of South African labour laws, employees may adopt a variety of interpersonal, organisational and statutory prescribed dispute resolution procedures to resolve unfavourable experiences or conditions in employment relationships (Bendix, 2010, Finnemore, 2009, and Nel et al., 2008).

The author believes that all forms of unfair discrimination should be eradicated from South African organisations, and that all employees should be informed on their rights and response options in this regard. This dissertation is written in the hope that it will contribute to the knowledge and understanding related to the nature of unfair discrimination in South African workplaces, and intended employee response to unfair discrimination by immediate supervisors.
1.3 Research Objectives

1.3.1 Demarcation

The purpose of this study is to discuss the findings that were made after a related literature review and research project that was conducted in order to answer the following research questions:

a) How will a group of typical South African white collar employees intend to respond to unfair discrimination by immediate supervisors?

b) Will sub-groupings within a group of South African white collar employees intend to respond differently to unfair discrimination by immediate supervisors, if they are of different age, race, gender, qualifications, sector and position?

1.3.2 Limitations

The sample group comprised of white collar employees in managerial or specialist jobs mainly in Gauteng and the North West Province. No intended responses of employees in blue collar jobs were considered in this study. These limitations may be addressed in future research.

Most South African organisations do not keep accurate records of employment relations conditions and behaviour, and do not want to share sensitive information in this respect on ethical and legal grounds. The researcher could subsequently not access data on actual
behaviour, and had responses obtained through application of a research instrument that measured intended responses to unfavourable employment relations conditions.

The researcher therefore had to make the assumption that there is a significant relationship between intended and actual employee responses for purposes of this paper.

1.4 Overview of Dissertation

This dissertation has been structured in five chapters. Chapter one provides an introductory discussion of the research problem. Chapter two contains a literature review dealing with the nature of immediate supervision, and related aspects of unfair workplace discrimination.

Chapter three provides an overview of the research methodology, and in chapter four research findings are discussed in detail. Chapter five contains specific conclusions and recommendations that were deducted from the literature review and research findings.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The relationship between employers and employees have been widely researched over the years. This includes abusive supervision and unfair discrimination by immediate supervisors. This chapter is a review of some of the relevant literature that will be dealing with supervision, unfair workplace discrimination and employee response to unfair workplace discrimination.

2.2 Supervision

2.2.1 Definition of management and supervision

The concepts of management and supervision are closely related. Supervision is one of the fundamental functions of most managers. It is very important to understand the duties and roles of managers within organisations in order to understand what management is all about. Robbins and Judge (2011) state that managers within the organization get things done through other people. They make the decisions, allocate resources, and direct the activities of other people to attain goals.
Organisations exist to attain a particular goal. It must be mentioned that in the workplace the relationships especially in South Africa are characterised by a multitude of biographical and behavioural differences Coetzee (2005). It is the primary duty of the managers to ensure that organisations attain their goals and more so importantly through other people. Rao (2009) defines management as the process of reaching organisation goals by working with and through people and other organisational resources. In management there are managers which according to Schermerhorn, Hunt, and Osborn (2000) are concerned with getting important things done timely, high quality and personally satisfying ways. In the organisation this is done through supporting and helping. In the new workplace the role of the managers is linked to "coordinator", "coach" or "team leader".

Different authors agree that the major function of managers centres around, planning, organising, leading and controlling. Rao (2009) states that a manager is a person who plans, organises, leads and control the allocation of human, material, financial and information resources in pursuit of the organisation's goal. From this definition it can be concluded that people are a very critical and important resource in the attainment of organisational goals. As such it is very essential that this resource should be lead, controlled, and coached among others. This is the responsibility of the managers. Supervision remains
one of the most important activities that the ensure that human
resource carries out its expected duties in the organisation.
Burton (1930) as quoted in Khan, Qureshi, Ahmad (2010) explain that
“supervision” gives right direction to the people, under supervision;
enable them to take initiatives, to take responsibilities and to go ahead
on their own among others. One aspect of supervision is to train these
people, correct them, tell them what to do and also bring improvement
in their deficiencies in service.

2.2.2 The nature and role of supervision

Supervisors play an important role in the workplace. Their fundamental
function is to see that the work performed by the employees is
completed on time and at the highest level of quality. For them to
achieve this job, they must know the production process and have an
understanding of human behaviour Tepper (2000). Supervisors
perform a wide range of functions, all of which are closely intertwined.
They must be able to communicate well, write reports, letters, memos;
performance appraisals and the documents that the business need to
operate. Generally, the supervisors must be able to liaise with every
stake-holder of the organisation. They are the well-rounded employees
who are willing to accept the responsibilities required to keep a
company running.

According to Khan et al. (2010), different approaches could be used in
supervision to give strength and accurate direction to employees’
performance that the task may be efficiently and effectively performed. Khan et al. (2010) mentions the participative-management which is used by supervisors to highlight the poor performance by their subordinates. The other approach is the pay-for-performance approach which is used in order to enhance the employee's performance. They further talk about the effective managers which are supervisors, saying that they have the ability to motivate their subordinates, seeking information regarding their subordinate's work. From time to time they should find out how their subordinates are doing. They should check on the employee's work and in their observation give them feedback be it negative or positive regarding their performance. They must be able to enhance their performance through right direction, as Komaki (1994) states as quoted in Khan et al. (2010).

Bronda (2007) mentions the following levels of supervision received and exercised by positions in the various classes of work:

a) Direct Supervision: Characteristics of this type of supervision are the assignments of tasks; the observance, review, and evaluation of performance; the administration of line personnel functions (e.g., selection, discipline, grievances, privileges); and the responsibility for the worker, as well as the work.

b) Immediate Supervision: The employee works in the presence of his/her supervisor or in a close situation of close control and easy reference.
C) General Supervision: Assigned duties require the exercise of judgement or choice among possible actions, sometimes without clear precedents and with concern for the consequences of the action.

d) Direction: The employee receives the general instructions regarding the scope of and approach to projects or assignments, but procedures and techniques are left to the discretion of the employee.

e) Indirect Supervision: It is characterised by some form of authority over the work of an employee not under direct supervision.

f) Technical Supervision: The supervisor is responsible for prescribing procedures, methods, materials, and formats as a technical expert in speciality

g) Functional Supervision: The supervisor is responsible for a project or recurrent activities that involve tasks performed by persons over whom she/he has authority to give direction in regard to that project or activity, even though they are under the direct supervision of someone else.

