

# THE INFLUENCE OF THE EMPLOYMENT EQUITY ACT ON ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE AT A RESEARCH INSTITUTION IN SOUTH AFRICA

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## **Abstract**

**Background and Objective:** The battle against discrimination in the South African workspace led to the establishment of the Employment Equity Act (EEA), which advocates for equality and the inclusion of marginalised groups. This study examined how the adoption of the act has affected organisational performance and perception.

**Study Design/Materials and Methods:** The search followed a qualitative approach to answer the research questions through a social-constructionism paradigm to capture the perceived influence of the EEA. To collect the data, the study utilised semi-structured individual interviews from participants sampled through a non-probability technique of purposive sampling. Thematic analysis through ATLAS.ti was utilised for data analysis. The sample composed of 30 employees from senior to entry-level positions. Using a theoretical lens, the study followed the Structural Injustice framework from Iris Marion Young.

**Results:** Beyond the primarily observed influence of the EEA to have a political, social and economic effect, the legislation is understood to influence the quality of the workforce negatively. A high performing organisation experiences a decline in performance through structural change; delayed employee acquisition due to specific role requirements such as gender, race and educational background; and on a vital point, the findings suggest that the EEA has created immense employment opportunities for marginalised groups.

**Practical implications:** Within the context of high performing workspaces, the EEA hampers effective practice, while it offers socio-economic inclusion for marginalised groups. The results emphasise the need for a diversified sectoral application of the EEA to allow organisations to perform effectively.

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**Conclusion and summary:** The adoption of the EEA hinders performance but positively brings balance to a workplace through the eradication of structural injustice.

**Keywords:** structural injustice, inclusion, employment, performance, discrimination

**JEL classification:** D23, J71, L23

**Paper type:** case study

## 1. Introduction

Workspaces globally have transformed over the last decades given the challenge of racial and gender exclusion, and other discriminatory factors. Drawing from Ernst and Young (2010), workspaces saw the ‘establishment of and adherence to legislation, including the Affirmative Action and Employment Equity Act, between the 1960s and the 1990s; the assimilation and inclusion of women in the workplace, corporate space, and both the public and private sector in the early 1980s; understanding and adopting workplace diversity beyond compliance using inclusion for improved work conditions in the late 1980s; the inclusion of women and marginalised groups fostering diversity in the late 1980s to the late 1990s; and in the millennium era the global sphere saw diversity and inclusion utilised beyond legislation but as a business strategy to maximise profit and growth’. The realisation of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is a fundamental component of democracy, which extends human rights and social responsibility. The inclusion of people with different identities, perspectives and origins is referred to as diversity. The idea of equity addresses the understanding that certain people lack resources because of systemic inequalities that have existed historically. To right historical wrongs, concrete solutions are required in the equity discourse. According to the inclusion principle, people who have been impacted by these historically established inequalities ought to have equal access to resources and opportunities.

However, throughout this dynamic period of the global workspace, South Africa was plagued with apartheid, which advanced the discrimination and inequality that was rooted in race. To eradicate this, among many other legislations, the Employment Equity Act (EEA) No. 55 of 1998 (Republic of South Africa, 1998) was established to support marginalised groups, and promote equality in the workplace and amongst the workforces. The numerous calls for inclusion, diversity, and access to education, employment and non-discriminatory workspaces are supported by the EEA. The EEA is a government law that aims to eliminate unfair discrimination in accessing workplaces and in other socio-economic activities, as well as to achieve social representation of diverse marginalised groups among employees (Du Toit & Potgieter, 2014; Lee, 2016; Ebrahim, 2018; Ramoroka et al. 2024). To combat inequality and exclusion in South Africa, the 2030 National Development Plan

(NDP) (Republic of South Africa, 2013) emphasises giving disadvantaged people priority access to economic opportunities (such as jobs or entrepreneurship) and high-quality education.

