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South African quantity surveyors: issues of gender and race in the workplace

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Abstract

A web-based questionnaire survey of the opinions of SA quantity surveyors was undertaken to establish gender- and race-based differences in job satisfaction. Issues explored included demographic factors, issues of gender and race in the workplace, and gender and racial harassment and discrimination at work.

'Significant' differences on the basis of gender exist on a number of issues. Women, more than men, have strong positive feelings regarding their levels of job satisfaction, feel that their career expectations have been fulfilled, would choose the same career again, and would unequivocally recommend the career to others. Females see QS practices as male-dominated, see themselves as being blocked from advancement to managerial ranks, participating less in decision-making, and remunerated at a lower level than equivalent colleagues. Issues important to women include: gender representivity in the profession, flexible working hours and maternity leave above the statutory minimum. Although both gender groups report racial harassment and discrimination at work, women experience significantly more sexual and gender harassment and religious and gender discrimination than do males.

'Significant' differences on the basis of race are evident concerning: feelings of job satisfaction and views on maternity / paternity leave above statutory minima. 'Highly significant' differences on the basis of race arise over issues of: being subjected to greater supervision because of race, not being allowed to contribute meaningfully to the decision-making process, viewing PDI status as a valid basis for promotion, seeing race representivity in the profession as important in combating discrimination at work, having personally experienced racial harassment and discrimination at work, and seeing respect for individual diversity in the workplace as important - with 'Whites' viewing these issues less 'empathically' than their 'Non-white' counterparts.

The results provide valuable indicators for how the quantity surveying firms can create a more conducive work environment for professional staff, particularly females.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, gender, race, harassment, discrimination, quantity surveyors, South Africa

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Abstrak

'n Internetgebaseerde vraelys opname is gedoen oor die opinie van Suid Afri-kaanse bourekenaars rondom geslag- en rasverskille ten opsigte van werkste-vredenheid. Sake soos demografiese faktore, geslag en ras in die werksplek, geslag- en rasteistering asook diskriminasie by die werk is ondersoek.

Merkwaardige verskille oor verskillende sake op die basis van geslag is gevind. Vrouens, meer as mans, het sterk positiewe gevoelens oor vlakke van werkste-vredenheid, voel dat hul loopbaanverwagtinge vervul is, sal dieselfde loopbaan weer kies en sal onomwonde dieselfde loopbaan aan andere aanbeveel. Vrouens beskou bourekenaarpraktyke as mansgeoriënteerd, sien hulself as uit-gesluit van bevordering tot bestuursposte, neem minder deel in besluitneming en ontvang vergoeding op 'n laer skaal as mans op dieselfde vlak. Sake wat belangrik is vir vrouens sluit in: geslagsverteenwoordiging in die professie, flek-siewerksure en kraamverloftyd meer as wat wetlik bepaal is. Alhoewel beide geslagsgroepe rasseteistering en diskrimansie in die werksplek aangedui het, het vrouens meer seksuele-, geslags- en gesloofsteistering rapporteer as mans. Merkwaardige verskille op die basis van ras sluit ook in: gevoelens van werkste-vredenheid en die beskouing dat kraamverlof meer moet wees as die wetlike minimum. Hoogs merkwaardige verskille op die basis van geslag sluit in: per-sone voel onderworpe as gevolg van hulle ras dat daar meer toesig oor hulle gehou word, word nie toegelaat om by te dra tot betekenisvolle besluitnem-ingsprosesse, beskou 'Voorheen Benadeelde Individu' status as 'n geldige basis vir bevordering, sien rasverteenwoordiging in die professie as belangrik in die bekamping van diskriminasie in die werksplek, het persoonlik rasseteistering en diskriminasie by die werk ervaar, en beskou respek vir individuele diversiteit in die werksplek as belangrik - 'wittes' is minder empaties teenoor hierdie sake as hulle 'nie-wit' ampsgenote. Die resultate verskaf waardevolle aanduidings vir hoe die bourekenaarsprofessiefirmas 'n meer bevorderlike werksomgewing vir professionele personeel in besonder, vrouens, kan skep.