From the definition and roles of managers and supervisors by various authors, it can be understood that supervision is the responsibility of
the lower level managers which are attached to production and who are in direct interaction with the employees.

2.2.3 Guidelines for effective supervision

The effectiveness supervision as one of the fundamental duties of a manager, its effectiveness should be judged on the basis of its ability to enable the organisation to attain its goal. Effectiveness of supervision is determined by managerial effectiveness. Rao (2009) refers to managerial effectiveness as management's use of organisational resources in meeting organisational goals. The closer an organisation comes to achieving its goals, the more effective its managers are considered to be. Supervision being critical and key to managerial duties, it is ideal that it should be such that it enables the employees to assist in the achievement of organisational goals. Luthans (2011) states that Leaders should be sensitive to differences among the people they lead in order to prevent miscommunication, misunderstanding and conflict. They unfortunately often struggle in dealing with workplace diversity, since they are uncertain on how to respond to various challenges, due to lack of knowledge or related experience.

Robbins et al. (2011) say a good supervision is the one that in which a supervisor provides emotional and technical support and guidance with work related tasks. It is a wish for every employee to be supervised by an effective supervisor and in the same breath it is the wish of every
organisation to have effective supervisors that would supervise their workforce. According to Tepper (2007), most researchers understand the effectiveness of a supervisor by identifying the supervisor characteristics and behaviours that are associated with favourable outcomes such as: high motivation, high individual and group performance, favourable attitude towards the job, organisation and leader. The aforementioned outcomes are the envy of every organisation to have from their workforce. They are the yardstick and guidelines for an effective supervision.

Various authors and researchers have written about effective supervision and its guidelines. Barney (1991) as quoted in Khan et al. (2010) says that the employees are the key resource for any firm, for this reason it becomes very important for this resource to be supervised effectively. Lusch and Serkenci (1990) as quoted in Khan et al. (2010) stressed on the effective management of these resources for competitive market position and high rate of return. It should be remembered that supervision is a key aspect of management.

An effective supervisor gives the right direction to the people under his/her supervision by enabling them to take initiatives, responsibilities and going ahead on their own. One aspect of supervision is to train these people, correct them, tell them what to do and to also bring improvement in their deficiencies.
Mills (1997) as quoted in Khan et al. (2010) states that supervisors assign tasks and clear responsibilities for performing those tasks and further, they expect from the assignees accuracy and punctuality. This should have a direct effect on an employee's performance.

Khan et al. (2010) further say that effective managers must have the ability to motivate their employees. They spend considerable amount of time, seeking information regarding subordinate's work. They regularly find out what and how employees are doing. They always check on the employee's jobs and what they observed, by giving feedback to the employees indicating their positives and negatives regarding their performance.

Effective supervisors should be able to perform the following roles and or functions:

a) Communicator,
b) Trainer,
c) Student,
d) Goal setter,
e) Adviser,
f) Idea Champion,
g) Environmental watchdog, and
h) International manager.
2.2.4 The effect of poor supervision

Poor supervision is any kind of supervision that does not bring about good or expected results to individuals and organisations at large. Most of the researchers and authors call this type of supervision "abusive supervision". Hornstein (1996) as quoted in Khan et al (2010) defined abusive supervision as one whose primary objective is the control of others and such control is achieved through methods that create fear and intimidation. Further than that, Tepper (2000: 178) as quoted in Khan et al (2010) defined abusive supervision as a kind of supervision that refers to subordinates' perception of the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of the hostile verbal and non-verbal behaviours, excluding physical contact. From the definitions of the two researchers, one can make a conclusion that abusive supervision has a negative impact on the employees.

Tepper, Carr, Breaux, Geder, Hu, and Hua (2009) maintains that abusive supervision involves continuing exposure to hierarchical mistreatment. This means that for an action to be considered an abusive supervision it does not have to be defined on the basis of one day occurrence, rather, it has to be a perpetual behaviour of the supervisor. What is of important to note is that abusive supervision falls within the domain of wilful behaviour, meaning that the supervisors exercise their abusive behaviour to attain a particular purpose (Tepper,
The supervisor may want to accomplish a particular goal rather than to cause a harm or injury. For instance, supervisors may mistreat their subordinates to elicit high performance or to send the message that mistakes will not be tolerated.

Different researchers have used a number of constructs that capture non-physical supervisor hostility in their studies of non-physical supervisory and their definitions. This could make easier to understand in detail what other researchers have to say with regard to abusive supervision Tepper (2007):

a) Generalised hierarchical abuse: Exposure to hostility perpetrated by hierarchically superior co-workers,


c) Victimization: According to (Aquino 2000: 172) as quoted in Tepper (2007) victimization is the individual's self-perception of having been exposed, either momentarily or repeatedly, to aggressive actions emanating from one or more other persons

d) Workplace bullying: Hoel and Cooper (2001: 4) as quoted in Tepper (2007) state that workplace bullying occurs when one or several individuals over a period of time perceive themselves to be on the receiving end of negative actions from one or several persons, in a situation where the target of bullying has difficulty in defending him or herself against these actions.
e) Supervisor aggression: Schat, Desmarais, et al. (2006) as quoted in Tepper (2007) state that supervisor aggression is the behaviour "that is intended to physically harm a worker or workers in a work-related context.

f) Supervisor undermining: Duffy., Ganster., and Pagon, (2002: 332) as quoted in Tepper (2007) define supervisor undermining as a behaviour intended to hinder, over time, the ability to establish and maintain positive interpersonal relationships, work-related success, and favourable reputation.

g) Negative mentoring experiences: Eby, McManus, Simon, & Russel, (2000: 3) as quoted in Tepper (2007) define negative mentoring experiences as specific incidents that occur between mentors and protégés or mentors’ characteristics that limit their ability to provide guidance to protégés.