Due to the statistical underrepresentation of people of colour in many economic sectors, these measures in South Africa have not yet produced the expected outcomes (Reus-Smit, 2017; Grissom, 2018; Roberson, 2019; Yadav & Lenka, 2020). Additionally, the NDP made the case that affirmative action principles and employment equality laws support the growth of a diverse workforce (Miller, 1998; Barak, 2000, 2017; Riccucci, 2002; Rangarajan & Black, 2007; Broadnax, 2010; Sabharwal, 2014). Thus, this study leans towards inclusion or the EEA to talk about how this affects employee perceptions and organisational performance. In addressing diversity management, the EEA focuses on race, age and gender without criticism of merit that affects organisational objectives or performance. This study draws on a research institution in South Africa to understand the impact of the transition from operating during apartheid to a democratic society, operating outside the boundary of legislation to the confinement of the constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

Thus, this study aims to comprehend (1) how employee perception affects EEA implementation and (2) how the EEA supports the goals and operations of the organisation. As a result, the study inquires about how employees view the EEA and how much it relates to an organisation's goals and performance. This quest utilises a research institution that represents a social infrastructure that existed before South Africa's democracy. Therefore, understanding a transformation forced by legislation in an institution that represents apartheid ideals is necessary. Understanding how the EEA (a post-apartheid law) is perceived by employees becomes crucial within the context of performance management in a research institution. After all, research institutions play an important role in driving innovation, creativity and development. Thus, it is important to consider them as a primary institution to query.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. The EEA

The literature that discusses diversity and inclusion frequently includes the EEA. Consequently, the EEA and diversity/inclusion are directly related. Affirmative action was introduced into the South African workforce in 1998 with the EEA, which addressed workplace inequality through policy practices in both public and commercial organisations. However, the 1960s and 1970s saw the beginning of the diversification of American and European workforces (Ernst & Young, 2010). The recently updated EEA No. 4 of 2022 demonstrates that South Africa continues to struggle with diversity and the inclusion of marginalised groups. "To achieve equity in the workplace by (a) promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment

through the elimination of unfair discrimination; and (h) implementing affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups, to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce” (Government Gazette, 1998, p. 12) was the stated goal behind the introduction of the EEA No. 55 of 1998 (Republic of South Africa, 1998). By providing equal opportunity and treatment in the workplace, this statute essentially promotes the equal inclusion of designated groups. Additionally, it specifies that this must be carried out at all workforce levels, including senior management, entry-level, and intermediate employment. Simplified, a varied society that fairly represents the nation should be included and represented at every level of all organisations and industries.

However, the revised policy mentions meeting a numerical goal for the number of members of the specified groups and submitting an annual report to the Ministry office. According to the revised policy, “the Minister may, after consulting the relevant sectors and with the advice of the Commission, ensure the equitable representation of suitable qualified people from designated groups at all occupational levels in the workforce, by notice in the Gazette, set numerical targets for any national economic sector identified.” Additionally, “Any sectoral target, in terms of Section 15 of the act, that applies to that employer must be met by the numerical goals set by an employer.” The EEA is essentially a statistical depiction of the workforce’s varied groups. The research of Robbin et al. (2016), Reus-Smit (2017), Grissom (2018), Roberson (2019), and Yadav & Lenka (2020) further supports this. Whether the case study personnel share this viewpoint will be further investigated in this study.

## 2.2. Inclusion

Over the past three decades, the South African government has promoted inclusion to address the impact of apartheid on the workplace. The affirmative action measures of the EEA, SDGs, and NDP in the public and private sectors fuelled the growth of the inclusion movement. As inclusion progresses, marginalised groups and immigrants face challenges in ensuring compliance with laws. The EEA and inclusion are legal compliance practices that restrict immigration. According to Douglas et al. (2017), effective recruitment from a diverse pool is crucial for maximising talent and maintaining organisational excellence. To ensure the inclusion of marginalised groups, a global candidate pool should be established to source suitable candidates. The EEA requires organisations to provide equal opportunities to individuals from diverse societies, including immigrants, marginalised groups, and those impacted by apartheid (Grissom, 2018; Juang & Schachner, 2020). With how the EEA is framed, priority is for the citizens of the Republic of South Africa with opportunities to be offered to immigrants with scarce skills to harness locally. This raises concerns about meeting the EEA requirements by including immigrants in an organisation’s workforce.