Sleutelwoorde: Werkstevredenheid, geslag, ras, teistering, diskriminasie, bou-rekenaars, Suid-Afrika

1. Introduction

According to Fogarty (1994), job satisfaction refers to the extent to which persons gain enjoyment or satisfaction from their efforts in the workplace. Locke (1976: 1300) puts it more simply, defining job satisfaction as "… a pleasurable or positive emotional experience resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience." Positive attitudes towards one's job are associated with high levels of job satisfaction. The converse is also true (Wilson & Rosenfeld, 1990).

There is a subtle difference between job satisfaction and motivation. Job satisfaction describes or measures the extent of a person's 'con-tentment' in his or her job. Motivation, on the other hand, explains the driving force(s) behind the pursuit or execution of particular activi-ties or a job. Put in another way, job satisfaction measures 'what is' – the level of job satisfaction while motivation measures 'why' – the

explanation(s) for the level of job satisfaction. The concepts are clearly linked and invariably used interchangeably in practice.

Loosemore, Dainty & Lingard (2003) have highlighted the importance of job satisfaction and motivation to the wellbeing of the construction industry. However, despite the wealth of research into job satisfaction and motivation generally, comparatively little research has been undertaken concerning its application to the construction industry (Asad & Dainty, 2005). This is particularly true in respect of the job satisfaction of building design team professionals. 'Job satisfaction' research in the construction industry has almost solely dealt with 'motivation'. Moreover, it has almost exclusively focused on construction 'worker' motivation (see Ogunlana & Chang, 1998; Baldry, 1995; Olomolaiye, 1990; 1988; McFillen & Maloney, 1988; Olomolaiye & Ogunlana, 1988; Maloney & McFillen, 1986; 1983). No study to date has focused solely on the job satisfaction of quantity surveyors. Even more scarce is literature examining the differences in job satisfaction of quantity surveyors on the basis of either gender or race.

The purpose of this article is to report on a study examining levels of job satisfaction of male and female, and 'Non-white' and 'White' (see Notes 1 and 2) professional quantity surveyors in South Africa. A web-based national questionnaire survey of the opinions of South African quantity surveyors was undertaken to establish their levels of job satisfaction. Issues explored included demographic factors; gender and race issues at work; and gender- and race-based harassment and discrimination at work.

The article provides valuable indicators for how quantity surveying firms can create a more conducive work environment for professional staff. Recommendations for future research are made.

2.   Gender and job satisfaction

A number of researchers have examined the relationship between gender and job satisfaction (e.g. Mason, 1995; Goh, Koh & Low, 1991), but the results of many studies have been contradictory. Some studies have found females to be more satisfied with their jobs than males (e.g. Clark, 1997), whilst other have found the reverse to be true (e.g. Forgionne & Peeters, 1982). According to Campbell, Converse & Rogers (1976), such differences can be explained on the basis that women have different expectations with regard to work; in essence, careers are of central importance to men but not as important to women. Research has indicated that men and

women may use different qualitative criteria in their assessment of work (Oshagbemi, 2003). Arguably, women are socialised to have different expectations, or society expects women to have different expectations. According to Oshagbemi (2003), however, there is no compelling reason to believe that, given equal education, employment and advancement opportunities, women should be any less (or more) satisfied than men with their jobs. A relationship is, however, said to exist between employee age and job satisfaction, regardless of gender (Oshagbemi, 2003).

Kiely & Henbest (2000) report on sexual harassment at work (see Note 3), noting that the increase in the numbers of women at work has been accompanied by a rise in the number of complaints. Whilst many women choose not to formally report sexual harassment (Baugh, 1997). Gutek (1985) report that this misconduct is widespread and that about 10% of women leave their jobs because of it. Sexual harassment and discrimination exact a high price from both employers and employees alike, representing a serious risk to employees' psychological and physical wellbeing (Schneider, Swan & Fitzgerald, 1997).

The issue of women in construction has been examined by, for example, Gurjao (2006), Gilbert & Walker (2001), Court & Moralee (1995), Sommerville, Kennedy & Orr (1993), Dorsey & Minkarah (1993), and Gale & Skitmore (1990). An examination of this literature reveals similar global issues (Gilbert & Walker, 2001), namely, justification of the need to increase the number of women in construction, perceptions of the industry by female school-leavers, increasing but unequal numbers joining the industry, and low retention rates of qualified women. The issue of male dominance within the industry has been highlighted. This dominance is said to have led to male orientation of the industry (Court & Moralee, 1995), and a lack of promotion prospects, maternity leave, child care facilities and flexible working hours (Sommerville *et al.*, 1993). Ellison (2001) comments on organisational barriers to promotion of women in firms of chartered surveyors, and the low representation of women at senior management levels.