Abusive supervision has negative effects in organisation. Research has been conducted on the negative effect of abusive supervision. The following effects were identified:

a) Abusive supervision is negatively related to job satisfaction and organisational commitment Tepper (2000) as quoted in (Tepper 2007, Duffy et al. 2004). His studies have found out that the abusive supervision could lead to unfavourable attitudes by subordinates.
b) Tepper, Duffy, and Shaw (2001) as quoted in Tepper (2007) maintain that the exposure to abusive supervision may evoke resistance behaviour on the part of subordinates.


d) Khan et al. (2000) as quoted in Tepper (2007) elaborates that abusive supervision would affect the subordinates' perception of organisational justice, which ultimately affect their performance, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, organisational commitment, conflict between work and family-life and psychological distress among others.

e) Asforth (1994, 1997) as quoted in Harvey, Stoner, Hochwater, and Kacmar (2007) outlined that abusive supervision is linked to a number of negative psychological outcomes such as helplessness, decreased efficacy and psychological distress.

f) Emotional exhaustion and abusive supervision have been positively linked by empirical studies (Harvey et al. 2000). Cropanzano, Rupp, & Byrne, (2003: 160) as quoted in Harvey et al. (2007) define emotional exhaustion as a "chronic state of emotional and physical depletion." This is a key component of job burnout and depression.

g) Tepper (2000) as quoted in Harvey et al. (2007) states that abusive supervision heightens turnover tendencies.
Researchers agree that abusive supervision is negative in any organisation, and therefore can destroy an organisation. It should therefore be eradicated in all organisations.

2.3 Unfair workplace discrimination

2.3.1 Definition

Discrimination can be described in a number of ways for different circumstances. For the purpose of this study, discrimination would be defined within the context of the workplace. The CCMA (2011) define discrimination as "any employer’s policy or practice showing favour, prejudice or bias against employees on any arbitrary grounds, for example on the basis of race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, family responsibility, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age disability, religion, HIV status, Conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, and language and which is not fair can be deemed to be unfair discrimination".

This definition has its premise in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Section (9) Subsection (1) which states that “everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law”. Equality in this regard refers to equal treatment in all spheres of life including even in the workplace. It is on the basis of this section of the Constitution that the labour laws that we have today that
specifically deal with discrimination have been formulated to ensure that discrimination is eradicated within workplaces.

2.3.2 Fair and Unfair Discrimination

Section 6 (1) of the Employment Equity Act (EEA) of 1998, makes prohibition of unfair discrimination, stating that no person may discriminate directly or indirectly against an employee, in any employment policy or practice on one or more grounds including, race, gender, sex, pregnancy and so on. Section 5 of EEA of 1998 places a positive obligation on all employers to “promote equal opportunity in the workplace by eliminating unfair discrimination in any employment policy or practice”.

Section 6 (2) of EEA makes provision for fair discrimination. According to this section of the Act, an employer can discriminate on the basis of Affirmative Action measures in consistence with this Act. Also, an employer can discriminate using an inherent job requirement as a ground. What this section is saying is that basically there is a discrimination that is allowed by the law, however, it has to be applied consistently based on the grounds mentioned above.

2.3.3 Dealing with unfair workplace discrimination

Unfair discrimination in the workplace is not tolerable in all possible senses. Be it by the employee amongst themselves or by the employer to the employee or the other way round, it is not allowed. If
discrimination is exercised in the workplace it actually puts a strain in the labour relation in the organisations. It is stated in Ehlers (2007) that the purpose of the EEA is to achieve equality in the workplace by promoting equal opportunities and fair treatment in employment through elimination of unfair discrimination.

Organisations should implement EEA without fear, favour and any prejudice so that there shall prevail peace and harmony in the workplace. Immediate supervisors are the custodians of the policies and practices of the organisations, and they should, for the sake of workplace peace and harmony, treat their subordinates equally and fairly in line with the aims and principles of EEA.

2.4 The law and unfair discrimination

2.4.1 The Constitution of South Africa (108 of 1996).

The South African Constitution includes provisions that aim to remove the past inequity and imbalances by protecting fundamental human rights, social justice and democratic values (van Wyk, 2002). The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 is the supreme law of the country and it is laid on the fundamental principles and values of equality. According to the Section (3) of the Constitution, any law that is not consistent with the Constitution shall be declared invalid. Equality is one of the cornerstones of the Constitution of South Africa, for this reason
any one who could practice any policy that is contrary to this fundamental value, shall be invalid and unconstitutional.

Section 9 (1) of the Constitution states that “everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law”. This refers also in the workplace, everybody should enjoy this right and his or her right to equality is guaranteed by the Constitution.

Section 9 (3) goes on to say that” the state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth” Most often, the mentioned criteria are the common once used by the supervisors to discriminate in the workplace. This section is emphasizes that none of them should be used as a ground for discrimination.

Section 9 (4) states that no person may unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds in terms of subsection (3). National legislation must be enacted to prevent or prohibit unfair discrimination. This section is the premise of the EEA and other legislations that regulate equality.
2.4.2 The Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998)

The main purpose of this act has been mentioned in the previous paragraph, however, it can be summarised by saying it is to achieve equality in the workplace. That could be done through promoting equal opportunity for all and equal treatment for all in the workplace and the elimination of unfair treatment and by implementing affirmative measures.

The Act makes provision for unfair discrimination as well as fair discrimination. Section 6 (1) is on the prohibition of unfair discrimination as stated in the Constitution of the RSA Section 9 subsection (3) as mentioned in the prior paragraph. Subsection (2) (a) states that it is not unfair to take affirmative action measures consistent with the purpose of this Act; or (b) distinguish, exclude or prefer any person on the basis of an inherent requirement of a job.

2.4.3 The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (4 of 2000)

EEA regulates the matters of equality and unfair discrimination in the workplace. One would ask the question to say what about inequality and unfair discrimination in the society at large. The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (4 of 2000) provides for the establishment of Equality Courts to ensure the implementation of the Act.
The Equality Act has been established to ensure that there is formation of the Equality Courts. All cases of unfair discrimination in the society at large are reported to these Courts to ensure justice for all. The Equality Act has been established in terms of the Section (9) of the Constitution which provides for the promotion of equality and for the enactment of a legislation preventing and prohibiting unfair discrimination.

The main objectives of the Equality Act can be summarised as follows:

a) To promote equality;

b) To prevent and prohibit unfair discrimination on one or more prohibited grounds, including but not limited to, sex and gender;

c) To prevent and promote hate speech; and

d) To establish equality.

