

**AN EVALUATION OF GENDER DIVERSITY IN SMALL TO MEDIUM
ENTERPRISES SITUATED IN THE WINDHOEK CENTRAL BUSINESS
DISTRICT AREA, BRB BUILDING, AUSSPANNPLATZ, NAMIBIA**

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Abstract

Workplace gender diversity in Namibia Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) has been a topic hidden in obscurity over the past years. This research explored the attitudes of SME employers towards gender diversity, the perception of employees and the effects of gender diversity in the workplace using examples from Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) situated in Windhoek Central Business District Area at BRB Building Ausspannplatz, Namibia as a basis and framework for analysis. Workplace gender diversity refers to the equitable and fair representation of all genders at the workplace. In this study the evaluation of gender diversity was only be narrowed to men and women. For the purposes of this study a quantitative research methodology was used. A questionnaire was used to gather data from the target population. A total sample of 53 respondents was targeted out of a population of 61 SMEs. Among the 53 questionnaires that were distributed, 53 were returned. Based on the findings this research concludes that there is significant need for SMEs to address gender diversity tactfully within their organisations. Among the respondents, 49.1% were not sure whether their organizations embrace gender diversity or not. The majority of the respondents constituting 77.4% were not satisfied with their management's attitude towards gender diversity. According to the findings, 81.1% agreed that SMEs would benefit from gender diversity and 71.7% agreed that gender diversity enhances business performance. It is therefore imperative for SME employers to recognise the positive impacts of gender diversity, leverage them and create real value for their employees and organisations. A holistic and multifaceted approach that involves employees at all levels is essential for achieving positive gender inclusivity.

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Key words

Gender Diversity

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

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Dedication

I dedicate this research work to my parents for the unwavering support they have given me throughout my life as a child, an adult and a student, especially in the build up to this research. Without their persistent encouragement, I would not have made it this far.

Declaration

I, Erica Gatawa, hereby declare that this study is my own work and is a true reflection of my research, and that this work, or any part thereof has not been submitted for a degree at any other institution.

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Date.....

CHAPTER 1

1.0 Introduction

Gender diversity refers to the variation in gender represented in a specific setting (Adams & Funk, 2012). Ordinarily this term is often used with reference to females and males though this term has evolved to denote some unconventional variations such as bisexual and transgender. The rapidly changing global business environment requires a skilled workforce that possesses varied experience and is ready to overcome modern day challenges. Cultural diversity in the workplace has with time grown as a trend with the upturn of globalisation in the world (Martin, 2014). Many organisations have found it imperative to use a diverse workforce as a springboard to delve into the dynamic business world. Diversity can affect the workplace in various ways, both positive and negative, “it could be a problem to an organisation, but could also be a solution” (Dike, 2013). The term ‘diversity’ has been a subject of complexity and controversy.

This research seeks to evaluate workforce heterogeneity with a specific focus on gender diversity awareness in relation to only men and women, employer and employee perceptions and advantages of a gender diverse workforce. This research will explore the attitudes of SME employers towards gender diversity, the effects of gender diversity in the workplace using examples from Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) situated in Windhoek Central Business District Area at BRB Building Ausspannplatz, Namibia as a basis and framework for analysis.

1.1 Background of the Study

The Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Namibia are considered key contributors to economic development, contributing 12% of the Namibian GDP (Ogbokor, 2012). According to the Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and SME Development (2015), SMEs contribute in “employment creation, income generation and poverty reduction among the inhabitants of Namibia, both in rural and urban areas. Indeed, strong, independent and growing SMEs are the drivers of growth, innovation, development and job creation in an emerging economy where the scale and diversity of large businesses are insufficient to meet the demand for new investment and employment”. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development reported in the 2012 African Economic Outlook regarding Namibia, that, the “pace of growth has remained stable at moderate levels”, (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2012).

There is no universal definition of SMEs since this definition would have to take into account the legal, social and economic environments of different countries (Tonin, 1998). In this research the definition of the term SME, shall be understood in the way it is defined by the Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and SME Development in Namibia. In this definition a *Micro Enterprise has employees up to 10 and realizes an annual turnover of up to N\$300,000. A Small Enterprise employs between 11 – 30 employees and has an annual turnover ranging between N\$300,001 – N\$3,000,000. A Medium Enterprise employs between 31 – 100 people and has an annual turnover of N\$3,000,001 – N\$10,000,000 (Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and SME Development in Namibia, 2016).* The size and characteristics of SMEs is officially

defined by the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) as illustrated in the table 1 below:

Table 1 SME Definition by the Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and SME Development Namibia, (2016)

Category	Number of Employees	Annual Turnover
Micro	Up to 10	Up to N\$300,000
Small	11 – 30	Up to N\$3,000,000
Medium	31 – 100	Up to N\$10,000,000

(Source: *Ministry of Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and SME Development Namibia, 2016 – 2021*)

With the knowledge that diversity encapsulates a wide range of variables, this research is restricted to gender diversity in SME workforces. Whether diversity management relating to gender can positively or negatively impact on an organisation, it is something that this research intends to elucidate.

1.2 Problem Statement

According to Greendoor Properties BRB Building Properties Management Profile (2017), among the 61 SMEs at BRB Building, 45 are male owned whilst 16 are female owned. This difference depicts a discrepancy in gender diversity. Mixed feelings towards the importance of gender diversity in organisations has characterized the discussions of gender over decades (Ngao & Mwangi, 2013).

Modern companies emphasize the importance of employing a diverse workforce for reasons such as representing the society that it serves, attracting talented employees, servicing diverse segments of clients and improving organisational performance (Bogaert & Vloebergs 2005; Mavis & Girling 2000). The general perception about workplace diversity is that it yields positive results. According to Ngao and Mwangi (2013), in some industries gender diversity can yield negative outcomes.

Vast existing literature on gender diversity has explored the topic in listed companies and boards of directors internationally. This has resulted in limited and scanty literature pertaining to gender diversity in SMEs in Africa and Namibia to be specific. However, this research mostly focuses on SMEs. SMEs are more important in terms of number, employment and sales (Minguez-Vera and López-Martínez, 2010).

The United Nations Development Programme in Namibia (2015), reports that women have “traditionally suffered discrimination and exclusion from full participation in the political, socioeconomic and cultural life of the nation”. Jauch (2012) states that while 51% of the Namibian population is estimated to be comprised of women, they are rated as the most unemployed group. Unemployment amongst women is higher in both rural and urban areas (52.8% and 35.7%) compared to men (41% and 25.8%), (Jauch, 2012). It is clear that women are underrepresented in the formal economy, professional and management levels. Female-headed households, which are some 40% of the total, have a per capita income of N\$ 7 528, in contrast to male-headed households with a per capita income of N\$ 12 248. These

figures point to a large number of single mothers and to the continued economic marginalization of women in Namibian society, (Jauch, 2012).

1.3 Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to evaluate gender diversity in Namibian SMEs situated in the Windhoek Central Business District area at BRB Building Ausspannplatz and the study seeks to answer the following questions:

- What attitudes do SME employers have towards gender diversity?
- Is gender diversity a common phenomenon among SMEs?
- What is the relationship between gender diversity and team synergy?
- What are the effects of a gender diverse workforce?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study is significant as it aids the researcher to address the gap in knowledge on gender diversity within SMEs. This will be addressed through the findings on the evaluation of gender diversity in SMEs situated in the Windhoek CBD area, the conclusion as well as the recommendations that will emerge in the study. Since the majority of previous evidence was taken from listed firms (Minguez-Vera and López-Martínez, 2010), this research is significant as it focuses on evaluating gender diversity in SMEs in Namibia. This is relevant for Namibia as it encourages everyone's participation in the economy through the Harambee Prosperity Plan (HPP) that was launched by the Namibian President Hage Geingob in 2016.

The study will also contribute to the global call for gender inclusivity in society and business. This is critical at a time when national governments are focusing on ensuring that gender diversity is used as a poverty eradication strategy. The study also adds to literature that is already available on gender diversity.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

This study mainly focused on gender diversity. This means that there is a narrow possibility of the research to be used as conclusive when dealing with other attributes that are different from the aforementioned primary and secondary ones such as age, race, sexual orientation, religion, education, geographical location, political parties and income. Namibian literature relating to gender diversity was limited. Gender diversity in SMEs as a topic has received little attention especially in the Namibian context.

1.6 Delimitation of the Study

This study confined itself to interviewing SMEs at BRB Building, Ausspannplatz in the Windhoek Central Business District. Diversity encompasses a wide range of variables such as age, gender, race, and sexual orientation, religion, education, geographical location, political parties and income. In this research, the main focus was placed on gender diversity.

1.7 Research Organisation

This study consists of five chapters structured as follows:

Chapter 1 - Introduction

This chapter provides a background of the study and gives an insight into the issues pertaining to gender diversity. The chapter comprises of the introduction and background, statement of the problem, research questions and the significance for the study.

Chapter 2 - Literature review

This section reviews the literature related to gender diversity. This review is done to give the researcher an in-depth understanding of the subject under study as well as help the researcher understand the subject from the perspective of other authors.

Chapter 3 - Research Methods

This chapter presents the process through which the researcher will collect data which is going to be used to reach a conclusion on gender diversity in Namibian SMEs within the Windhoek Central Business District at BRB Building Ausspannplatz. This section comprises of the research design, target population, sampling method, research instruments, ethical considerations and data analysis method.

Chapter 4 - Data Analysis and Interpretations

This is the chapter where the data that was gathered from the respondents will be analysed and interpreted so that it becomes useful to the researcher for the drawing of recommendations and conclusions.

Chapter 5 - Recommendations and Conclusions

This chapter builds on the findings and implications from chapter four in making recommendations regarding the adoption and implementation of strategic planning.

CHAPTER 2

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section, referred to as “scholarship review” (Mouton, 2001), allows the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the subject under study as well as get the perspective of other scholars on the subject (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012). The purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact of gender diversity on Namibian SMEs operating at the BRB Building in the Central Business District Area of Windhoek. Although this review discusses relevant publications published from books, electronic journals, and credible internet sources and periodicals on gender diversity issues that are related to this study, it also discusses how relevant they are in terms of the significance to this study.