Gurjao (2006) and Court & Moralee (1995) highlight the issue of retention of female labour within the industry. Women are leaving the industry in their early thirties (Court & Moralee, 1995), often to start a family. The perception on the part of many women that they feel obliged to make a choice between a career and a family is noted by Dainty, Bagilhole, & Neale (2000). Factors resulting in women leaving the construction industry in the UK can be

classified into two groupings: working environment characteristics and private life demands (Court & Moralee, 1995). Sinclair (1998) proposed the existence of a number of masculine subcultures, and that these encourage ritualism relating to sex and sports, bullying, and paternalism.

3. Race and job satisfaction

A number of North American studies have examined the racioethnic differences in various job-related outcomes. Friday, S.S. & Friday, E. (2003) report that such research has focused on differences in job satisfaction (e.g. Lankau & Scandura, 1996), organisational commitment (e.g. Tsui, Egan & O'Reilly, 1992) and turnover intentions (e.g. Davis, 1985). With respect to job satisfaction, mixed results have emerged. For example, studies by Brenner & Fernstein (1984) and Jones, James, Bruni & Sell (1977) found that 'black' employees reported higher levels of job satisfaction than did 'white' employees, whilst studies by Tuch & Martin (1991) and Greenhaus, Parasuamn & Wormley (1990) found the opposite to be the case. These studies covered a variety of occupations; *inter alia*, blue-collar employees, white collar workers, nurses, and social work staff members. Friday, Moss & Friday, (2004) concluded that the literature clearly provides conflicting empirical evidence on racial differences in job satisfaction. None of the above studies relate to the South African context, nor do they focus on design team professionals in general, and quantity surveyors in particular.

Recent literature (e.g. Friday *et al*., 2004) has suggested that the descriptive variable 'race' is not sufficient in explaining racial differences in job satisfaction. They suggest that other dimensions of racioethnicity, such as the socioethnic dimension, may better explain or provide additional insight into differences in job attitudes between races. Friday *et al*. (2004) propose the use of 'orthogonal cultural identification theory', in terms of which an individual may identify with cultures other than the racial group to which he or she belongs, without 'losing' identity with that original group. A unique facet of this theory is that it acknowledges that an individual's cultural environment is constantly evolving (Friday *et al*., 2004). The application of orthogonal cultural identification theory is clearly beyond the scope of this article given its purpose.

None of the above studies focused on the quantity surveying profession in general or on gender or race differences in particular.

4. Post-*apartheid* South Africa: a contextual background to the research

The *apartheid* legacy in South Africa provides a unique context to examine gender- and race-based differences in quantity surveyors' job satisfaction. In terms of *apartheid* legislation, persons were racially classified as 'White', 'Black', 'Coloured', or 'Asian'. The term 'Coloured' was used to describe South Africans who are from mixed descent. The 'Asian' classification included Indians (a large minority grouping in South Africa). For the purposes of enforcing *apartheid*, persons were generally categorised as either 'White' or 'Non-White' (see Notes 1 and 2).

Post-apartheid South Africa saw the introduction of 'positive discrimination' or 'affirmative action' as a vehicle to assist previously disadvantaged persons (PDIs) ('Non-whites' and women) (South Africa, 1996). Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) and affirmative procurement policies are examples of mechanisms used to facilitate change. Within the context of the construction industry, affirmative action has, for example, taken the form of preferential procurement in the award of building contracts and the appointment of professional consultants. The latter point has relevance here, as anecdotal evidence suggests that some quantity surveying practices accelerate the advancement of PDI staff ('window dressing' or 'fronting') in order to gain an advantage in the award of public sector commissions, in terms of which the number of PDIs in the practice in general, and in managerial positions in particular, are important considerations.

Given the legacy of *apartheid* and the current policy of the government to address the inequities of the past, it is considered appropriate to provide the racial 'classification' of respondents i.e. 'Non-whites' and 'Whites'. This classification will be referred to where considered appropriate in the analysis of the data.