2.4.4 Legal implications of unfair workplace discrimination

An act of unfair workplace discrimination may have very serious negative consequences for an employer and the organisation. The most notable consequences of unfair workplace discrimination is that cases will be referred to CCMA and Labour Court. In general the aggrieved employees would litigate against the supervisors and the organisation.

Watkins (2011) in Workinfo.com (2011) discussed the case of Thekiso v IBM, in which a retrenched employee, a black woman, challenged her employer’s decision to appoint a white man to a new job established during a restructuring. She claimed a right to the job on the basis of her status as a historically disadvantaged South African, and her capacity,
within a reasonable time to do the job. However, the court rejected the argument, and stated that the EEA should be used as a shield rather than a sword. There is no right to rely directly on the EEA to claim unfair selection in the context of a retrenchment, and other unfair discrimination cases.

2.5 Employee Response to Unfair Workplace Discrimination

2.5.1 Employment Relations at Workplace Level

It is an expectation in every organisation that the employers and employees should interact with one another. It is also natural that out of such interaction the positive labour relation is expected and the results can be either way, desirable or undesirable (Tustin & Geldenhuys, 2000). Positive labour relation is what every organisation is striving for. Ehlers (2007) identifies a number of circumstances in the organisations in which positive labour outcome could be possible, to list some, contractual compliance, equity, acceptance, reasonableness and integrity, good faith, consistency, and compliance with labour laws. Child (2005) is of the opinion that employee's feelings of inequality could lead to demotivation and could be the cause of an employee offering a lesser contribution in the workplace.

The above mentioned conditions are positively linked with the positive labour relation outcome. They are closely related to one another and it is very essential to note that one of these conditions should be
compromised and be ignored. They can be called generic criteria for harmonious employment relations at workplace level. If one of these could be compromised the negative outcome could be realised. They are the following:

a) Compliance with all applicable labour laws and codes of good practice;
b) Compliance with all contractual rights and duties;
c) Fair treatment of employees;
d) Equitable treatment of employees;
c) Consistent treatment of employees;
f) Trustworthy behaviour by employer and employee; and
g) Good faith in dealings between employer and employee.

2.5.2 Employee Response Options

Human beings are diverse in their nature. Their diversity goes to the extent at which they respond to a variety of situations. Yukl (2006) maintains that responses to inequitable treatment and job dissatisfaction vary in form and intensity. Supervisors who exercise power in an arrogant, manipulative, domineering manner are more likely to encounter resentment, resistance or negative responses from their subordinates. This includes as to how they would react or respond to unfair discrimination in the workplace. Robbins and Judge (2011) stated four responses to job dissatisfaction:

a) Staying loyal and passively wait for improvement;
b) Neglect by allowing conditions to worsen;
c) Voicing dissatisfaction; and
d) Exiting the organisation.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa made provision for some labour statutes that allow the workers or employees to go for a number of options in response to unfair discrimination in their workplaces. There are procedures that are to be followed. Some are within the organisation whereas some are external but are constitutional. Some of the responses may be less formal within the organisation. Bendix, (2010); Finnemore, (2009); and Nel et al. (2009) state that the other option that the employees may choose is the one of responding in undesirable behavioural form such as poor work performance.

There are a number of responses that the workers can display in reaction to unfair discrimination by their immediate supervisors in the workplace, ranging from formal to less formal, legally and socially acceptability. For the purpose of this study, the author selected the following responses that are believed to be representative of socially and legally acceptable: i) Not be influenced at all, ii) Complain to friends and family, iii) Request supervisor to stop behaviour, iv) File a formal grievance, v) Seek CCMA protection and, vi) Resign. The table below shows the different responses and their intensity.
Table 1. Intensity of employee response to unfair discrimination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
<th>INTENSITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Resign</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Seek CCMA protection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. File a formal grievance</td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Request supervisor to stop behaviour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Complain to friends and family</td>
<td>LOW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Not influenced at all</td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.5.2.1 Ignore a Problem

People can respond to unfair discrimination in the workplace in different ways. Some could just ignore the problem as if nothing is happening. Belak (2004) states that in because of our childhood conditioning and societal norms, we often suppress or disguise our emotions. The Constitution and the labour statutes are there to ensure that people are treated fairly and some measures have been outlined to assist in this regard. Some people would just ignore the problem on the basis of the reasons known by them or not knowing as whether protection by the laws could be sought. The level of literacy also plays a part in this regard, some of the employees are not aware of their fundamental rights and they may think that the supervisors have the authority to treat them in any manner they wish.
2.5.2.2 Complain to friends and family

Friends and families are the pillars of strength for every one. They are shoulders that one can lean on in times of frustrations and sorrows. The frustrations and dissatisfaction in this context refer to the one that might arise from the relationship between the immediate supervisor and the employees. Employees who feel that they have been exposed to unfair discrimination by their immediate supervisors may complain to a friend or family. A friend in this regard may be a colleague or someone outside the organisation.

If an employee experiences unfair treatment at work, what you can do is to get help from a friend if they do not have the presence of mind to deal with an issue. Talking to a friend can provide some direction in resolving an issue (Dcosta, 2011).

2.5.2.3 Request supervisor to stop behaviour

If an employee is aggrieved by the treatment of the supervisor, he or she may as one of the responses, request an interview with his/her supervisor as soon as possible (Bendix, 2010). The supervisor would then grant an employee an interview and they would attempt to propose an acceptable solution after listening to the employee's grievance.
2.5.2.4 File a formal grievance

A grievance as a feeling of dissatisfaction that is experienced by an employee as a result of behaviour or conditions specifically related to the labour relations environment that requires the formal attention of the management (Ehlers, 2007). A grievance could be as a result of a number of issues that are expected from the relationship between employer and employee. Fair decision-making is one such expectation that if not met, a grievance may arise. A grievance is one of the most important and effective method that could be used to resolve a conflict, and dissatisfactions. A grievance procedure is more structured and formal and its objective is to establish open upward channel and to resolve disputes.