This study aims to explore employee perceptions of diversity and its impact on organisational objectives. According to Shore et al. (2011), Lozano & Escrich (2017), and Semono (2023), inclusion refers to the integration of marginalised groups into formal and informal organisational structures, as well as their perception of the workplace climate and assimilation into existing personnel. In this study, inclusion refers to an organisation's ethical compliance in providing equal access to employment, education, and economic activities for marginalised groups, specifically people of colour and women.

### 2.3. Diversity

The advancement of workplace equality has prompted numerous organisations to comply with the Employment Equity Act (EEA), address national employment equity plans and goals, and lessen unjust discrimination in the workplace. According to Brunner & Strine (2022), this endeavour resulted in diversity, which is "understood as a human capital-based government mechanism based on the usefulness of outsider perspectives and interests." However, diversity offers a statistical proportionality of workers in a company and is a flurry of parallels and distinctions (Robbin et al., 2016; Brunner & Strine, 2022). Therefore, a statistical representation of all the demographic information that distinguishes personnel across various organisational units can be used to establish an adequate implementation of the EEA in an organisation.

One could argue that a diverse organisation should have more members of marginalised groups than a certain percentage of its entire workforce. The viewpoint evolved into a corporate strategy after more than 60 years of progress towards equal employment opportunity and the equitable representation of minorities and marginalised groups in the workplace. This supports Vertovec's (2012) theory that diversity is a business strategy that fosters innovation and creativity as well as the discovery of possibilities and methods to affect how customers regard an organisation. Additionally, the focus of discussion these days is on diversity and inclusion, with an emphasis on how different people may contribute to business growth and profitability. This study focuses on variety within the context of the EEA. The following advantages of incorporating diversity are discovered with the deployment of the EEA. Diversity in the workplace benefits talent retention, creativity, flexibility, productivity, and human capital quality (Cox, 1991; Jabbour et al., 2011; Meeussen et al., 2014; Frijns et al., 2016; Manoharan & Singal, 2017). The benefits of EEA implementation are frequently highlighted in the literature.

### 2.4. Equality

This study draws on Iris Marion Young's (2007) theory of structural injustice, which states that it occurs when individuals are denied the opportunity to develop

and exercise their capacities due to social processes. The study highlights structural injustices such as apartheid, discrimination, and the exclusion of marginalised groups in the workplace. To address these issues, the EEA was developed and amended to improve inclusion, equality in education, and socio-economic activities, including employment. Furthermore, employment in an organisation is driven by a variety of reasons, including “pursuing their goals and interests while adhering to rules and norms” (Young, 2007). Thus, organisations work directly towards their goals, and EEA implementation may interfere. As a result, the study seeks to determine how employees see the implications for organisational goals. Demeterio (2014) defines structural injustices as “justice and injustice founded on the presence or absence of domination and oppression in a social structure or social structural processes that may assist, or hinder a given social group’s exercise of its capacities and attainment of its possibilities”.

According to Elia et al. (2019), building a functional structure and achieving its objectives efficiently involves compliance with legislation, labour relations, and external forces influencing organisational activities. Structural inequities can be addressed by creating a functional framework that prioritises equitable opportunities and inclusion for all marginalised groups. Through a structural injustice lens, inclusion advocates for individuals to have access to economic and social opportunities by removing exclusionary barriers and systems. Organisations can address structural injustice through employee recruitment and retention processes (Bourne et al., 2013; Ojochona et al., 2022). This study examines employees’ perceptions of applying the EEA in a research-oriented organisation that requires specific academic backgrounds and skills. It provides an overview of how the organisation includes and excludes potential employees based on educational qualifications.