5. The quantity surveying profession in South Africa

In South Africa only persons registered with the South African Council for the Quantity Surveying Profession (SACQSP), a statutory body in terms of the *Quantity Surveying Profession Act* (No. 49 of 2000) (South Africa, 2000) and Regulations promulgated in terms of the Act., are permitted to call themselves 'quantity surveyors', adopt the letters 'Pr.QS', and perform work reserved for quantity surveyors. The requirements for registration generally consist of the holding of a 4-year degree in quantity surveying, 3-year's post-graduation

practical experience ('articles') under the mentorship of a Pr.QS, and successfully passing an Assessment of Professional Competence (APC). As at June 2007, the SACQSP report 1756 registered quantity surveyors. Of this total, 218 (12.4%) are women. No such figures are available with regard to race.

6. Methodology and data collection

The data for this study were collected via a web-based, online questionnaire survey. This data collection instrument was adopted as it would facilitate the comparatively easy (and inexpensive) national coverage of every registered quantity surveyor in South Africa. The range of issues included in the survey instrument was drawn from the previous studies undertaken by, for example, Uppal (2005), Asad & Dainty (2005), Gilbert & Walker (2001), Smithers & Walker (2000), and Olomolaiye (1988).

A pilot web-based study was conducted with the co-operation and involvement of the Cape Town branch of a national firm of quantity surveyors. The questionnaire was tested with regard to respondent understanding, as well as in terms of the mechanics of data collection *per se*. The pilot study demonstrated that all questions were easily understood, data were collected successfully on the system, and so no changes were made. The full survey was launched in May 2007. The SACQSP emailed all registered quantity surveyors for whom email addresses were on record (N = 1448), requested their participation in the survey, and provided a link to a URL where the questionnaire could be completed on-line (see <http://webdav.uct.ac.za/research/cemjobsat/index.html>). A period of 3 weeks was allowed for responses and contact details were provided in the event of queries. By due date 98 responses had been received, representing a response rate of 6.77%. To increase the number of returns the deadline was extended by two weeks, by which time 146 submissions had been received. Of these, 23 (16%) are women; exceeding the proportion of women (12.4%) registered as quantity surveyors (population). The final response rate of 10.08% (n = 146) is considered adequate for a survey of this nature (Oppenheim, 1992). The data were analysed using SPSS for Windows.

7. Discussion of the results

The findings indicate that the majority of the respondents may be considered to be 'White', male South Africa citizens, senior professionals, with considerable experience. Most consider themselves to be paid an average, to above average, salary. Most report being

employed in the private sector, in professional quantity surveying practices, and holding a four-year full-time degree or equivalent. All respondents are members of the ASAQS, with membership of other professional bodies (e.g. RICS) being considerably less. The vast majority of participants report being married (or in a relationship) and having children. Whilst the single largest age grouping for both male and females is the '45 and older' age group (males: 49%; females; 26%), racial differences exist. More specifically, although 51% of 'White' respondents fall into the '45 and older' age category, the single largest grouping for 'Non-whites' is the '30-34' year category (30%).

7.1   Issues relating to gender at work

Earlier work by Gale (1991) and Gilbert & Walker (2001) investigated whether men and women perceive the same issues (variables) at work to be motivating and de-motivating. The relatively low numbers of women in the industry is said to be related, directly or indirectly, to perceived male 'domination' at work. As stated earlier, this dominance is said to have led to male orientation of the industry (Court & Moralee, 1995), and a lack of promotion prospects, maternity leave, child care facilities and flexible working hours (Sommerville *et al.*, 1993). In South Africa, women, together with 'Non-white' persons, have been classified as PDIs for the purposes of affirmative action.

The majority of quantity surveyors rate highly the 'principle' of remuneration being fair and equitable regardless of gender, and there was no significant difference between responses from males or females in this regard (p=0.13). The same holds true for the rating of the need for equality in recognition by the employer, with no differences between gender (p=0.59). When the 'reality' of the situation is examined, significant differences are apparent between males and females regarding remuneration (p<0.01) with 35% of females compared to 6% of males stating that they feel that they are being remunerated at a level lower than equivalent colleagues due to gender. The fact that the proportion of women participating in the survey (16%) exceeds their representivity in the general population of registered quantity surveyors (12.4%) permits the assertion that gender differences are significant based on evidence from the data. There is no difference between the groups (p=0.76) regarding the recognition by their employers of achievements regardless of gender. These results accord with those of Ellison (2001).