2.5.2.5 CCMA disputes

Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration has been established in terms of Labour Relations Act (LRA) of 1995 Chapter VII Section 112. Section 115 (a) states that the commission must attempt to resolve, through conciliation, any dispute referred to it in terms of this act. For a dispute resolution an employee can take a dispute to an agency or bargaining council or an accredited agency if covered by those agencies. If there are doubts, the employee may refer the disputes to the CCMA. The CCMA would try to resolve the dispute through conciliation and if the problem remains unresolved the problem would be referred for arbitration Bendix (2010).
2.5.2.6 Resignation

Resignation means that an employee has terminated the services that he/she was rendering to the employer. Many people resign because of extremely unacceptable work circumstances. Resignation suggests that a point of no return has been reached whereby an employee feels that the only way is the way out. There are many ways that an employee could respond to unfair discrimination by an immediate supervisor, but tendering a resignation is the final straw which could be interpreted that the employee has completely lost trust in the employer such that it cannot be restored. Robbins (2008) states that exit is a behaviour directed at leaving the organisation either by looking for a new position or resigning. This is one of the behaviours that the employees can display to express their dissatisfactions.
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The objective of this study is to investigate the nature of employee response to unfair discrimination by an immediate supervisor. Nkatini (2005) states that research methodology should be seen as a system through which a researcher is able to collect, analyse, and interpret data in order that the research design may be measured internally or externally. The usefulness of the results of this research entirely depend on the quality of the research design. It is very important also that the study method should be adapted to the research topic under investigation. This chapter provides an overview of the research methodology that was followed in this study.

3.2 Research design

This study required a comprehensive literature review, and subsequent analysis of data that was readily available in a reliable existing database which was developed for another related research initiative between 2008 and 2011. (Ehlers: 2011) The researcher extracted related data from the existing database and investigated the nature of white collar employee responses to one specific aspect of abusive supervision, namely fairness.
The research design can therefore be described as a mixed research design, since it is not a purely quantitative or purely qualitative research design. Mixed research methods can be used to explain quantitative results within qualitative data, to use quantitative data to develop new theory that can be tested later, to compare quantitative and qualitative data to make well validated conclusions or to enhance a literature study with supplemental data (Maree, 2007).

An extensive questionnaire survey was not undertaken for purposes of this research, since this document is a mini dissertation of limited scope. The study does, however, comply with the minimum requirements of the Graduate School of Business and Government Leadership of the North-West University (Mafikeng Campus) for MBA mini-dissertations. The author subsequently elected to analyse data that was gathered in response to a single question, for purposes of testing the hypotheses under investigation and for purposes of this mini-dissertation.

3.3 Sampling

When the population studied is large, it is often impossible and inefficient to study every person in that population. If sampling could be conducted correctly and scientifically it could make it possible for the researcher to describe a population or to test a hypothesis on a
relatively few research subjects and yet generalize the findings to the larger population.

3.3.1 Using secondary data

Nkatini (2005) differentiates two types of data, primary data and secondary data. Primary data is defined as a data that the researcher has personally elicited from their own source, while secondary data is defined as a data that has been elicited from other sources. Leedy, Timothy, and Ertmer (1997) defines primary data as the data that lie closest to the source of the ultimate truth underlying the phenomenon. It is very important to note that the researcher who uses the secondary data may have the different aims and objectives that are different from those of the original research. On this basis the secondary data must be used carefully and with caution.

For the purpose of this study, a secondary data set has been used which was extracted from an existing database containing data that was captured from a survey of intended employee response to a negative and positive employment relationships Ehlers (2011).

3.3.2 Advantages and disadvantages of questionnaires

There are advantages as well as disadvantages that are associated with the usage of the secondary data in a research study, the following are the advantages:
a) The secondary data from the perspective of the sponsors and the researcher saves a lot of time and money. It is cheaper to reanalyze an existing data than to collect and analyse a new data.

b) Data collection is the most expensive process and the users of secondary data may be able to avoid that process.

c) The secondary analysis may be less obtrusive as compared to the primary analysis.

d) With regard to the independent researcher, the benefit is that the fresh, creative approach and personal style could be applied to the existing data; and

e) The secondary researcher searches through a wide array of materials spread over geographic space and time which may yield greater scope and depth than is usually possible in the single primary research project

The following are disadvantages that are associated with the use of secondary data:

a) The most common and notable problem of using the secondary data is locating the relevant data to the research questions.

b) Some data are not more readily available.

c) Proprietary (original researchers have prior claim to their data) issues are also a concern and complex concern; most primary researches would not want to release their primary data until they have finalise their analysis.
d) Most often the insufficient information about the collection of data is given to determine the possible biases in them. A lack of specification about sampling method, response rate, measurement and coding raises doubts about the quality of data.

e) The use of data from a respectable and reputable data may hide some of the errors and in competencies by the secondary analysts.

3.3.3 Sample characteristics

A total number of 354 respondents completed and returned a structured questionnaire. The respondents were part of the following group: MBA students enrolled at the North West University (Mafikeng Campus), University of Pretoria students attending post graduate or advanced management and labour relations courses, senior SARS and Department of Land Affairs employees attending relations courses presented by tertiary institutions.
### Table 2: Sample Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALL RESPONDENTS</strong></td>
<td>354</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AGE</strong></td>
<td>354</td>
<td></td>
<td>S = 8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>YEARS OF FORMAL EMPLOYMENT</strong></td>
<td>354</td>
<td></td>
<td>S = 8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GENDER</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Male</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Female</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RACE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. African</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Coloured</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Asian</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. White</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LANGUAGE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. IsiZulu</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. IsiXhosa</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Afrikaans</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sepedi</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. English</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Setswana</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Sesotho</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Xitsonga</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Siswati</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Tshivenda</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. IsiNdebele</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>QUALIFICATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Matric or equivalent</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. National Diploma/Bachelors degree</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Postgraduate qualification</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>POSITION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Senior management</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Middle management/Supervision</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Technical specialist</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Administrative/Sales</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Operational/Production/Routine</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4 Research Instruments

3.4.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are generally viewed as important and reliable research instruments. A questionnaire requires that a respondent fills out and returns it to the researcher. It is like a self-administered interview in which the questions and instructions are complete and understandable enough so that the respondent can act as his own interviewer. In most cases the questionnaire can be hand delivered to the respondent’s home or office or be distributed at locations such as institutions of learning, malls or movie theatres.

Since the questionnaire is a self-administered survey, the language and instructions should be clear and easily understandable in order to motivate respondents to participate in the study. According to Nkatini (2005), a questionnaire is a set of questions that must have the following features:

a) Be short and simple;

b) Be understandable;

c) Not double barreled; and

d) Not lead the respondents.