2.2 Small to Medium Enterprises definition

The term “Small and Medium Enterprises, covers a variety of definitions and measures. In the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member countries, employment is the most widely used criterion for determining firm size. SMEs are usually defined as firms with fewer than 500 employees, although a number of countries, including those in the European Union use a lower cut-off point of 250. It is apparent that SMEs play an important role in all OECD economies: they make up over 95 per cent of enterprises and account for 60 to 70 per cent of jobs in most OECD countries (OECD, 2015). In Namibia an SME is determined by the number of employees as well as the total annual turnover. An

enterprise employing 1 – 100 people, with a turnover up to N\$10,000,000 – 00 (10 million Namibian dollars can be regarded as an SME (*Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and SME Development in Namibia, 2016*).

2.3 Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Gender Diversity

SMEs often lack the time, means and expertise to address gender diversity issues. They usually have more urgent operational concerns and their priority is first and foremost to stay afloat. At first glance, gender diversity management appears to most SME managers as an immaterial and non-financial concern (European Commission, 2015). Ngao and Mwangi (2013) mention that effectively managed gender diversity encourages constructive dialogue, contradictory debate, collaboration, creativity and innovation. As a result, diversity impacts indirectly but positively on long-term economic performance. According to the European Commission (2015), homogeneity of profiles within work teams does not necessarily guarantee better collaboration or yield higher achievements and innovation. Diversity is an even more interesting and valuable resource in the context of SMEs due to their small size and greater flexibility, SMEs obtain visible results very quickly.

According to Scott and Irwin (2009), a survey of 400 SMEs on Gender in the United Kingdom, found that, Gender, Ethnicity, Education and Social Capital in SMEs, men were more likely than women to use advice from customers, investors, lenders, strategic partners, management team and paid professionals. In contrast, women found investors, suppliers, management team and business acquaintances more useful than men. The sources cited above are important in highlighting some of the

issues which the researcher will use in formulating questions on the questionnaire regarding SMEs and gender diversity.

2.4 Gender Diversity

Gender diversity refers to the variation in gender representation within a specific setting (Adams & Funk, 2012). According to Dezsò and Ross (2012), gender diversity involves the representation of all gender in organisations. Over the past few decades, researchers have had considerable focus on the impact of gender diversity on business performance. The involvement of women in the workplace is said to have brought remarkable improvements to the way business processes are carried out (Myers, 2009). According to Barker (2014), departments with women produce work teams that stay on schedule and under the budget.

In addition the departments demonstrate improved employee performance, perform better financially particularly when women are occupying a significant proportion of top management positions and demonstrate superior team dynamics. Swanepoel (2012) states that these second generation managerial women are drawing on what is unique to their socialization as women, hence creating a different path to the top. They seek and find opportunities in fast changing and growing organisations to show that they can achieve results in a different way.

According to Dike (2013) the primary dimensions of diversity such as age, gender, race, and sexual orientation exhibits the main differences between various individuals. These primary differences also have the most impact on initial encounters and can be easily noticed and serve as filters through which people view the world (Ashton, 2010). The secondary dimensions such as religion, education,

geographical location, political parties and income, are those qualities that are not noticeable in the first encounter and can even change throughout different encounters (Ashton, 2010). Diescho (2015) states that “Diversity is a reference to the differences that do and will exist wherever species of creation coexist”.

As a point of departure, it is imperative to understand diversity in the way organisations and other schools of thought would define it. Many organisations have come to an understanding that diversity does not only focus on the conventional legally protected primary attributes of human differences such as age, ethnicity, race, ancestry, gender but also secondary attributes such as physical abilities and qualities, sexual orientation, educational background, geographic location, income, marital status, differences in thought and political views (Dike, 2013).

Gender Equality is deeply enshrined in the Namibian Constitution, Chapter 3 of the Namibian Constitution, Article 10; Equality and Freedom from Discrimination states that “everyone is equal and may not be discriminated against or on the basis of sex, race, ethnic origin, colour, religion or economic status. Discrimination on the basis of sex is explicitly forbidden (Hubbard, 2010). With the Namibian government’s strong policy on Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunities, diversity management is encouraged.

According to the Namibian Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (2010 – 2014) 5 Year Strategic Plan, gender diversity can be achieved when men and women are given equal rights, opportunities and conditions to realize their full human rights. This has not been achieved as the ministry has extended the time limit and has

divided the strategic plan into phases in terms of the issues to be addressed. The phases include: school enrolment for the girl child, employment creation with special emphasis on women entrepreneurship, gathering of statistics of women in the workplace for both private and public organisations, women in leadership and management positions and ongoing awareness to address discrimination of women at the workplace as well as culture and stereotyping of male dominance in the society (Jauch, 2015)

According to Benschop (2011), gender diversity requires that the organisation establishes appropriate processes and systems that facilitate the attraction and retention of employees from both gender backgrounds. Gender diversity can only be effective when there is a system within the organisation that ensures an adequate awareness of the existence of gender diversity. Organisations: small, medium and large should embrace gender diversity. Particularly, it is crucial for SMEs to establish sound recruitment processes that can enable them to improve on selection and hiring of a diverse workforce. This is because these are organisations that are still lagging behind in the adoption and application of modern business practices (Benschop, 2011)

Gender diversity in working groups implies a better knowledge of the market and best identification with customers and employees, and thus making it easier to operate in markets (Cedric, 2009). Therefore, gender diversity facilitates the complimenting of skills, knowledge and capabilities inherent in both men and women. According to Cedric (2009) the marketplace is diverse and requires a diverse workforce that can cater for the multifarious needs of clients. According to the

Namibia Statistics Agency (2011), 52% of the Namibian population is comprised of women, while 48% are men. This indicates a gender diverse market that would have diverse needs. Milliken and Martins (1996), and Fray and Guillaume (2007) suggest that a diverse team has access to a larger network and, associated with this, access to a larger pool of information, skills, and support that fall within the network.

2.4.1 Gender Diversity and SMEs in Africa

In Africa, gender orientation patterns are a key explanation of the differences in self-employment with nearly 40 % of males who are self-employed in the construction sector, whilst increases in female self-employment have occurred as a consequence of personal growth and other services and the expansion of private practice among the liberal professions (Carter,2013). With regards to access to finance, women-led businesses experience higher financial barriers. This can be attributed to starting with lower levels of overall capitalization, using lower ratios of debt finance. Furthermore, women are much less likely to use private equity or venture capital, and are more likely to be discouraged borrowers (Carter, 2013).

There is almost no evidence of supply-side discrimination, but substantial concerns that demand-side debt aversion is more pronounced among women in Africa. Access to markets for women-led businesses are often located within the services sectors, so access to markets may be more constrained than is observed among male-led enterprises. Access to management studies demonstrate that, given the same starting resources, business performance by gender does not differ but however, women-owned enterprises typically start with lower levels of resources (Carter, 2013).

In South Africa and Nigeria, the governments have to a certain degree, recognized the importance of developing a strong sector, known as the Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise (SMME as they are referred to in Nigeria), which could promote and achieve economic growth, wealth creation and creation of jobs. To this end, the governments have over the years focused on the development of female entrepreneurs (Van Der Merwe, 2002). These female entrepreneurs are considered as late comers in the "game" of entrepreneurship and therefore thought to be lacking the adequate skills and competencies required to start and grow a business (Botha, 2006).

Timmons and Spinelli (2004), argue that one significant difference between men and women is the under-representation of women pursuing higher education in business, engineering and sciences. They further state that while education is not compulsory for the creation of new ventures, it provides the individual with the skills and training that is crucial to the success of the business. Cultural and social norms were also identified as hindrances to the development of entrepreneurship for women. According to Alarape (2009), Nigerian women are often under-utilized; therefore they seek to be self-employed in order to alleviate poverty, overcome unemployment issues as well as issues of gender bias in the work place. According to Kitching and Woldie (2004), Nigerian women entrepreneurs are usually hindered by high levels of illiteracy and lack of skills. This places them in a position of constant need for various support services. A study in Trinidad in 2002 confirmed that women with high self-efficacy and internal locus of control exhibited higher entrepreneurial

behaviour than those with low self-efficacy and external locus of control. Women were therefore encouraged to understand that self-belief and a higher education are factors that provide growth and achievement in the realization of their entrepreneurial success. This can be achieved by establishing initiatives that provide women with training, business coaching and mentoring of women entrepreneurs. (Esnand-Flavius, 2010).

The citations above are relevant to our study as they give an overview of women participation in SMEs in other parts of Africa. This will help the researcher in exploring the participation and attitudes of women in SMEs in Namibia using enterprises at the BRB Building in the CBD.

2.4.2 Gender diversity and SMEs in Namibia

After independence in 1990, Namibia began adopting good governance practices such as the acceptance of all races and gender in society. According to Ogbokor and Ngeendepi (2015), one of the critical issues to be addressed was the redressing of the inequality that the colonial era had left. However, much focus was on uplifting the previously disadvantaged communities while ensuring that the former masters were also accommodated in society (Government Gazette, 1992). It was not until the late 1990s that focus was extended to ensure that the inequality gap between men and women was reduced.

At the formation of the Namibia National Development Plan 4 2012, the issue of gender inclusivity was emphasized with the vision to have 50-50 representation by

2030 (Namibia National Development Plan 4 NDP, 2012). The call for gender diversity through the Affirmative Action Act was extended to all sectors such that every organisation, be it a government organisation, private organisation, large or small organisation should embrace the concept. In a speech by the former Prime Minister, Libertina Amadhila, in 2005, the government encouraged the participation of every sector in promoting gender diversity. This was meant to ensure a workforce that allowed equal contribution in the achievement of set goals and objectives. In addition to the Namibian government initiatives, the Harambee Prosperity Plan was launched by President Hage Geingob in 2016 to underpin inclusivity by creating an inclusive Namibian House (Harambee Prosperity Plan, 2016/17 – 2019/20).

The Affirmative Action, requires all organisations to give priority to the minority and the previously disadvantaged groups when making considerations for any opportunity. With the emergence of opportunities for start-up businesses, Namibia has seen a rapid influx of SME businesses and these are also expected to embrace gender diversity (Jauch, 2010).

According to estimates, over 40 000 SMEs are registered with the Ministry of Trade and Industrialization in Namibia, (Ogbokor, 2012). As per the Industrial Upgrading and Modernization Programme IUMP (2012), the Namibian government recognises the importance of the SME sector in creating employment, focusing on gender as well as an important source of household income. IUMP further indicates that SMEs contribute 12% to the GDP and employ over 20% of the labour force in Namibia. According to Mahembe (2011), SMEs add to the Gross Domestic Product and also play a pivotal role in the achievement of national plans such as the Vision 2030.