According to Moneyweb.co.za (25 May 2024), the Department of Home Affairs was unable to deport a Czech Republic executive with critical skills. This highlights the importance of hiring candidates with skills that marginalised groups lack. Aligning with development plans helps organisations improve productivity, profit and competitiveness. The literature on diversity, the EEA and inclusion focuses on organisational decisions, top management practices, and external factors influencing HRM practices (Flory et al., 2021; Ng et al., 2020; McCallaghan et al., 2020; Semono, 2020; Ojochona et al., 2022). When implementing a justice structure, it is crucial to prioritise organisational development and innovation, especially in organisations with limited skill sets. Structural justice, recognised through the EEA, aims to promote the equal representation of global society within organisations while maintaining organisational objectives. Organisations should prioritise compliance with the EEA and other constitutional acts that promote equity and justice. In all, this work promotes the importance of workplace diversity management through understanding employees’ perceptions of the EEA, while examining the potential effect the legislation has on organisational performance as a result of the EEA and

its requirements. Furthermore, querying the implications that the EEA enforces on organisational objectives.

In summary, the EEA, inclusion, diversity and equality stem from different positions but are in parallel with the discussion of eradicating unfair discrimination in the workplace, bias, and non-compliance with regulations. Importantly, all reflect the importance of the socio-economic inclusion of marginalised groups, especially women in the workplace, thus emphasising the importance of equal opportunity and the advancement of societal objectives to improve economic activities across different social groups.

### 3. Methodology

The study was conducted through a qualitative research approach that adopted a social constructionism paradigm recognising ‘the development of meaning through lived experiences across different social settings’ (Gergen, 2015; Schudson & Gelman, 2023). This research was conducted at the Department of Management and Entrepreneurship, University of the Western Cape. From a case study design, a research institution in South Africa was chosen for the study and purposive sampling was adopted to conveniently draw 30 participants from the population based on the following factors:

- The organisation existed before, during, and after apartheid, and has extensive data on various employee structures influenced by legislation during each period.
- As a government parastatal, compliance with legislation is crucial for effective operations in a democratic society where the constitution governs institutions.
- The organisation uses a Key Performance Indicator system to keep employees focused on organisational objectives.
- The organisation has a diverse workforce influenced by the EEA.

Furthermore, the researcher chose the organisation based on its nature of operation and work-orientation (the chosen institution works closely with government in addressing the socio-economic struggles of the society). The researcher, as an outsider, has no influence on the narrative of the study, nor the reflections of the employees, and reflects the views of one institution, not of South African institutions. The study included 30 participants: ten senior/top management employees (executive directors and unit managers), ten intermediate employees (employees that are not working as interns or trainees but not at the executive level), and ten entry-level employees (interns and trainees), to gather their perceptions of the EEA. Although diversity demographics were noted, they were not used in the participant selection process as the important aspects were employee level and years of employment in the institution. The selection criteria were influenced by employee diversity (years in the institution and role), employment levels, and EEA ethical requirements applica-

ble to all levels of employment. To maintain research ethics, the participants' names and institutions are not disclosed.

The study selected 30 participants, of which only 28 contributed to the study, while two abruptly withdrew from the interview. Approximately 75% of the study participants were female. In terms of ethnicity, the study drew a homogeneous sample from the organisation, with at least 89% of participants belonging to the marginalised group, which included Coloured, Indian, and Black individuals. Moreover, junior employees, and senior employees nearing retirement age made up only 14% of the sample. Only 39% of participants had at least 6 years of work experience. In selecting the participants, the sampling criteria classified employees based on years of experience in the institution, willingness to participate once invited, and role in the organisation. Furthermore, the interview process followed ethical procedures that required participants to fill in a consent form, the researcher reading the consent form, having participants sign the invitation letter to confirm participation, and lastly, the participants' personal information was excluded from the recording of the interview. To avoid bias, the researcher transcribing the interview approached this study as an outsider to not influence the feedback received.