Specific research issues should form the basis of a research questionnaire. Furthermore, the type of data that must be analysed will also influence the type of questionnaire that should be designed. Leedy
et al (1997) states that a questionnaire is a commonplace instrument for observing data beyond the physical reach of the observer. Questionnaire are often sent thousands of kilometres away and the respondents may never even meet with the researcher. Leedy et al (1997) proposes the following guidelines:

a) The language must be unmistakably clear to those expected to respond;
b) Questionnaires should be designed to fulfil a specific research objective.

It is also very important to take the following into consideration when a questionnaire is designed. The researcher should never forget that he or she is asking of the recipient a gift of time and effort and the favour of reply:

a) Be courteous;
b) Simplify;
c) Consider first impression;
d) Concentrate on the universal;
e) Make it brief;
f) Check for consistency;
g) Send return postage; and
h) Offer the result of your study to your respondents.
3.4.2 Research questionnaire

An original research questionnaire was developed by a Pretoria based labour relations consultant, for purposes of measuring the strength and direction of intended employee responses to negative and positive employment relations behaviour of immediate supervisors. (See Annexure A). The original draft questionnaire was face validated by two academics and three labour relations practitioners. The panel agreed that all of the questions that were included in the final draft were valid for the purposes of the initial research project (Ehlers, 2011). The original questionnaire had three sections, namely:

a. Section A: Fifteen questions related to biographical information, prior experience with negative employment relations behaviour and group affiliation.

b. Section B: Twelve questions intended to measure the intended remedial response of employees to a number of negative employment relations behaviour forms of immediate supervisors. A scale with progressive response options was provided.

c. Section C: Twelve questions intended to measure the intended performance response of employees to a number of positive
employment relations behaviour forms of immediate supervisors. A scale with progressive response options was provided.

3.4.3 Data Selected for this Research

Responses to the first eight questions from the biographical information section, and responses to one specific question from Section B relating to the strength of intended employee reaction unfair discrimination were extracted and analysed for purposes of this research (See Annexure B).

3.5 Data Analysis

The process of data analysis include procedures to convert the data into standard forms that would simplify computations and comparisons, and the application of analytical techniques that would produce results that meet the objectives of the research. The process of data analysis could be in the following stages:

a) Coding: A process where responses from the data collection instrument are converted to standard form, not necessarily a numerical form, so that systematic analysis may be done by data-processing machines or electronic computers.

b) Data Entry: Data entry means transferring the code representing a response on a questionnaire.
c) Descriptive Analysis: In this stage the analyst is ready to examine the characteristics of the sample and to begin looking for the relationships.

d) Cross-Tabulation and Contingency Tables: In this stage the researcher combines the frequency distributions on two or more variables. The researcher is asking question like "how the distribution of the responses on the dependent variable is affected by the distribution of responses on an independent variable.

e) Testing Relationship between Variables: During this stage the significance of the relationship between the dependent and independent would be observed. The level of the variation that is observed in the dependent variable could be explained by the independent variable or some combination of independent variables. This could be done through usage of various statistical techniques.

In this study, data relating to three of the fifteen questions in the biographical section were used, namely age, race and gender. Certain data values needed to be recoded in order to enable statistical testing. Responses to one question from section B which specifically relate to unfair discrimination by immediate supervisors, was selected for purposes of this research. (See Annexure B)
Data was initially captured on SPSS v9 on a personal computer. Data for this paper was extracted and analysed by using the SPSS v18 statistical analysis programme.

3.6 Statistical Testing

There are number of statistical tests that the researcher does with purpose of finding the relationship or differences between variables. In this study the mean and the standard deviation of the values representing intended responses were calculated for all of the respective groupings under consideration. The Mann-Whitney U test was then used to test the statistical significance of differences in intended response of the respective groups. This test was designed to test whether observations in one population tend to have higher values than those from another population (Elliot and Woodward, 2007). It is one of the most powerful of the non-parametric tests, and is a most useful alternative to the parametric t-test when researchers wish to avoid the normality or equal variance assumptions of the t-test (Siegel, 1956). It was selected to the hypotheses that were used in this research for the following reasons: The data was ordinal, the two samples were independent, normality was questionable and sample was relatively small.
3.7 Hypotheses

Hypotheses were formulated to determine and judge the statistical significance of the differences in the intended responses of the various groups to unfair discrimination by immediate supervisors. The following table reflects the grouping variables that were used for this purpose:

**Table 3: Mann-Whitney Grouping Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUPING VARIABLES</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Y</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Age</td>
<td>Under 40</td>
<td>40 and older</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Race A</td>
<td>African</td>
<td>All other groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Race B</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>All other groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H₀ – There is no statistically difference between the intended responses of (X) and (Y) to unfair discrimination by an immediate supervisors.

H₁ - There is a statistically significant difference between the intended responses of (X) and (Y) to unfair discrimination by an immediate supervisors.
The following decision rules were applied for purposes of accepting or rejecting or accepting the null hypothesis for all the groups:

a) The statistical significance level (a) was set at 0.05. (a=0.05).

b) Ho should be rejected in favour of H1 if a is ≤0.05.

c) Do not reject Ho, but conclude that there is significant support for H1 if a ≤0.20.

d) Conclude that there is no significant support for H1 where a > 0.20.
CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to discuss the findings that were made after a related literature review and research project that was conducted in order to answer the following questions:

a) How will a group of typical South African white collar employees intend to respond to unfair discrimination?

b) Will sub-groupings within a group of South African white collar employees intend to respond differently to unfair discrimination by immediate supervisors, if they are of different age, race and gender?

This chapter consolidates the research findings which are derived from analysis and interpretation of statistical data as discussed in the previous chapter. The intensity of the intended response to unfair discrimination is discussed. The different intended responses to unfair discrimination by age, gender and race are also discussed. The chapter will be concluded by the summary of the findings.
4.2 Intensity of intended response to unfair discrimination

Table 4. Intensity of employee response to unfair discrimination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
<th>INTENSITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Resign</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Seek CCMA protection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. File a formal grievance</td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Request supervisor to stop behaviour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Complain to friends and family</td>
<td>LOW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0. Not influenced at all</td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of respondents in the sample group reported an intention to request the supervisor to stop the unfair discrimination when it occurs. This conclusion was made after considering the mean and standard deviation of all responses (n=354, \( \bar{x} = 2.83, s = .82 \)). It does however; align closer with the filing of a grievance, than complaining to friends and family.