Whilst there is considerable support for flexible working hours, significant gender differences of opinion exist in respect of both the

importance ($p<0.01$) and presence ($p=0.05$). More specifically, women had a higher tendency to support strongly the need to be away from work during normal working hours and consider such flexibility to be very important. The same gender differences are apparent with respect to the 'importance' of maternity and paternity leave above statutory minimum entitlements ($p=<0.1$). Whilst it appears that the vast majority of employers adhere to statutory minima, 68% of the females hold the view that entitlements above the minimum are 'important' or 'very important'. Only a third of the males support this contention. These results mirror the findings of Sommerville *et al.* (1993).

Whilst a secure working environment [safety needs] is deemed important by the vast majority of both male (89%) and female (96%) quantity surveyors, a greater proportion of females (87%) compared to males (41%) see it as a very important issue. Over a quarter of both groups claim not to work in a safe and secure environment. There was no significant difference between the way males and females responded to the presence of a secure working environment ($p=0.60$), but women did find this factor to be more 'important' than males ($p<0.01$). Given current crime levels in South Africa, security is an important consideration.

In keeping with the findings of Court & Moralee (1995), the management of the vast majority of respondent quantity surveying firms is male dominant, although significant differences are apparent between the two groups over this issue ($p<0.01$). Where such male dominance exists, nearly 50% of female respondents (males: 3%) feel that advancement of females to managerial ranks is blocked by management. Clearly, perception differences by gender exist regarding advancement possibilities for women ($p<0.01$). These findings support those of Ellison (2001). Similar views are held by women in respect of not being allowed to contribute meaningfully to the decision-making process, albeit to a lesser degree where the gender difference is not significant ($p=0.23$). An important message stems from these results. Whether grounded in fact or not, the perceptions of women regarding barriers to advancement, lack of participation in decision-making, and consideration of issues such as flexible working hours are important and cognisance needs to be taken of them by management. Few male or female quantity surveyors feel that they are subject to a high degree of supervision in the workplace because of their gender, with no significant differences between the two groups ($p=0.24$).

Notwithstanding the fact that 'affirmative action' or 'positive discrimination' is permitted (for PDIs) in terms of the Constitution of South Africa (South Africa, 1996), the vast majority of male and female respondents see promotion on the basis of PDI status (positive discrimination) to be 'unacceptable'. No significant differences in the opinions of men and women exist in this regard (p=0.92).

Regarding whether or not professional status is important in combating perceptions of discrimination in the workplace, the vast majority of quantity surveyors (males: 71%; females: 78%) stated that it was (p=0.34). When similarly questioned regarding gender representivity, 26% of males and 52% of females 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that it was important. Females had a greater tendency than men to support the issue of gender representivity (p=0.03).

7.2   Issues relating to race at work

Unlike the work of Gale (1991) and Gilbert & Walker (2001) dealing with the perceptions of men and women, no similar, race-based research appears to have been conducted in the construction industry.

The majority of quantity surveyors ('Non-whites: 88%; 'Whites': 93%) rate highly the 'principle' of remuneration being fair and equitable regardless of race, and there was no significant difference between the two groups (p=0.69). When the 'reality' of the situation is examined, whilst a majority of 'Non-whites' and 'Whites' stated that they are not discriminated against in terms of salary, large proportions of both groups ('Non-white': 42%; 'White': 28%) claim that they are. The difference between the groups is not significant (p=0.27). Both groups consider equality in recognition of achievements by employers to be important (p=0.88). In reality, however, significant differences (p=0.01) in this regard between the groups emerge with 44% of 'Non-white' compared to 76% of 'Whites' 'agreeing' or 'strongly agreeing' that this is in fact the case. Employers need to take account of these feelings of marginalisation on the part of 'Non-whites'.

Whilst there is considerable support from both groups (>70%) for flexible working hours, differences by race in respect of both the importance (p=0.14) and presence (p=0.63) of this factor are not significant. A clear majority of both groups (>80%) report that their organisations adhere to the statutory minimums with respect to maternity and paternity leave (p=0.88), although 'marginally' significant differences (p=0.06) exist between the groups with more

'Non-whites' (55%) than 'Whites' (37%) seeing entitlements above the minimum as 'important' or 'very important'.