However, most of the SMEs have a short lifespan or continue operating on a small scale (Mahembe, 2011).

2.5 Attitudes of men and women

According to a survey done by McKinsey and Company (2010), women are more likely than men to strongly agree that gender diversity yields positive results. Men are much more likely than women to disagree that there is need for introduction of diversity initiatives to correct gender imbalances. These differences in perspectives stand as significant hurdles for achieving effective gender diversity in organisations.

Prior social identity research has found that individuals who identify more strongly with their demographic groups are more likely to have a sense of common fate with the group (Turner, 2014). Therefore, both men and women with stronger gender identity centrality, feel a greater vested interest in the fortunes of their respective gender group than men and women with weaker gender identity centrality. The former is likely to favor programs they perceive as furthering the interests of their gender group and be opposed to those that they perceive as hurting their interests (Cameron, 2011). Furthermore, individuals who identify strongly with their demographic group, desire to see their group portrayed in a positive light (Turner, 2014). Thus, prior research conducted by Cameron (2011) suggested that both men and women with higher gender identity centrality will show a greater desire to see their respective gender groups valued through appointment to top management positions than those with lower gender identity centrality.

Therefore the more an individual identifies with his or her gender, the more personal and self-relevant will be gender diversity management efforts in the assessment of organisational attractiveness. Researchers have noted that both men and women differ within their demographic groups as to how positively they view affirmative action policies (Truxillo & Bauer, 2004).

Whereas some view them as positive, others see them as unnecessary (Turner, 2014). Women see affirmative action portraying them as weaker candidates and feel uncomfortable with the stigma of being perceived as benefiting from preferential treatment (Heilmann, 2003). Men with positive attitudes towards affirmative action for women perceive that such programs are required to facilitate equality in the workplace. Individuals may differ on the extent to which they believe that workplace discrimination against women exists. The above assertions on attitudes are relevant to this study because the researcher intends to uncover the different attitudes of both men and women towards gender diversity in SMEs in Namibia through a case study to be conducted at the BRB Building in the CBD.

2.6 Effects of gender diversity on organisational performance

In deciding whether or not to invest in diversity efforts, human resources and employers, as well as participants in these efforts, need to be clear about their own goals and the reasons for investing in diversity (Agocs & Burr, 1996). Olsen and Martins (2012) suggest that there are mixed feelings, positive and negative towards gender diversity that necessitates an interrogation of its impact on the organisation. Gender diversity has been recognized to have various contrasting effects on the performance of organisations (Carter, Simkins & Simpson 2003). This means, by

embracing gender diversity, an organisation should be prepared to put in place the necessary infrastructure to support the existence of different genders.

Existing literature supports the notion that gender diversity can lead to better performance in an organisation. McMillan-Capehart (2013) used the resource-based view of the firm to argue that gender diversity at the management and organisational levels can provide a firm with a competitive advantage. The results of the study established a positive relationship between gender diversity and performance when performance was operationalised as a return on equity. Further, Frink (2013) conducted two organisational level empirical studies to examine the relationship between women's representation and performance, measuring performance differently in each study. The overall results support the authors' argument that an organisation's performance would increase when gender diversity is maximised at the level of at least 50 percent women representation. Perceptions of the organisation's attractiveness are important, as they impact on valued organisational outcomes such as competitiveness in the labour market (Thorsteinson & Highhouse, 2003). Researchers found that a greater organisational emphasis on gender diversity management programs have a positive effect on organisational attractiveness among women, as women are the intended beneficiaries of the programs Konrad & Hartman (2011).

Organisations devote resources to diversity initiatives because they believe diversity is a business imperative and good for the bottom line (Jayne & Dipboye 2004). Creativity, innovation and effective decision making can be achieved. It is unfortunate that diversity cannot be learnt in one day but it requires emotional

intelligence in people to examine their own backgrounds and avoid name calling, prejudices and stereotypes (Pongpayaklert, 2011). According to Hoogendoorn, Oosterbeek & Praag (2013), companies can benefit from gender diversity if they create supportive infrastructure that promotes a conducive environment for gender inclusivity.

2.6.1 Positive effects of gender diversity

Dwyer, Richard & Chadwick (2003) state that gender diversity enables the acceptance of all different genders within the organisation. This means that when an organisation embraces gender diversity, it accepts both men and women, giving them equal opportunities and priorities. According to the European Commission (2015) diversity management equips an organisation to see past prejudices and overcome stereotypes so as to recruit the quiescent and best talents.

In a study by the National Centre for Women and Information Technology USA (NCWIT) (2014), it was found that a positive relationship exists between gender diversity and organisational cultures that value teamwork, participation, and cohesiveness. However, gender diversity was not related to organisational cultures that promoted competition with the external environment. This means that the prevalence of gender diversity promotes teamwork, participation and cohesiveness. According to Benschop (2011), gender diversity is associated with more constructive group processes because all members of the group are valued. In a research done in 2010 by the Harvard Business Review on gender diversity, 294 women and 104 men were interviewed. In the survey, 34 % of the women and 57 % men responded by saying that women brought a fresh perspective and diversity of thought.

Gender diversity can open up access to an untapped pool of resources (Martins and Parsons, 2007). Some advantages include better problem solving (Ernst and Young, 2009) and enhancement of employee satisfaction (Catalyst, 2010). The presence of women may improve the image of the firm and this may have a positive effect on customer behaviour (Smith, 2006).

A diversified workforce enables an organisation to deal with a diversified client base in meeting their different needs, “diversity in terms of profile, skills, and educational background provides the company with a new variety of perspectives and, thereby, with enhanced responsiveness to clients’ expectations”, (European Commission, 2015). This can act as an advantage in expansion into new markets, which, in turn, allows the production of new, innovative products or services.

2.6.2 Gender diversity and financial performance of companies

According to Joy (2007) the connection between gender diversity and corporate financial performance has not been substantially established due to unavailability of authentic data, measurement issues pertaining to what, when and how to measure. A research done in 2004 by Catalyst, an organisation based in the United States of America that aims to advance women in business, revealed that organisations that had a higher percentage of women in their top management performed better than those with fewer women. The research examined 353 Fortune 500 Companies and found that companies with higher representation of women experienced better financial performance as compared to the ones with lower representation (Catalyst,

2004). The results were based on measuring Return on Equity (ROE) and Total Return to Shareholders (TRS).

In a research conducted at the Kenya Ports Authority by Ngao and Mwangi (2013) there were varying opinions on explanations as to the effects of gender on organisational performance. Some respondents gave varying views that most women go on maternity leave and because an alternative may not be found, immediate work suffers, while others intimated that it is performance that matters. Others were of the view that some jobs and positions are meant for men only, while others said there is no gender balance in their work place (Ngao & Mwangi, 2013).

A research done in 2015 by the International Finance Corporation to establish the impact of gender diversity on the economic performance on companies in Jordan revealed that it was almost impossible to establish with complete certainty that the improved Return on Assets (ROA) and Return on Equity (ROE) in companies with women in the boardroom is directly correlated to gender diversity. However, it appears that gender diversity plays a significant role in promoting improved financial performance of companies and this is reflected in the table below:

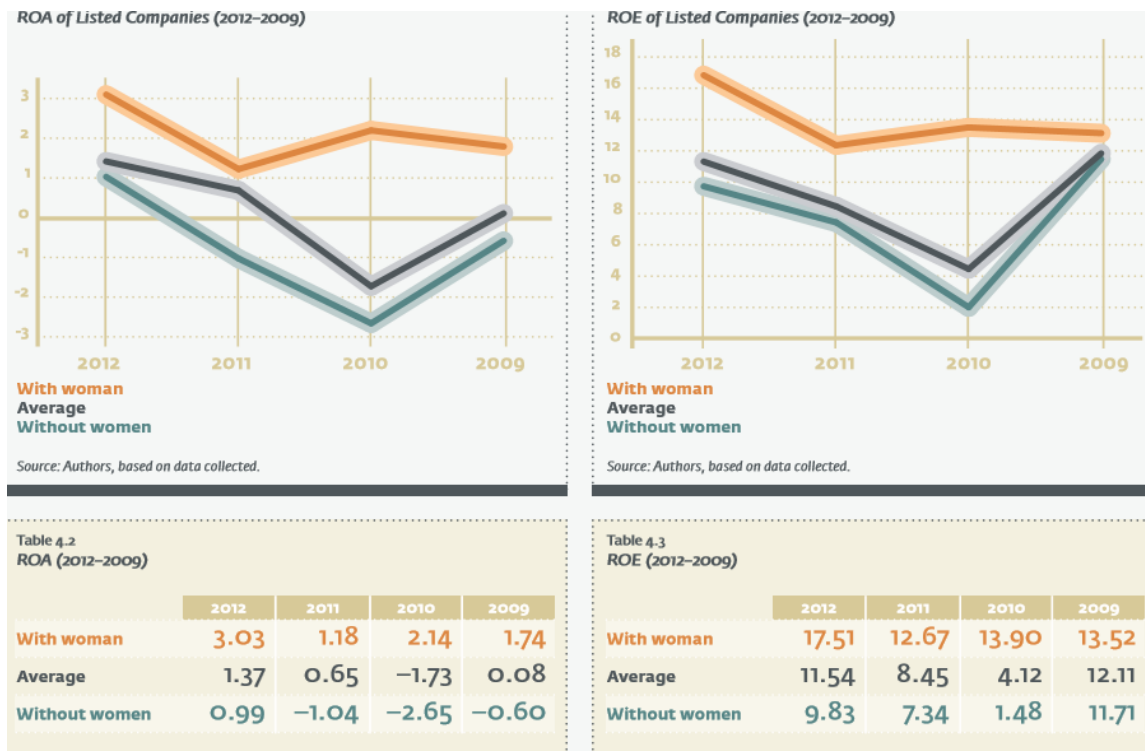


Figure 1 Gender Diversity in Jordan Listed Companies

Source: International Finance Corporation 2015

Figure 1 shows a significant increase of the Return on Assets (ROA) and Return on Investments (ROI) from 2009 to 2012, of companies with women in Jordan. In comparison, the results also show that the ROA and ROE of companies without women were lower than those with women. Though the above table reflects findings in Jordan, it is relevant to the research as it will act as a juxtaposition comparison to the findings of this research to be conducted in Namibia. Similarities and differences will be drawn from the findings of this research.