The sampling process evenly divided participants across employment levels (entry-level, intermediate, and senior). Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with 28 selected participants. Furthermore, the data was analysed thematically using ATLAS.ti, which aids in autocoding. The ATLAS.ti autocoding process involves creating a project, adding documents, organising them, identifying, and selecting text for further interest, comparing data segments, querying data, conceptualising data, building networks and codes, and compiling a report based on memos (Friese, 2022). Simply put, this is a brief explanation of how important information was created from the data collected.

## 4. Results

This paper examined employees' perspectives on the EEA and its relevance to organisational objectives. This study focused on the EEA, diversity, inclusion, and, most importantly, their relationship. The study examined scholarly perspectives on the EEA and organisational objectives, including performance, profitability and effectiveness. The primary focus was to deduce the views of employees on how organisational performance is affected by the adoption and application of the EEA. The study questioned employees' understanding of the Employment Equity Act. This question was designed to assess participants' perspectives on the EEA. A qualitative research approach values 'the different views and perceptions of the study participants' (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018). The question allowed us to explore participants' perspectives on employment equity. The themes discussed are

tied to the responses which answered the question accurately, and are relevant to the literature review.

#### **4.1. To organise the views of participants regarding the first question “How do you understand the EEA?” the study draws on the responses quoted below:**

Participant 1 *“The EEA concerns employability, considering race, and trying to balance and sort out the inequality that occurred in the past, where fewer black people had higher positions or even any positions at all. Therefore, it considers employment based on race or even positions based on race.”*

Participant 4 *“Equity means balancing the number of people employed, for example, black, and including race, gender, qualifications, and equity.”*

Participant 10 *“The guiding framework for ensuring that we employ or employers recruit and employ with a sense of understanding the transformation agenda in South Africa, and with those transformation aspirations and how they should be represented in the workplace. So, that includes recognition of whether you call it previously disadvantaged or currently disadvantaged living with people living with disabilities.”*

Participant 13 *“To correct the wrongs of the past in terms of employment equity, make sure that all people, specifically people who the apartheid government previously marginalised, have access to employment opportunities. Employment equity is all about levelling the playing field; it is not about equality but equity. Therefore, people who have previously been disadvantaged, will be prioritised.”*

Participant 19 *“It means transformation and inclusion on the job. The workplace becomes more diverse and inclusive. We make a conscious effort to ensure inclusivity and diversity in the workplace. So, typically, your previously marginalised groups would be black Africans, people who look like us, and women, and I am not sure whether it extends to people with disabilities.”*

Participant 28 *“So, we have to deal with discrimination and unfair discrimination that is embedded in our historical past.”*

To aggregate and understand the perception of employees of the legislation, the responses all drive inclusion, equity, the eradication of historic discrimination efforts, the inclusion of marginalised groups, and diversifying the workspace. This, in line with what the literature utters, including the views of Du Toit & Potgieter (2014); Lee (2016), and Ebrahim (2018) that the EEA was drafted to facilitate the inclusion of marginalised groups in the workplace and eradicate discrimination, further confirming the importance of the understanding and acute implementation of the legislation in the workplace. Drawing from the selected responses, this gives an overview that the EEA is clearly understood. Furthermore, the understanding is

pinned on economic, social and political perspectives of the act. This confirms the views of Omar & Inaba (2020), Pawlak & Kołodziejczak (2020), Zarei, Karami & Keshavarz (2020), focusing on the importance of decoding knowledge production of social, economic, political and technological constraints that through the practice and implementation of legislation are brought forth. As such, even the work of Young (2007) notes that social processes that threaten domination or create deprivation (the EEA in this case) are necessary to understand and apply precisely to reduce structural injustice towards a given social group (discrimination against marginalised groups).