Regarding a secure working environment [safety needs], there was no significant difference between the way 'Non-whites' and 'Whites' responded to the presence (p=0.23), or importance (p=0.67), of a secure working environment.

Insofar as 'race in the workplace' is concerned, significant differences are clearly evident. Whilst the majority (84%) of all respondents see promotion on the basis of one's PDI status rather than on ability as unacceptable, clear differences between the two race groups are evident (p<0.01); with 22% of 'Non-whites' compared to 3% of 'Whites viewing it as an acceptable practice. Management needs to be sensitive to this issue.

Although a majority of both race groups ('Non-whites: 57%; 'Whites': 90%) do not see themselves as being subjected to a high degree of supervision because of their race, more 'Whites' (55%) than 'Non-whites' (17%) are emphatic about this. Significant differences exist between the two groups on the issue of supervision and race (p<0.01). Significant differences also exist between the two groups regarding not being allowed to contribute meaningfully to the decision-making process (p=0.02), with 33% of 'Non-whites' (compared to 10% of 'Whites') claiming this to be the case. Most respondents ('Non-whites': 96%; 'Whites': 87%) stress the importance of participation in decision-making, with a marginally significant difference between the groups (p=0.07). Management needs to be cognisant of this issue.

Regarding whether or not professional status is important in combating perceptions of discrimination in the workplace, although more 'Non-whites' (83%) than 'Whites' (71%) state that it is, the difference between the groups is not significant (p=0.13). When similarly questioned regarding race representivity, the difference in responses between the groups is significant (p=0.02); with 42% of 'Non-whites' compared to 27% of 'Whites' stating that it is important.

7.3   Gender and racial harassment and discrimination at work

Respondents were requested to provide details regarding the extent to which gender- and/or race-based harassment and discrimination at work had personally been experienced. Whilst incidences of 'harassment' do occur, their frequency is comparatively small with females experiencing proportionately more sexual (17%), racial (17%), and gender (30%) harassment than their male colleagues.

Statistically significant differences between the two groups occur in the cases of sexual (p=0.01) and gender (p<0.01) harassment. Although a larger proportion of women experience racial harassment (see Gutek, 1985), though there is no significant difference on the basis of gender (p=0.51). Of those who claim to have experienced racial harassment, a larger proportion are 'Non-white' (29%), with a significant difference between the two groups (p=0.02). Few respondents from either race group report sexual harassment at work (p=0.26). Harassment on the basis of gender (p=0.65), sexual orientation (p=0.17), and religious affiliation (p=0.13) appears minimal. Clearly, any form of harassment is unacceptable and management needs to be alert to these practices and implement remedial and supportive action where necessary.

Perceived 'discrimination' in the workplace appears to be more widespread, particularly with regard to race, gender, and educational background. Racial discrimination appears to be the most widespread, being reported by more than a third of all respondents. There is a statistically significant association between gender and discrimination on the basis of gender (p<0.01) and religious affiliation (p=0.05). Close to a majority of female respondents (48%) report having experienced gender discrimination at work. These results mirror those of Gurjao (2006). Incidences of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and physical disability are minimal.

Racial discrimination appears to be the most widespread, being reported by 58% of 'Non-whites' and 31% of 'Whites' (p=0.02). It is not clear whether the incidences of racial discrimination are 'active' rather than in a 'passive' form associated with affirmative action. More 'Non-whites' (17%) than 'Whites' (5%) report discrimination on the basis of educational background, with a marginally significant difference between the groups (p=0.06). This feeling of discrimination may result from the fact that 39% of 'Non-whites', compared to 19% of 'Whites', do not hold a 4-year university degree or its equivalent. Respondents from both groups (13%) have experienced gender discrimination, but the group differences are not significant (p=1.00). Incidences of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, religious affiliation and physical disability are minimal and differences between the groups not significant. These results support those of Ellison (2001). Again management needs to be sensitive to these issues.