2.6.3 Negative effects of gender diversity

In some instances gender diversity has been identified as a cause of poor performance and conflict (Ngao & Mwangi, 2013). At the Kenya Ports Authority,

gender is still a major issue as a significant number of males believe that females are poor at communication, conflict management and solving disputes which leads to greater team disintegration. Further, the male counterparts still believe that there are some jobs and positions that are meant for men only which reinforces the point that there is gender imbalance in Key Performance Areas (KPA), which in effect affects an organisation's overall performance (Ngao & Mwangi, 2013).

Heterogeneous groups are more likely to present communication and coordination difficulties that reduce the effective use of knowledge and skills, and result in less cohesion and interpersonal attraction and fewer mutually satisfying interactions among members (Forbes & Milliken, 1999). Therefore, it is more likely that heterogeneous groups spend more time in meeting preparation, discussion of questions and taking decisions (Lau & Murnighan, 1998).

Diversity may also reduce the quantity of new ideas a team generates, though it appears to have no effect on the quality of new ideas generated (Milliken & Martins 1996). Men and women with similar social and educational backgrounds, are likely to come up with the same type of ideas and, thereby likely to yield no innovation (European Commission, 2015). This can be explained as homophile, which is defined as the love of the same.

2.7 Practices that promote gender diversity

With the support from global and national authorities towards inclusivity in both industry and society, any organisation can effectively embrace gender diversity and use it to its advantage. (European Union, 2015). According to Collier (2014) there is

a consensus among nations that women should be involved in nation building through being integrated into the workforce. Following the Industrial Upgrading and Modernization Programme (IUMP) (2012), Namibian SMEs employ 20% of the labour force and this contributes to the betterment of communities and poverty eradication. SMEs act as avenues for women to participate in various industries. Therefore, it is important for SMEs to be aware of the different policies that promote gender inclusivity. USAID (2012) states that female empowerment is globally seen as a significant development objective.

Organisations that focus on gender inclusivity provide equal training opportunities to both men and women to develop their skills and competencies (Cosgrove, 2016). According to Aguinis (2014), training and development provides employees with the necessary skills that enable employees to do their jobs effectively. SMEs can take advantage of requisite training and development programmes that can improve employee productivity and thereby simultaneously improving company performance.

The gateway for employees into an organisation is the recruitment and selection process (Noe, 2015). This means that organisations have an opportunity to recruit a diverse workforce. However this requires the presence of policies that enforce the recruiters to be considerate of gender inclusivity when selecting candidates.

2.8 Summary

This chapter is encapsulated the meaning of gender diversity, the situation gender diversity and SMEs in Africa and Namibia, attitudes of both men and women towards gender diversity and management and negative and positive effects of

gender diversity. It shed light on the impact of gender diversity on organisational performance as well as financial performance. Literature reveals that SME employers are still not committed to gender diversity as SME managers view it as an immaterial and non-financial concern (European Commission, 2015). It is also evident in literature that the Namibian government has put in place initiatives that promote inclusivity with regards to all genders. While the facts and data presented are objective, the interpretation of the results in this research will carry more than an element of subjectivity. All the sources cited and discussed from related literature are significant to this study as the views, opinions and facts raised by the authors form the backbone of the questionnaire to be used in this study. Furthermore, the literature aids the researcher on the gaps on gender diversity and sheds light related issues in SMEs. The next chapter is a discussion of research methodology and design which embraces the methods and procedures that the researcher used during the study for data collection and analysis.

CHAPTER 3

3.0 RESEARCH METHODS

According to Kothari (2004) a research methodology is a systematic way of solving a research problem and also the science involved on how the research will be conducted. These are systems of methods and rules to facilitate the collection and analysis of data. This chapter discusses the research methodology and design which embraces the methods and procedures that the researcher adopted and used during the study for the purpose of data collection and analysis. A description of the research design, population of the study, the sampling method and instruments used for data collection, ethical considerations followed and the data analysis methods used during the study will be provided.

3.1 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is an important part of research methodology. This overarching term relates to the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge. Research philosophy is classified as ontology, epistemology and axiology. (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012). These philosophical approaches enable the researcher to put into perspective research questions and decide which approach to adopt and why.

This research will take the positivism epistemology philosophy. This philosophy adheres to the view that only factual knowledge gained through observation, measurement and testing is trustworthy. In positivism studies, the role of the researcher is limited to data collection and interpretation in an objective way. In

these types of studies research findings are usually observable and quantifiable (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012).

In this research, the researcher will make use of questionnaires to gather data from the sample of SMEs at the BRB Building, Ausspannplatz in the Windhoek Central Business District. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) will be used in the analysis of the data collected. With the positivist epistemology approach the findings derived from the scientific analysis will be considered a reflection of the evaluation of gender diversity in Namibian SMEs situated in the Windhoek Central Business District area at BRB Building Ausspannplatz. This philosophy assumes that the researcher is separate from and not affecting the outcomes of research. Verified data also referred to as positive facts received from the senses are known as empirical evidence thus positivism is based on empiricism (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012).

3.2 Research design

For the purposes of this study, the researcher used quantitative method for data collection and analysis. The purpose of a quantitative research is to determine the quantity or extent of some phenomenon in the form of numbers (Zikmund, 2003). In addition, Creswell (2009) stated that quantitative research method is using quantitative techniques in both data collection and analysis. It provides data that would be obtainable when using the primary method of data collection. In this study the researcher used questionnaires.

A research design is a plan or blueprint of how you intend conducting the research (Mouton, 2001). Kothari (2007), indicated that a research design is a specification on the most adequate operations to be performed under given conditions. This research brings out numeric description of perceptions, trends, attitudes and opinions of an SME population at the BRB Building by studying its sample.

A survey design was used in this research. A survey design is aimed at discovering how many people think, act or feel in a specific way. Survey research provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population. It includes cross-sectional and longitudinal studies using questionnaires or structured interviews for data collection; with the intent of generalizing from a sample to a population (Fowler, 2012). A questionnaire with structured questions was used during the survey.

Quantitative research is a formal, objective, systematic process in which numerical data is used to obtain information about the world. This research method is used to describe variables, examine relationships among variables and determine cause-and-effect interactions between variables (Burns & Grove 2005). This design enabled the description of variables to which attitudes and productivity is a result of gender diversity.

In juxtaposition to quantitative research design is qualitative research, which is described by Denzin and Lincoln (2005) as “an interpretive naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the

meanings people bring to them”. Qualitative research can unveil trends in thought and opinions and exploit the problem exhaustively. Focus groups and individual interviews are pertinent in qualitative research.

Quantitative research allows the researcher to measure and analyse data and study in detail the relationship between independent and dependent variables. This is advantageous because the researcher is more objective on the findings of the research.

3.3 Population

According to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2012), the population in a study is made up of individuals who share the same characteristics. Sekaran and Bougie (2009), defines population as the entire group of people, events, or things of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate. In this research the population comprises of all 61 SMEs at BRB Building in Ausspannplatz, Windhoek Central Business District Area. This number has been obtained from Greendoor Properties, the property managers of BRB Building. Junior, middle or senior level SME employees where targeted for data collection.

3.4 Sample

A sample is a subset of a population selected to participate in the study, it is a fraction of the whole, selected to participate in the research (Zikmund, 2003). The researcher chose a sample of 53 SMEs out of a population of 61 SMEs operating from the BRB Building in Ausspannplatz, Windhoek Central Business District Area.

Within the SMEs only employees in the junior, middle and senior levels were targeted to complete the questionnaires. Sampling refers to the process of selecting a portion of the population to represent the entire population in a study (Lapan, Quartaroli & Riemer, 2012). Sekaran and Bougie (2009) refers to sampling as the process of selecting the right individuals, objects or events as representatives for the entire population. Sampling is a procedure involving a small number of items or a representative selection of the population to make a conclusion regarding the whole population (Zikmund, 2003).

This study used the probability sampling method called the Simple Random sampling. Probability sampling gives all the subjects in a population an equal chance to be selected to become the sample (Sekaran and Bougie, 2009), whilst with non-probability sampling, subjects in a population do not have an equal chance to be selected or not. In non-probability sampling, the elements do not have a known or predetermined chance of being selected as subjects. Probability sampling can be either unrestricted (simple random sampling) or restricted (complex probability sampling) in nature (Sekaran and Bougie, 2009). Simple random sampling means that every member of the sample is selected from the group of the population in such a manner that the probability of being selected for all members in the study group of the population is the same.

In this method, every member in the study group of the population, which is the 61 SMEs at BRB Building was assigned a random number. The sample was then selected from a table of random numbers or a random selection. The sample in this research was 53 SMEs picked from the 61 SMEs.

Simple random sampling provides a representative sample of the population and is free from bias and prejudice. The simple random sampling method requires minimum knowledge of the study group of population in advance and is free from errors in classification. This is also suitable for data analysis, which includes the use of inferential statistics.

The researcher chose a sample of 53 SMEs out of a population of 61 SMEs operating from the BRB Building in Ausspannplatz, Windhoek Central Business District Area using Slovin's formula. According to Zikmund (2003), Slovin's formula enables the researcher to sample a population with a degree of accuracy. This formula ensures a reasonable sample size.

Slovin's Formula used:

Formula: $n = N/(1+N(e^2))$

Where : $N =$ Population
 $n =$ Sample Size
 $e = (1-0.95)^2$ (0.05²) margin of error

Confidence level	95 %
Margin of Error	5 %
N	61
e	0,0025
Sample Size (n)	53

With this technique all the SMEs at BRB Building had an equal chance of being selected as a subject.

3.5 Research instrument

For the purposes of this study the researcher used a questionnaire as the research instrument to collect primary data from the respondents. The survey questionnaire was structured and consisted of closed-ended questions. A list of possible and exhaustive responses was provided for every question.

Some of the questions on the questionnaire were on a 5 point Likert Scale. According to Bertram (2013), the Likert Scale is a psychometric response scale and is primarily used in questionnaires to obtain a participant's preferences or degree of agreement with a statement or set of statements. Likert scales are a non-comparative scaling technique and are unidimensional, that is, only measure a single trait in nature. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with a given statement by way of an ordinal scale.

According to Kothari (2004) a questionnaire is to be carefully constructed as it is considered the heart of the survey. Kothari (2004) further explains the main aspects of the questionnaire as being the general form, question sequences and questions formulation and the wording. These are the important aspects for a good questionnaire.