In tackling the main objective of the study, the primary question drew on the understanding of the EEA, to be followed with a structured question to ascertain respondents' views on how the EEA influences organisational objectives (performance and attaining goals). A selected number of responses to the question are as follows:

#### 4.2. How does the EEA affect organisational objectives?

Participant 2 *“It also has disadvantages because if a male and a female, both African, are interviewing for one post, I mean a female already has an advantage if she qualifies, and if she has the desired skills, she already has an advantage of getting the job even before they ask the questions.”*

Participant 7 *“It influences transformation because it wants to address the inequalities of the past.”*

Participant 8 *“Yeah, I have experienced the benefits of the EEA, because I have been put in places where I even feel like I don't think I should be in charge of this.”*

Participant 12 *“It is a policy or a guiding framework to ensure that we employ or employers recruit and employ with a sense of understanding the transformation agenda in South Africa, and also with those transformation aspirations and how they should be represented in the workplace.”*

Participant 14 *“The organisation was white-dominant, mostly male, and Africans were in the bottom positions. This EEA addresses these inequalities.”*

Participant 23 *“Many black people aren't qualified to fill all the numbers.”*

Simply put, concerns raised over the EEA speak to it conforming to the objectives of satisfying legislation over the concerns of a given institution. Thus insinuating that organisations are driven to comply regardless of factors such as employees being fit for the role, and it gives advantage to marginalised groups who may be in a position of disadvantage based on skills and experience if merit was the only principle which applied. In this context, this hinders the effective execution of responsibilities. In terms of the organisation's desire to function effectively towards its goals, “developing a functional structure requires compliance with the legislature, labour

relations, and external forces influencing organisational activities” (Elia et al., 2019). Thus, scholars propose focusing on external factors to shape the organisation and enable it to achieve, implying that social, economic and political factors need to be considered. In this case, the EEA is that factor to be considered during restructuring an organisation to function effectively. However, lack of skills amongst marginalised groups serves as a detrimental factor considering that their inception into academic and socio-economic activities has been severely hampered by discrimination. This confirms the assertion by Portnoi (2015) that the apartheid-era-created imbalance regarding education, and skills capacitation amongst different races and genders remain a factor today. Furthermore, it confirms the views of “participant 7” that the EEA addresses past inequalities and “participant 23” that many marginalised groups lack education to occupy particular roles. Thus, the EEA transformation is hampered by human capital and apartheid injustices to date.

The analysis of the EEA’s relevance to the organisation’s objectives yielded three responses: relevant, irrelevant, and neutral. Respondents who found the EEA relevant praised its benefits, such as workplace diversity, increased idea exchange, and the creation of a learning organisation. Respondents cited the history of apartheid and the EEA’s efforts to promote diversity in South African organisations. Some respondents questioned the EEA’s relevance, claiming it fails to communicate an organisation’s economic objectives. EEA-influenced employment does not always address performance gaps. However, there is still a lack of statistical representation, and relevant skills and abilities for organisational goals. The study indicates that the EEA is viewed from social, political and economic perspectives. From the primarily observed perspectives of the EEA, this study deduces meaning from claims that encompass diversity as a facilitator of increased exchange of ideas, advancing learning through individual differences, and benefiting the workplace with effectiveness. Thus, there is a positive impact of the EEA on organisational objectives.

The detailed perspectives emphasise that the EEA and diversity are one concept, with similar outcomes but differing approaches. The results show that the EEA promotes a balanced workforce across diverse groups in organisations, as supported by amendments (Robbins et al., 2016; Brummer & Strine, 2022). The amended act emphasises the numerical representation of employees in reports. The EEA’s political relevance is reflected in responses that address past political injustice. In contrast, social relevance is argued through social equity, while economic relevance is emphasised through financial inclusion for all members of society. The EEA has been shown to address socio-economic inequality, education, economic exclusion, and apartheid-era injustices (Cox, 1991; Jabbour et al., 2011; Meeussen et al., 2014; Frijns et al., 2016; Manoharan & Singal, 2017; Roberson, 2019). From framing the EEA and diversity as one concept, employees understand the common objective offered by both and draw conclusions that both, respectfully, can offer a similar impact.