4.3 Differences in Intended Response to unfair discrimination

4.3.1 Age

H0 is not rejected because there were no significant differences (\( \alpha = .614, p \geq .05 \)) between the responses of employees who were younger than
40 (n = 191, \( \bar{x} = 2.84, s = 0.83 \)), and those who were 40 and older (n = 163, \( \bar{x} = 2.82, s = 0.80 \)).

Figure 5: Mean response of different age groups

4.3.2 Gender:

Figure 6: Mean response of different gender groups
Ho is not rejected because there are no significant differences ($\alpha=.810$, $p \geq .05$) between the intended responses of males ($n=184, \bar{x}=2.82$, $s=.71$) and females ($n=170, \bar{x}=2.84$, $s=.92$).

4.3.3 Race A - African compared to other groups:

Figure 7: Mean response of African and other race group

Ho is rejected in favour of $H_1$ because there is a highly significant difference ($\alpha=.011$, $p \leq .05$) between intended responses of African respondents and those from other race groups. African respondents intended to respond more intensely ($n=230, \bar{x}=2.91$, $s=.84$) than other race groups ($n=124, \bar{x}=2.68$, $s=.75$)
4.3.3 Race B - White compared to other groups:

Figure 8: Mean response of Whites and other race group

Ho is rejected in favour of H1 if because a highly significant difference was found between the intended responses of white respondents and respondents belonging to other race groups ($\alpha=.042$, $p \leq .05$). White respondents intended to respond less intense ($n=74$, $\bar{x}=2.66$, $s=.82$) than other race groups ($n=280$, $\bar{x}=2.87$, $s=.81$).

4.4 Summary

The majority of the respondents in the sample group reported a general intention to request the supervisor to stop the unfair discrimination when it occurs. The findings also suggest that employees from different race would respond differently to unfair discrimination by their immediate supervisors.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study involved a comprehensive literature review and a statistical investigation of related responses of a group of South African white collar employees. The study was divided into five chapters. Chapter one contained an introduction and problem statement, chapter two a comprehensive literature review and chapter three provided an overview of the research methodology used in this study. Findings were discussed in chapter four and conclusion and recommendations were made in chapter five.

The study was specifically aimed at finding answers to the following questions:

- How will a sample group of white collar employees intend to respond to unfair discrimination by immediate supervisors?
- Will sub-groupings within a sample group of South African white collar employees intend to respond differently to unfair discrimination by immediate supervisors, if they are of different age, race and gender.
This final chapter contains conclusion and recommendation, and
discussions of the significance of findings on general responses and
differences between groups with different age, gender and race.

5.2 Significance of general findings on general response

The research findings suggest that the majority of employees in the
sample group of South African white collar employees intend to resolve
problems related to unfair discrimination by a supervisor, through direct
communication rather than more formal responses such as grievances
and disputes. It was noted that although employees could have
responded much stronger to unfair discrimination, none of the
respondents reported an intention to resign in response to unfair
discrimination. This appears to be in conflict with the findings of Chen,
Chen, and Portnoy (2009) who suggested that that people show positive
reciprocity responses to favourable treatment, and negative reciprocity
responses to unfavourable treatment. Further research may provide
more insight in this regard. This intention could also be ascribed to the
fact that most South African organisations prescribe an initial formal
discussion with an immediate supervisor to resolve problems, before
proceeding to the formal documented grievance resolution procedures. It
could also be a result of other variables such as fear of unemployment.
5.3 Significance of findings on age, gender and race

There were no significant differences in how people from different age and gender groups intend to respond to unfair discrimination. There were, however, highly significant differences in the intended responses of different race groups. African employees intended to respond significantly stronger than employees from other race groups. This should be considered against the background of the past, when African people were subjected to unfair discrimination without any significant legal or social recourse in the apartheid era. This intention to respond stronger to unfair discrimination is in all likelihood related to the need to protect and promote constitutional and workplace rights, which were earned through the struggle against inequity in the apartheid era. Further more intensive research is required in this instance.

White people, on the other hand, intended to react significantly less intense than other race groups. This could be related to the fact that unfair discrimination against white employees is often perceived to be sanctioned by affirmative action laws and policies. Their less intense response intention could, also be indicative of a general acceptance that white people need to endure unfair discrimination in the new South Africa, in order to contribute to the eventual restoration of equality in the South African labour market and society. Further more intensive research is also required in this instance.
5.4 Concluding remarks

The research findings suggest that South African white collar employees will generally use direct dialogue with their supervisor at workplace level, when they respond to unfair discrimination by immediate supervisors. It is in a way reassuring, from an employment relations management perspective, that unfair discriminatory treatment of subordinates will generally not result in more intense responses such as formal grievances, CCMA disputes or resignation. Be that as it may, the elimination of all forms of unfair discrimination from South African workplaces should be a primary objective of all organisational leaders and members. Fair discrimination in all human resource management practices will make a significant contribution to redressing imbalances in a diverse society, and all organisations should make all efforts to prevent and eradicate unfair discrimination from all work related policies and procedures.
References


36. Thekiso v. IBM South Africa (freud AJ, JS 415/05)


Annexure A
EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS OUTCOMES QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:

Please answer the following questions. Use the descriptions that are printed with each question to select your answer.