3.6 Research Procedure

The questionnaires were hand delivered to the 53 SME employees at BRB Building in the junior, middle and senior levels. The questionnaire were self-administered, where the respondents were expected to read the survey questions, choose their preferred answers, and then record these in the absence of the interviewer. Questionnaires collect precise and unbiased information, and are a favoured tool by researchers. Completing the questionnaire took about fifteen minutes. Completed questionnaires were collected from respondents after a minimum period of three days.

3.7 Data Analysis Method

The researcher used the quantitative data analysis method. Mellenbergh (2008) indicated that data analysis is an examination of data and also a critical step of the scrutiny of data in order to determine the key areas to take note of so as to develop suggestions or recommendations for further action. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), a statistical software package used for data analysis, was used in the analysis of the data collected in the research as the researcher deemed it the most appropriate, given its versatility and considering the nature of the data collected. The data was coded and entered into the SPSS software package which performed data analysis to produce summary measures for categorical variables in the form of frequency tables and graphs. One-way ANOVA and descriptive statistics were the statistical techniques used.

An evaluation of gender diversity was ascertained through comparing dependent and independent variables. According to Creswell (2014), independent variables are those that cause, influence or affect outcomes. In this research, attitudes of both employees and employers of different genders towards gender diversity could be regarded as independent variables. Creswell (2014) further describes dependent variables as those that depend on independent variables; they are the outcomes or results of the influence of the independent variables. In this research the employment of different genders, productivity, business performance and gender diversity management can be regarded as dependent variables. The data analysis uncovered employers' attitudes towards gender diversity, effects of gender diversity in SMEs, the relationship between gender diversity and team synergy as well as getting an insight on gender diversity awareness in SMEs.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012) pointed out that researchers should maintain research ethics when conducting research work. An ethical consideration in any research applies to the researcher, the participants and sponsoring organisations (Kumar, 2011). The researcher was in possession of a letter of support from the Namibia Business School and all the rules of the university governing research were adhered to.

The researcher made sure that research ethics were upheld by ensuring that respondents participated voluntarily, anonymously and in confidentiality. Participants endorsed their inclination to provide information by signing the research consent form. According to Kumar (2011), it is unethical to collect information

without the knowledge of the participants and their expressed willingness and informed consent. The researcher also used data collected for this academic research paper only.

Completed questionnaires are being kept in a lockable safe only accessible to the researcher and will be destroyed after five years. Information collected from the respondents is kept anonymous, and its source cannot be identified (Kumar, 2011).

3.9 Summary

Chapter 3 discussed the research methods used in this study. Such methods conform to quantitative research. The chapter also outlined the study population and sample. The sample was drawn from the specific business units under study in the research. The manner in which the information was gathered and analysed was explained in this chapter. Ethical considerations were also highlighted.

The next chapter provides a presentation of the interpretation of the data that was gathered for the study. This will be illustrated by graphs, tables and pie charts, in other words, using descriptive statistics.

CHAPTER 4

4.0 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the presentation and interpretation of the data that was gathered for the study. The previous chapter gave an insight of the research methodology and design used by the researcher to collect data. The data from the questionnaires was captured in a codebook. A codebook is a document that summarizes the data on questionnaires clearly and succinctly. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used in the analysis of the data collected. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012), a researcher can utilise a statistical programme to analyse data. Data is presented in various formats including tables, graphs and descriptive narrations. The Likert scale was used to measure the responses given by the participants.

The findings are linked to theories discussed in chapter two of the study and new theories. Some of the new theories include findings that pointed out that the environment in Namibia supports gender diversity. Among the respondents, 75.5 % agreed that the environment in Namibia supports gender diversity. Gender was also found to be of influence on pay gaps. This was illustrated by 88.7 % of the respondents who agreed that gender influences pay gaps. The percentage of respondents who had been trained on gender diversity was found to be 43.4 %. This was a positive reflection in terms of the sensitization of SMEs on gender diversity as the percentage was not low.

4.2 Findings

4.2.1 Gender

Figure 2 below indicates that 79 % of the respondents were male while 21 % were female. This was an indication that there are fewer females within the SME sector than males.

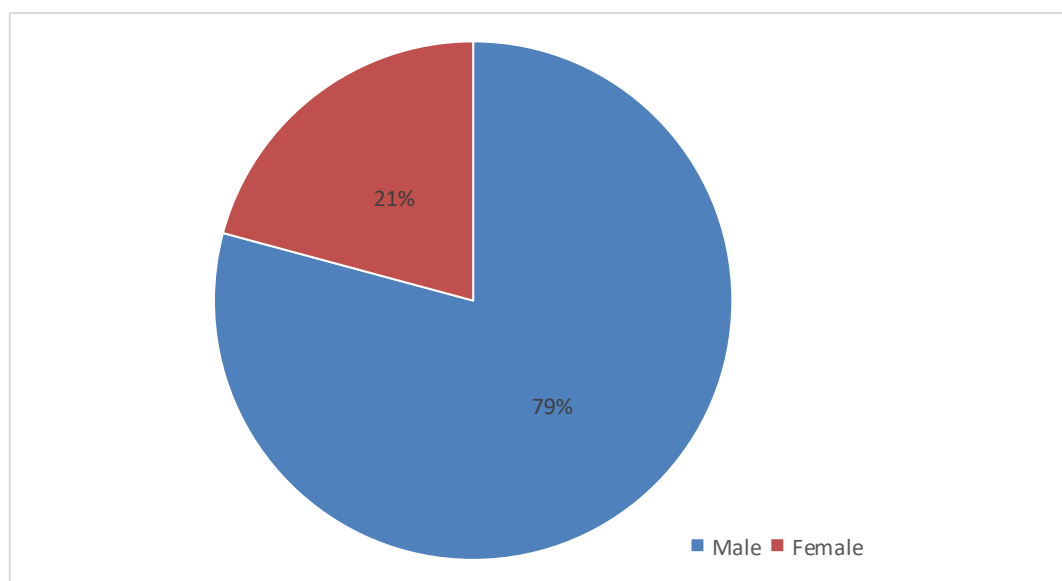


Figure 2 Gender respondents

Source: *Primary data*

4.2.2 Age groups

As indicated in Figure 3 below 35.8 % of the respondents involved in the study were between 31 to 40 years of age whilst 28.3 % were between 21 to 30 years, 26.4 % were between 41 to 50 and 9.4 % were aged from 51 to 60.

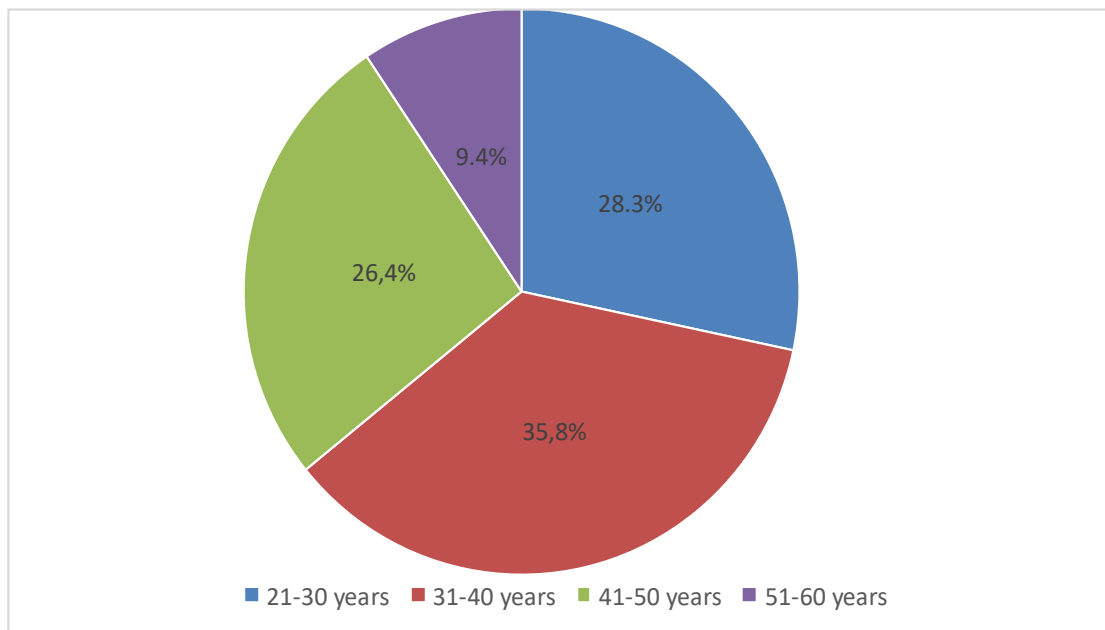


Figure 3 Age Groups

Source: *Primary data*

4.2.3 Levels in Organisation

As illustrated in Figure 4 below, data collected demonstrates that among the respondents there were 30.2 % in junior management level management, 49.1 % in middle level management and 20.8 % in the senior management level.

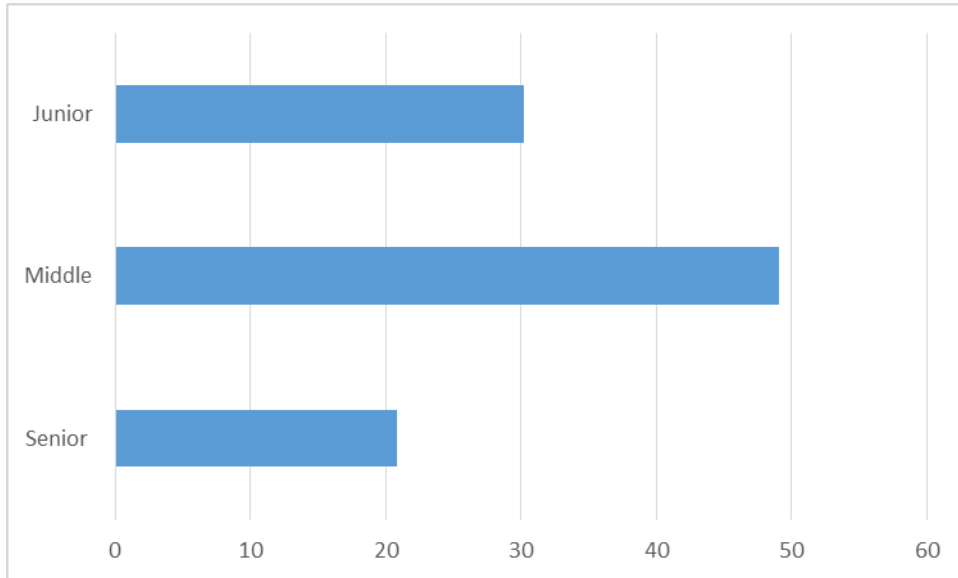


Figure 4 Levels in Organisation

Source: *Primary data*

4.2.4 Period of Employment

Figure 5 below illustrates that 60.4 % have worked between 1 - 3 years, 26.4 % have worked between 4 - 6 years and 13.2 % between 7 - 9 years. This means that the respondents had worked for their organisation long enough to make relevant and informed comments with regards to issues pertaining to their organisation.