Thus, it is important to manage the implementation of the EEA to yield positive results.

Future research could explore the EEA and diversity as a business strategy, political factor, social factor, economic factor, and statistical representation of society in an organisation. Female academic staff members also experience alienating working environments in the South African context, as in other countries (Portnoi, 2015). Considering their position as a marginalised group, and perceptions of employees drawing on their need for inclusion as imminent, it is recommended to consider supporting the inception of females in senior positions and offering further capacity building.

## 5. Conclusions

This study examined employee perspectives on the EEA and its impact on organisational performance. It employed social constructionism to understand employee meaning, and structural injustice theory to examine how the EEA is used to address past injustices, such as gender inequality and lack of representation. The study found that private institutions do not operate under the same principles as public entities, resulting in varying applications and relevance of the EEA within organisations. Future research could explore the relationship between the EEA and diversity, applying existing theories to better understand the implications and consequences. This study found that implementing the EEA effectively promotes diversity in organisations. Theorising the relationship between the EEA and diversity is crucial for organisational performance.

The study found implications for organisational policies and practices, particularly those related to EEA implementation. Respondents expressed an understanding that the EEA and diversity are viewed as one concept, with the implementation of either producing results that include the other. Understanding diversity is crucial for developing policies that promote EEA adoption within organisations. Diversity training workshops should cover EEA and workplace legislation. The conclusion is that the EEA is relevant to organisational goals. It suggests developing EEA and diversity policies that align with organisational goals. As a policy, the EEA sets implementation thresholds based on sector, size, and financial profit. Organisational policies must align with the organisation's goals and support constitutional legislation. This will make it easier to implement the EEA and achieve organisation-specific diversity goals. The EEA's policies and practices should prioritise developing a diverse workforce to enhance performance. To summarise, practitioners should align their EEA and diversity objectives with organisational goals.

This study highlights the need for further research into the EEA's impact on reducing workplace inequality and injustice. However, the study was conducted in a research institution and does not provide implications for the EEA in a profit-making

institution. More research on the EEA's impact on organisational objectives could be conducted in different sectors, such as the private sector or profit-driven markets. Further research on the EEA should examine the impact of diversity management practices on organisations, as this study focused on their relevance to organisational objectives rather than practical implications. The study identified perceptions of the EEA from social, economic and political perspectives. Further research is needed to better understand the impact on organisations. Future research should explore the relationship between the EEA and diversity, their relevance to organisational goals, and their impact on these objectives. The study did not include specific components of the EEA that promote inclusion, equality and equity for marginalised groups. Understanding how the EEA promotes workplace diversity is crucial with specific reference to performance implication as a primary variable.

The study sample limits making general conclusions and applying the findings to other institutions. Thus, further exploration of this topic across different sectors will yield positive results as this study approach chose a single field of application. The study focused on a single case study, limiting the findings from being applied and duplicated. Furthermore, the sample is predominately a representation of marginalised groups, and offers a homogeneous perspective on the implications of the EEA on organisational performance, limiting the credibility of the findings.

More exploration should be considered outside research institutions to understand the significance of the EEA on performance. Moreover, a heterogeneous sample should be consulted to gather a comprehensive view from various races, nationalities, and other factors contributing to diversity dimensions. The study consulted limited literature on the topic, given that much research is done outside institutions focused on only research, thus more work on organisations reflecting a miniature society should be examined. This work did not prioritise examining the internal processes focusing on advancing inclusion, equality and diversity but their consequences as a result of the EEA. Future research focusing on a different approach beyond employee understanding and perceptions may provide significant conclusions to influence policies and regulations.

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