1. **Age** (Write number of years)
2. **For how many years have you been formally employed in the labour market?** (Write number of years)
3. **Sex** (Male - 1, Female - 2)
4. **Race** (African - 1, Coloured - 2, Indian/Asian - 3, White - 4)
5. **Indicate your home language?** (IsiZulu-1, IsiXhosa-2, Afrikaans-3, Sepedi-4, English-5, Seswana-6, Sesotho-7, Xitsonga-8, Siswati-9, IsiNdebele-10, Other-11)
6. **Indicate your highest formal qualification** (Lower than Matric - 1, Matric - 2, Specialist Certificate - 3, Artisan/Trade - 4, National Diploma - 5, Bachelor's Degree - 6, Advanced Diploma/Postgraduate degree - 7, Professional qualification - 8)
7. **Indicate your employer’s primary activity** (General Public Service - 1, Local/Provincial Government - 2, SANDF - 3, SAPS/SACS - 4, Manufacturing - 5, Retail/sales - 6, Financial - 7, Mining - 8, Construction - 9, Healthcare - 10, Communication/IT - 11, Service - 12, Education - 13, Other - 14)
8. **Indicate your position in your organisation** (Executive management - 9, Specialist professional - 8, Senior management - 7, Middle management - 6, Supervision - 5, Technical specialist - 4, Administrative/Sales - 3, Operational/Production - 2, Routine work - 1)
9. **Did you ever resign from a job because you did not get along with a superior?** (Yes/No)
10. **Did you ever file a formal grievance or declare a CCMA dispute against a superior?** (Yes/No)
11. **Did you ever suffer from serious stress/depression as a result of a superior’s behaviour?** (Yes/No)
12. **Did a superior’s behaviour ever impact extremely negative on your private relationships?** (Yes/No)
13. **Are you a religious person who regularly attends religious activities of your denomination?** (Yes/No)
14. **Are you an active member of a union, who participates in all prescribed union activities?** (Yes/No)
15. **Did you ever attend a traditional initiation school or undergo basic military training?** (Yes/No)

SECTION B: REACTION TO NEGATIVE BEHAVIOUR:
The following statements represent different forms of negative leadership behaviour related to employment relations. Indicate how you will really react to each of these behaviour forms. Be very honest please. Choose your reaction from the following options:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reaction to Negative Behaviour</th>
<th>I Will...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 - RESIGN</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - DECLARE A CCMA DISPUTE</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - FILE A FORMAL GRIEVANCE</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - ASK THE SUPERIOR TO STOP THE NEGATIVE BEHAVIOUR</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - COMPLAIN TO FRIENDS &amp; FAMILY BUT TAKE NO FURTHER ACTION</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 - NOT BE INFLUENCED AT ALL - IT IS HIS/HER RIGHT</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**If my immediate superior...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>I Will...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Disrespects my legal rights as an employee</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Fails to ensure that my employer accepts it’s responsibility towards me</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Fails to adhere strictly to employment contracts and allows special privileges for some employees</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Discriminates unfairly when making decisions that that may impact on my employment conditions</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Treats me unfairly and fails to ensure that I am treated fairly by others in the workplace</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Fails to ensure that there is equity in how I am treated in relation to other employees</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Disrespects the trust relationship between us and proves to me that he/she is untrustworthy</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Acts in bad faith, by being secretive, unreasonable and one-sided when we discuss problems</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Behaves in a negative manner in our employment relationship</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Is prejudiced against me in our workplace</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Behaves in an unprofessional manner when interacting with me in the workplace</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Harasses me, or allows other people to harass me in the workplace</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION C: REACTION TO POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR:

The following statements represent different forms of positive leadership behaviour related to employment relations. Indicate how you will really react to each of these behaviour forms. Be very honest please. Choose your reaction from the following options:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5 – PERFORM MY WORK FAR ABOVE AVERAGE AND DO EXTRA WORK</th>
<th>4 – PERFORM MY WORK FAR ABOVE AVERAGE</th>
<th>3 – PERFORM MY WORK ABOVE AVERAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 – PERFORM MY WORK SLIGHTLY BETTER THAN AGREED</td>
<td>1 – ENSURE THAT I PERFORM MY WORK AS AGREED</td>
<td>0 – NOT BE INFLUENCED AT ALL - IT IS MY BASIC RIGHT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IF MY IMMEDIATE SUPERIOR........  I WILL...

13. Respects my legal rights as an employee
14. Ensures that my employer accepts its responsibility toward me
15. Adheres strictly to the employment contract and allows nobody any special privileges
16. Ensures that all employment decisions that may impact on my employment conditions comply with principles of fair discrimination
17. Treats me fairly and ensures that I am treated fairly by others in the workplace
18. Ensures that there is equity in how I am treated in relation to other employees
19. Respects the trust relationship between us and constantly proves that he/she can be trusted
20. Acts in good faith by being constructive, reasonable and understanding when we discuss problems
21. Behaves in a positive manner in our employment relationship
22. Is not prejudiced against me in our workplace
23. Behaves in a professional manner when interacting with me in the workplace
24. Does not harass me, and ensures that I will not be harassed in the workplace

60
## Annexure B

**INTENDED EMPLOYEE REACTION TO UNFAIR DISCRIMINATION BY IMMEDIATE SUPERVISORS**

### SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Please answer the following questions. Use the descriptions that are printed with each question to select your answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Age</td>
<td>(Write number of years)</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. For how many years have you been formally employed in the labour market?</td>
<td>(Write number of years)</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sex</td>
<td>(Male - 1, Female - 2)</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Race</td>
<td>(African - 1, Coloured - 2, Indian/Asian - 3, White - 4)</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Indicate your home language</td>
<td>(IsiZulu-1, IsiXhosa-2, Afrikaans-3, Sepedi-4, English-5, Setswana-6, Sesotho-7, Xitsonga-7, Siswati-8, Tshivenda-9, IsiNdebele-10, Other-11)</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Indicate your highest formal qualification</td>
<td>(Lower than Matric - 1, Matric - 2, Specialist Certificate - 3, Artisan/Trade - 4, National Diploma - 5, Bachelors Degree - 6, Advanced Diploma/Post graduate degree - 7, Professional qualification - 8)</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Indicate your position in your organisation</td>
<td>(Executive management - 9, Specialist professional - 8, Senior management - 7, Middle management - 6, Supervision - 5, Technical specialists - 4, Administrative/Sales - 3, Operational/Production - 2, Routine work - 1)</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### SECTION B: REACTION TO NEGATIVE BEHAVIOUR

The following statements represent different forms of negative leadership behaviour related to employment relations. Indicate how you will really react to each of these behaviour forms. Be very honest please. Choose your reaction from the following options:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reaction Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 – RESIGN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – FILE A FORMAL GRIEVANCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – ASK THE SUPERIOR TO STOP THE NEGATIVE BEHAVIOUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – COMPLAIN TO FRIENDS &amp; FAMILY BUT TAKE NO FURTHER ACTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 – NOT BE INFLUENCED AT ALL - IT IS HIS/HER RIGHT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**IF MY IMMEDIATE SUPERIOR...........**

**I WILL...**

Discriminates unfairly when making decisions that may impact on my employment conditions