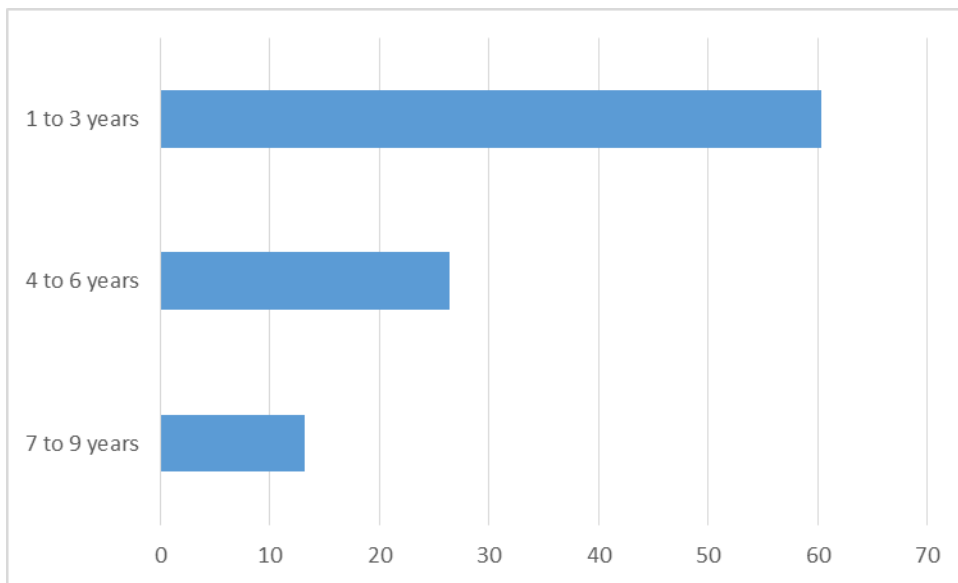


Figure 5 Period of Employment

Source: *Primary data*

4.2.5 Size of Organisation

Figure 6 below shows that the majority of the SMEs interviewed at BRB Building fall in the micro category which is 73.6 %. Respondents in the small category were 20.8 % whilst 5.7 % were in the medium category.

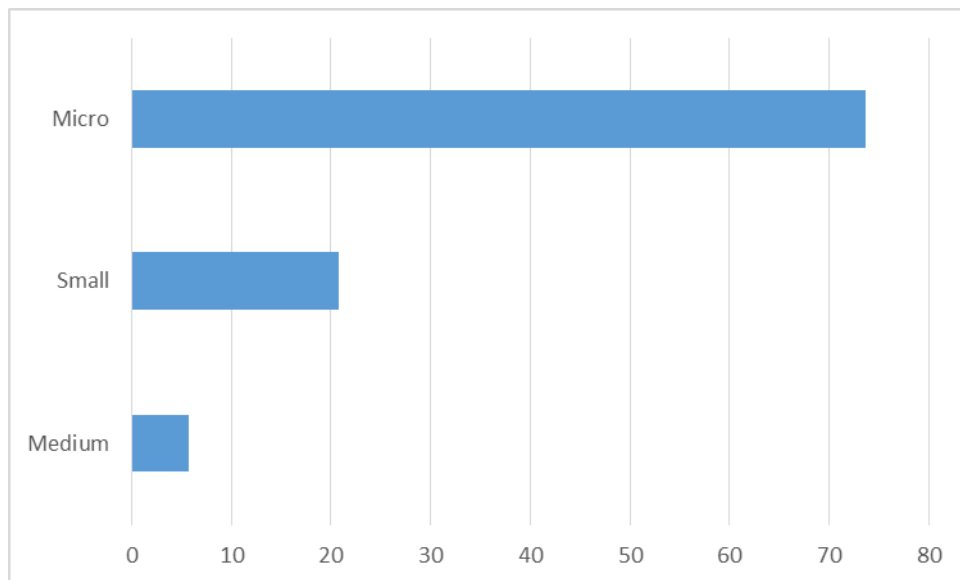


Figure 6 Size of Organisation

Source: *Primary data*

According to the Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and SME Development in Namibia, (2016) a Micro Enterprise has employees up to 10 and realizes an annual turnover of up to N\$300,000. A Small Enterprise employs between 11 – 30 employees and has an annual turnover ranging between N\$300,001 – N\$3,000,000. A Medium Enterprise employs between 31 – 100 people and has an annual turnover of N\$3,000,001 – N\$10,000,000 (Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and SME Development in Namibia, 2016).

4.3.1 Understanding of Gender Diversity

Most of the respondents showed an understanding of gender diversity. Figure 7 below shows that 81.1 % of the respondents understand gender diversity whilst 7.5 % do not and 11.3 % were not sure. Having an understanding of gender diversity means having a comprehension of the variation in gender representation within a specific setting (Adams & Funk, 2012). In addressing one of this research's question on whether gender diversity is a common phenomenon or not, this result indicates that it is a common phenomenon. This was relevant to the study because it had a significant level of .037 where $P < .05$ Significance levels depicts how likely a pattern in the data presented is due to chance.

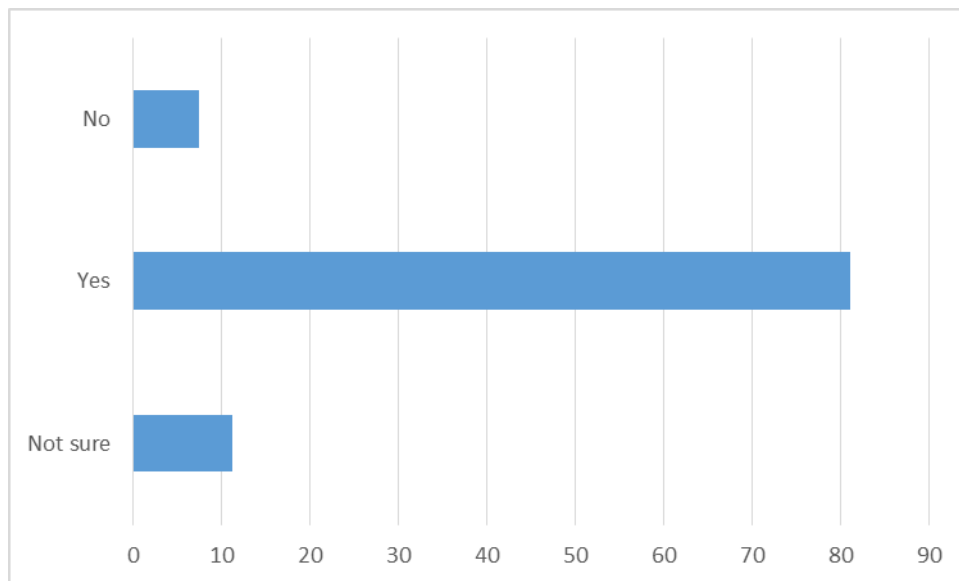


Figure 7 Have an Understanding of Gender Diversity

Source: *Primary data*

The table below indicates that the p-value related to the understanding of gender diversity is statistically significant with a score of .037 lower than .05 the cut off score.

Table 2 ANOVA Descriptive Have an Understanding of Gender Diversity

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean of Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	15.902	3	7.951	165.645	.037
Within Groups	2.400	50	.048		
Total	18.302	53			

Source: *Primary data*

4.3.2 Ever been trained on Gender Diversity

The variable of respondents having been trained on gender diversity has a significant level of .000 where $P < .05$ and is relevant to this study. Figure 8 below illustrates that 43.4 % of the respondents have been trained on gender diversity while 50.9 % have not and 5.7 % were not sure. This meant that the majority of respondents had not been trained on gender diversity. Literature indicated that it seems SME employers do not prioritize gender diversity matters because they usually have more urgent operational concerns and their priority is first and foremost to stay afloat (European Commission, 2015). Training is an important factor in sensitizing employees and providing awareness on gender diversity. This is a pointer on the negative attitude of SMEs towards gender diversity which is part of research questions.

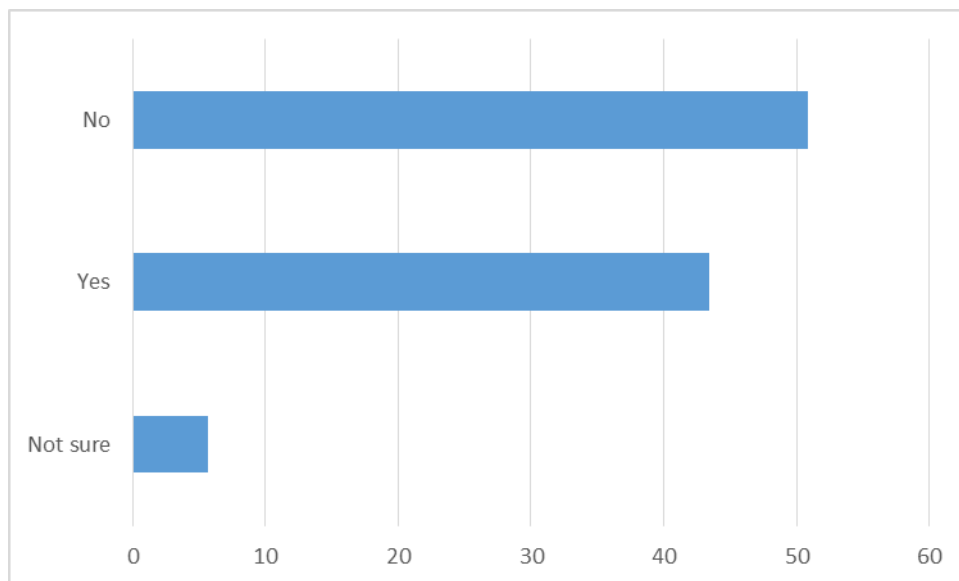


Figure 8 Ever been trained on Gender Diversity

Source: *Primary data*

4.4.1 Organisation embraces Gender Diversity

Figure 9 below depicts that the majority of the respondents constituting 49.1 % were not sure whether their organisations embrace gender diversity, whilst 20.8 % disagreed and 30.2 % agreed. This variable is critical to this study because it has a significant level of .000 where $P < .05$. The result shows that the majority of the respondents did not know whether their organisations embrace gender diversity or not. This indicates a negative attitude of SME employers on gender diversity.