Finally, whilst an overwhelming majority of both male and female respondent groups regard respect for individual diversity in the workplace to be important, there is a significant difference between

males and females ($p<0.01$), with more women (78%) than men (44%) citing it as 'very important'. Whilst the majority ('Non-white': 100%; 'White': 87%) regard respect for individual diversity in the workplace to be 'important' or 'very important', there is a significant difference between the two race groups in this response ($p=0.01$) with 45% of 'Whites' (compared to 71% of 'Non-whites') seeing it as 'very important'. Such intolerance is contrary to the provisions of the South African Constitution (South Africa, 1996).

7.4   Overall levels of job satisfaction – gender and race perspectives

Although the vast majority of participating quantity surveyors appear to like the work they do, significant differences exist between the male and female respondents ($p<0.01$) with 68% of females reporting that they 'like it very much' or 'love it', compared to 38% of the males. These results conflict with those of Oshagbemi (2003). When asked whether or not they would recommend a career in quantity surveying to others, significant differences are apparent between the two gender groups ($p=0.02$). More specifically, whilst a majority of males (75%) and females (79%) said they would 'probably' or 'definitely' do so, far more females (48%) than males (19%) were emphatic. Over a quarter of both gender groups said they were unlikely to recommend the career to others.

Most male (85%) and female (83%) respondents claim to have 'probably' or 'definitely' experienced fulfilment with regard to their career expectations, although far less males (19%) than females (48%) said so with absolute conviction; giving rise to a significant difference between the groups ($p=0.01$). When asked if they would choose the same career again, significant differences exist between the two gender groups ($p<0.01$) with a greater proportion of females (44%) than males (17%) stating that they would. Again, these results conflict with those of Oshagbemi (2003).

Whilst more 'Whites' (46%) than 'Non-whites' (22%) report that they 'like it very much' or 'love it', the differences overall are not significant ($p=0.22$). A small minority of both race groups appear indifferent to the job. When asked if they would choose the same career again, whilst a clear majority of each racial group said that they 'definitely' or 'probably' would, nearly 30% of both race groups claimed that they most likely would not. Differences between the race groups are not significant ($p=0.57$). Interestingly, 'Non-whites' and 'Whites' differ significantly ($p=0.03$) as to whether they would consider moving into a different field of employment within the built environment, with

more 'Non-whites' (21%) than 'Whites' (10%) emphatic about this. When asked whether or not they would recommend a career in quantity surveying to others, no significant differences exist between the race groups (*p*=0.85) with 79% of 'Non-whites' and 75% of 'Whites', respectively, stating that they would 'probably' or 'definitely' do so.

Comparatively few quantity surveyors experience high levels of job dissatisfaction at all times; certain aspects of the work obviously giving rise to job dissatisfaction to a greater or lesser degree – most notably the measurement of builders' work, project administration, and the preparation of final accounts. Reasons cited under 'Other' included: perceived incompetence of other professionals; poor documentation from, and lack of faith in, designers; bureaucracy; dealing with government officials (political interference); disparaging attitudes displayed towards 'White' women by 'Black' male clients; contractual disputes; professional appointments made on the basis of affirmative action; and dealing with 'incompetent' emerging contractors. The provision of cost estimates appears to give rise to the least job dissatisfaction. Differences between the gender and race groups are not significant.

8.   Conclusions

The focus of this article has been a gender- and race-based comparison of the opinions of quantity surveyors in South Africa regarding job satisfaction. An overview of research relating to the nature of job satisfaction was provided. Previous research into job satisfaction and motivation in the construction industry was discussed. The dearth of literature relating to quantity surveyors' job satisfaction in general, and gender and racial differences in particular, was noted. The focus of this research centred on a number of issues, namely: issues relating to gender and race at work; personal experiences of gender- and/or race-based harassment and discrimination at work; and levels of job satisfaction experienced by the different groups.

'Significant' differences of opinion between the male and female respondents exist on a number of issues. More women (68%) than men (38%) have strong positive feelings regarding their levels of job satisfaction. Similarly, considerably more women (48%) than men (19%) feel that their expectations regarding the career have been fulfilled. Proportionately far more females (44%) than males (17%) would choose the same career again, and considerably more women (48%) than men (19%) would emphatically recommend a

career in quantity surveying to others. The females rated having flexible working hours far more highly than men.