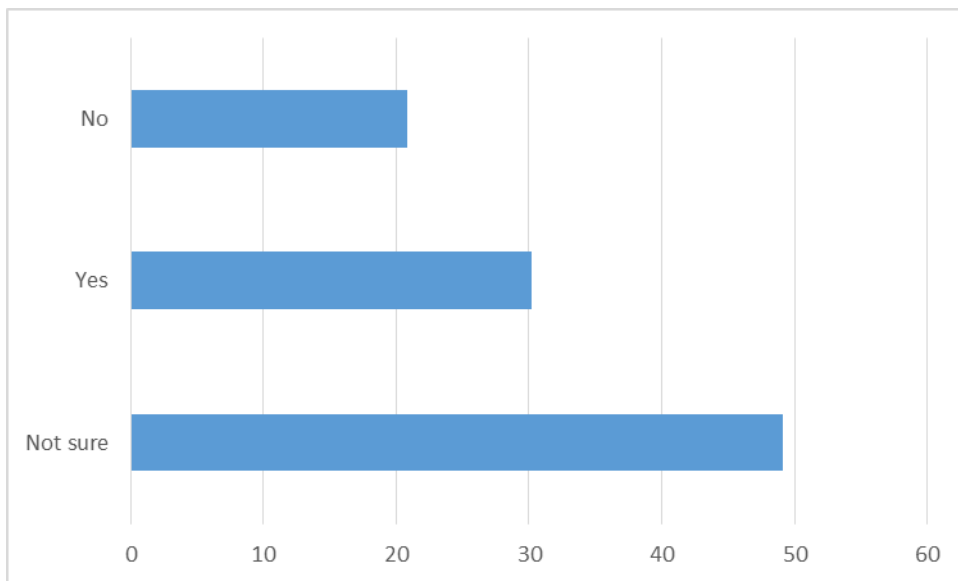


Figure 9 Organisation embraces Gender Diversity

Source: *Primary data*

4.5.1 Gender Diversity leads to Productivity

Figure 10 below illustrates that 73.6 % of the respondents agreed that gender diversity leads to productivity, whilst 7.5 % were not sure and 18.9 % disagreed with the assertion. One of our research questions sought to understand the relationship between gender diversity and team synergy. Invariably team synergy results in positives outcomes, this result indicates that gender diversity leads to productivity.

Further, 84.9 % of the respondents agreed that they would recommend gender diversity to their management, whilst 15.1 % indicated that they would not.

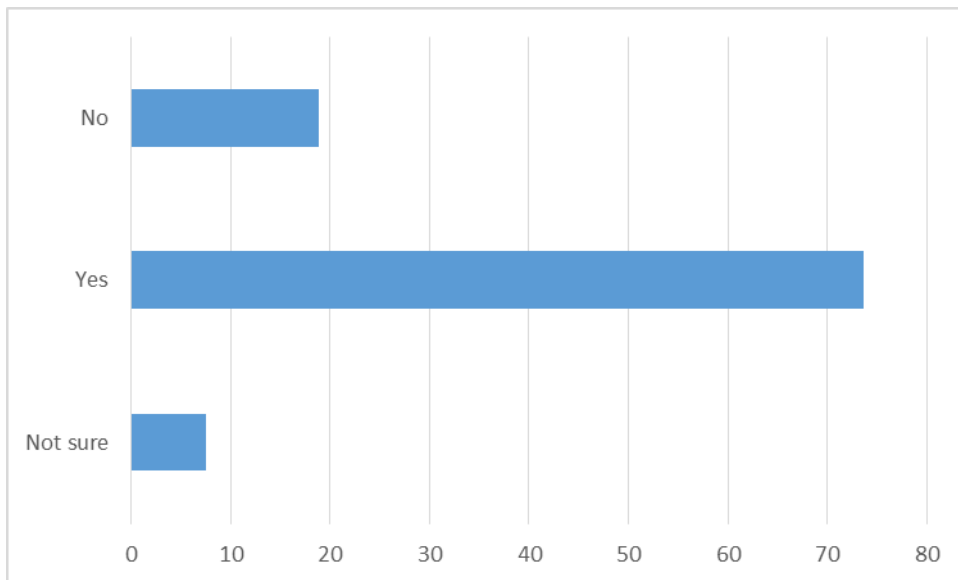


Figure 10 Gender Diversity leads to Productivity

Source: *Primary Data*

The table below shows that the respondents had a mean that ranges between .128 and 10.386. The p-value on the relationship between gender diversity and productivity is statistically significant with a score of .048 lower than .05 the cut off score.

Table 3 ANOVA Descriptive Gender Diversity leads to productivity

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean of Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	20.770	3	10.386	81.132	.048
Within Groups	6.400	50	.128		
Total	27.170	53			

Source: *Primary data*

4.5.2 Satisfied with management's attitude towards Gender Diversity

The figure below reveals that 77.4 % of the respondents disagreed that they were satisfied with management's attitude towards gender diversity, 5.6 % were not sure and 17 % responded that they were satisfied. This shows that the majority of the respondents were not satisfied with management's attitude towards gender diversity. One of this research's focus questioned the attitudes of SME employers towards gender diversity and the findings indicate a negative attitude. Literature also suggests that most SME employers perceive gender diversity management as immaterial. This variable is critical to this study because it has a significant level of .017 where $P < .05$.

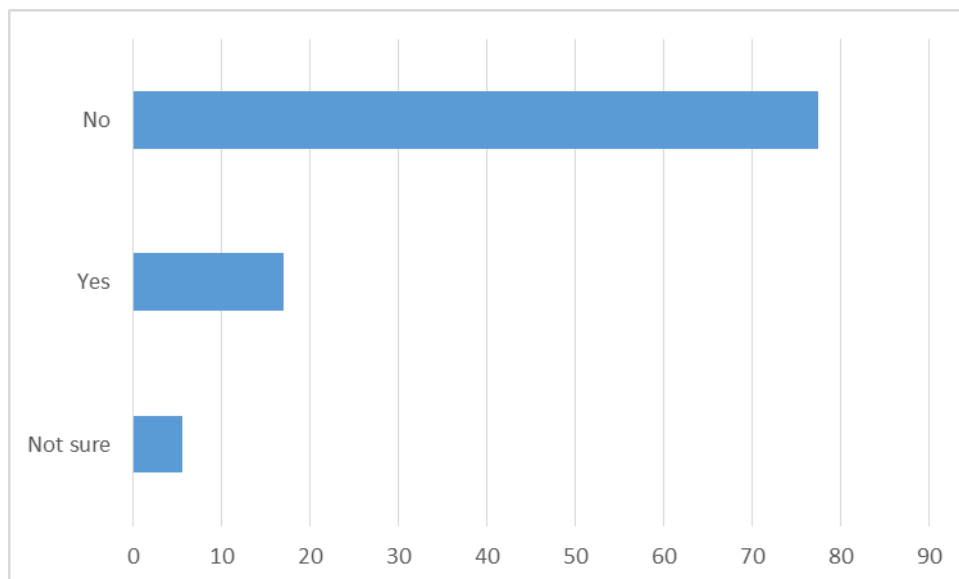


Figure 11 Satisfied with management's attitude towards Gender Diversity.

Source: *Primary data*

The mean levels depicted in the table below range from .554 to 1.493 from all the respondents. The p-value on the relationship of gender diversity and productivity is statistically significant with a score of .017.

Table 4 ANOVA Descriptive Satisfied with management attitude towards gender diversity

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean of Square	f	Sig
Between Groups	2.987	3	1.493	2.697	.017
Within Groups	27.692	50	.554		
Total	30.679	53			

Source: *Primary data*

4.6.1 Barriers that inhibit gender diversity at your workplace

As indicated in the table below respondents constituting 35.8 % agreed that there are barriers that inhibit gender diversity, 35.8 % indicated that they are not sure and 28.3 % responded that there are no barriers inhibiting gender diversity.

Table 5 Are there barriers that inhibit gender diversity at your workplace?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	15	28.3	28.3	28.3
Not sure	19	35.8	35.8	64.2
Yes	19	35.8	35.8	100.0
	Total	53	100.0	100.0

Source: *Primary data*

4.6.2 Recruitment practices support Gender Diversity

Figure 12 below demonstrates that the majority of the respondents (56.6 %) were not sure whether or not their organisation's recruitment practices support gender diversity. Data reveals that 3.8 % of the respondents indicated that their organisation's recruitment processes support gender diversity whilst 39.6 % indicated that they do not. This is an indicator of SME employers' negative attitude towards gender diversity. Literature highlighted a lack of commitment to gender diversity by SME employers.