It is common cause that the management structures of quantity surveying practices are male dominated. Female quantity surveyors see this as giving rise to male-dominated management actively blocking female advancement to the managerial ranks (50%) and being remunerated at a lower level than equivalent colleagues (35%). Although the difference is not significant, more females (25%) than males (12%) claim not to be allowed to contribute meaningfully to the decision-making process. Women, significantly more than men, see gender representivity in the profession as a means of combating discrimination at work. Issues of maternity / paternity leave above the statutory minimum and working in a secure environment are significantly more important to women than men.

Instances of sexual, racial and gender 'harassment' at work are not uncommon. Women experience significantly more sexual (males: 2%; females: 17%) and gender (males: 2%; females: 30%) harassment at work than their male counterparts. Both males and females report suffer from racial harassment (males: 12%; females: 17%), but the difference between the two groups is not significant. Similarly, instances of 'discrimination' occur in the workplace. Significant differences between the two groups occur in the cases of religious affiliation (males: 2%; females: 13%), and gender (males: 6%; females: 48%). It is noteworthy that nearly half of all female respondents report gender discrimination. Both groups report racial discrimination (males: 37%; females: 26%), but group differences are not significant. Whilst a vast majority of both groups consider respect for individual diversity within the workplace to be important, the females are more emphatic in this regard.

'Significant' differences of opinion between the 'Non-white' and 'White' respondents exist on a number of issues. More 'Whites' (46%) than 'Non-whites' (22%) have strong positive feelings regarding their levels of job satisfaction. Conversely, more 'Non-whites' (21%) than 'Whites' (10%) would consider moving to a different field of employment in the built environment. More 'Whites' (82%) than 'Non-whites' (68%) have positive feelings about recognition by employers of achievements regardless of race, this disparity becoming more pronounced when considering those who are emphatic about this issue. 'Non-whites' (55%), significantly more than 'Whites' (37%), see maternity / paternity leave above statutory minimums to be important.

'Highly' significant differences between 'Non-whites' and 'Whites' arise over issues of: being subjected to greater supervision because of race; not being allowed to contribute meaningfully to the decision-making process; viewing PDI status as a valid basis for promotion; seeing race representivity in the profession as important in combating discrimination at work; having personally experienced racial harassment and discrimination at work; and seeing the importance for respect for individual diversity in the workplace – with 'Whites' viewing these issues less 'empathically' than their 'Non-white' counterparts.

These results provide valuable indicators for how quantity surveying firms can create a more conducive work environment for professional staff, particularly with regard to a safe and secure working environment; feelings of marginalisation on the part of 'Non-whites'; attitudes of 'Whites' to promotion on the basis of PDI status; feelings of 'Non-whites' regarding the need to be included in decision-making and being subjected to greater levels of supervision on the basis of race; and combating harassment and discrimination at work.

Further research could explore the discrepancy between women being more satisfied in their jobs than men, but displaying greater levels of dissatisfaction than their male counterparts with the way they perceive themselves to be treated in the profession. Similarly, the intersection between race and gender is worthy of examination; particularly the low levels of job satisfaction being experienced by "Non-white' females.

Notes

1. In terms of the *apartheid* legislation of the pre-1994 government in South Africa, persons were racially classified as 'White', 'Black', 'Coloured', or 'Asian'. The term 'Coloured' was used to describe South Africans of mixed descent. The 'Asian' classification included Indians. For the purposes of enforcing *apartheid*, persons were generally categorised as either 'White' or 'Non-White'. While the latter term has some pejorative connotations, it remains a useful label for categorising several groups of people who were formerly disadvantaged due to their ethnicity. It has been solely used in that capacity in this research.

2. Given the legacy of *apartheid* and the policy of the current government of South Africa to address the inequities of the past using mechanisms of 'positive discrimination' and 'affirmative action', it has been considered appropriate to use the racial classifications

of survey respondent groups for some of the data analysis. In most cases, however, the complete sub-groupings were too small for reliable analysis, and the larger 'White' and 'Non-White' sub-groups (as explained in Note 1 above) have been used.

3. The definition of sexual harassment is sometimes subject to wide interpretation. In 2001 the US Supreme Court defined sexual harassment as discrimination based on the sex of the employee dealing with their compensation, terms, conditions or privileges of employment (Moyes, Williams & Koch, 2006).

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Acknowledgements