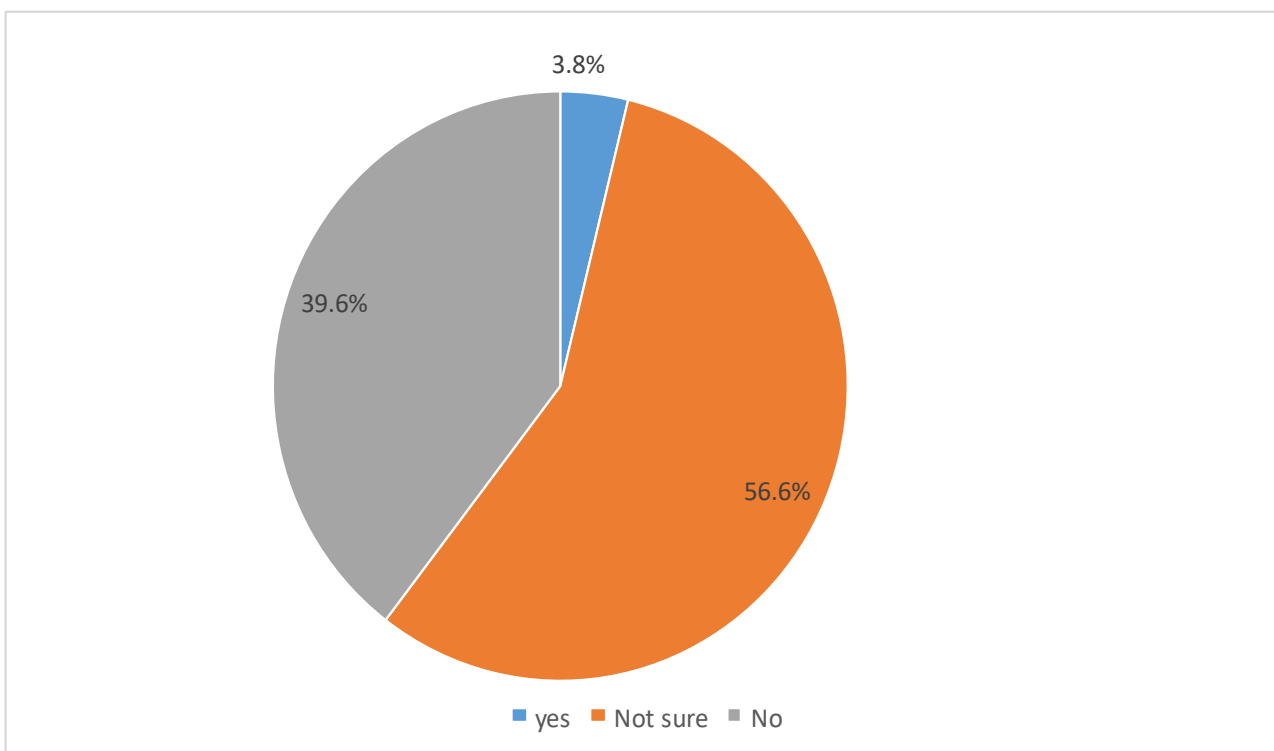


Figure 12 Do recruitment practices support Gender Diversity?

Source: *Primary data*

4.6.3 Diverse genders work well together

Figure 13 below indicates that the majority (69.8 %) of the respondents agreed that diverse genders work well together, 15.1 % disagreed and 15.1 % were not sure. This is an indication that diverse genders work well together. The variable is critical to the study because it has a significant level of .019 where $P < .05$.

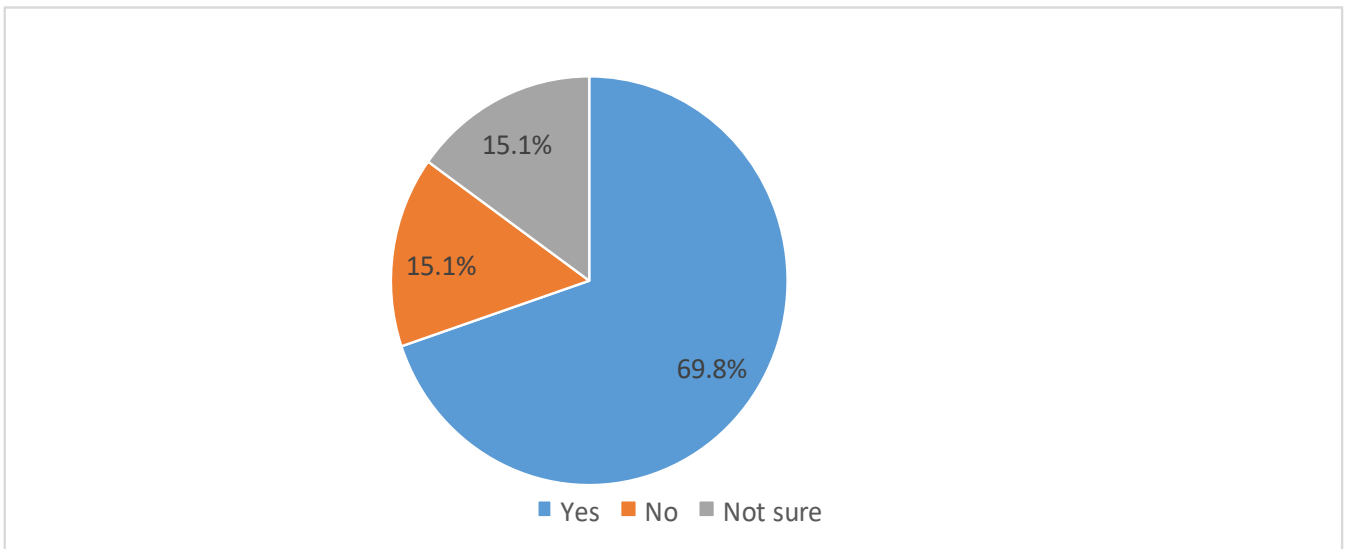


Figure 13 Do diverse genders work well together?

Source: *Primary data*

The table below illustrates that the mean levels ranges from .070 to 12.817 from all the respondents and the p-value on diverse genders working well together is statistically significant with a score of .001.

Table 6 ANOVA Descriptive Do diverse genders work well together

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean of Square	f	Sig
Between Groups	25.635	3	12.817	183.239	.001
Within Groups	3.497	50	.070		
Total	29.132	53			

Source: *Primary data*

4.6.4 Same genders work well together

According to Figure 14 below, 50.9 % agreed that same genders work well and 43.4 % disagreed, 5.7 % of the respondents were not sure whether same genders work together well. This result is an indication that the respondents are not sure whether employees of the same genders work well together. The variable has a significant level of .041 where $P < .05$ and is important to the study.

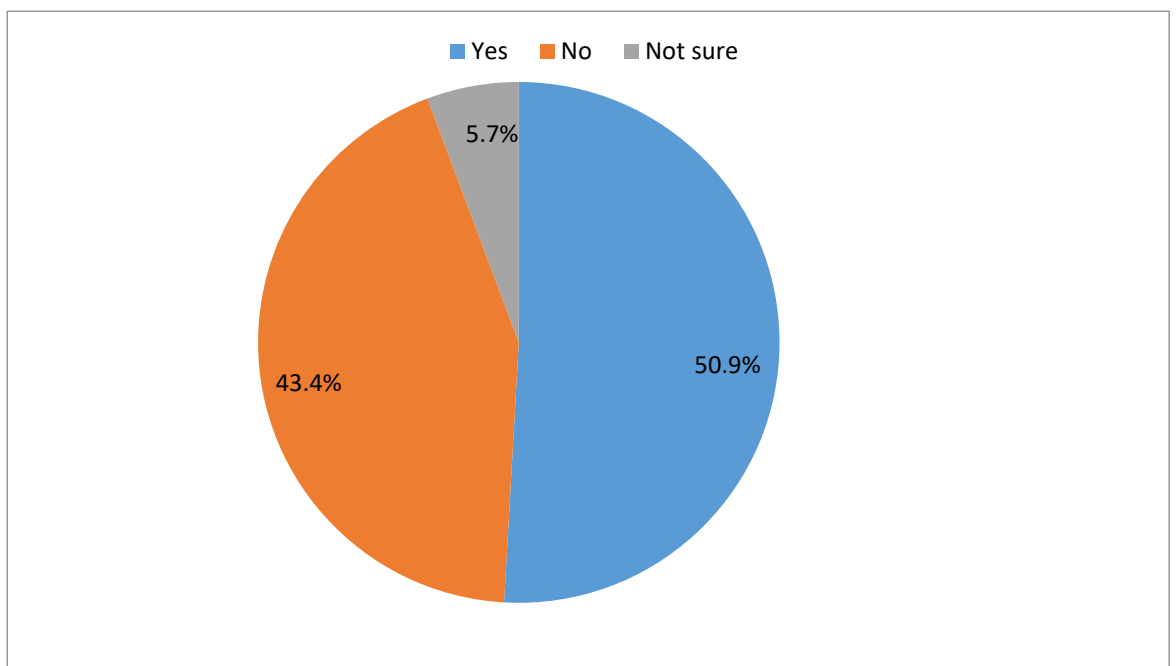


Figure 14 Do same genders work well together?

Source: *Primary data*

4.6.5 The environment in Namibia support Gender Diversity in SMEs

The figure below displays that 75.5 % of the respondents agreed that the environment in Namibia supports gender diversity in their SMEs, 18.9 % disagreed with that assertion and 5.7 % were not sure. Literature showed that the Namibian government has been put in place programmes such as the Namibia National Development Plan 5 (NDP5), Affirmative Action, Vision 2030 and Harambee Prosperity Plan 2016/17 – 2019/20 that support inclusivity.

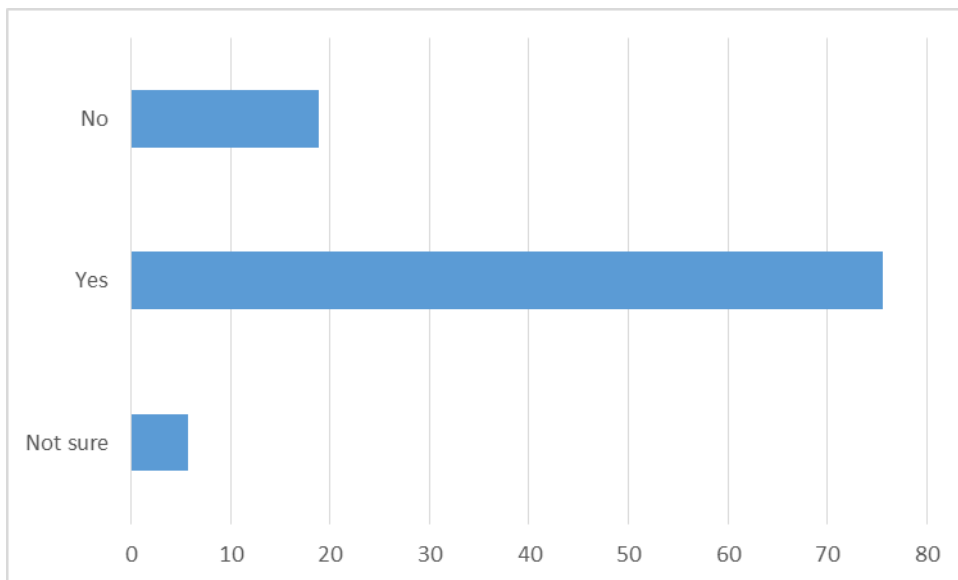


Figure 15 Does the environment in Namibia support Gender Diversity in SMEs?

Source: *Primary data*

4.6.6 SMEs would benefit from Gender Diversity

Figure 16 below depicts that 81.1 % of the respondents agreed that SMEs would benefit from gender diversity whilst 15.1 % responded that they would not and 3.8 % were not sure.

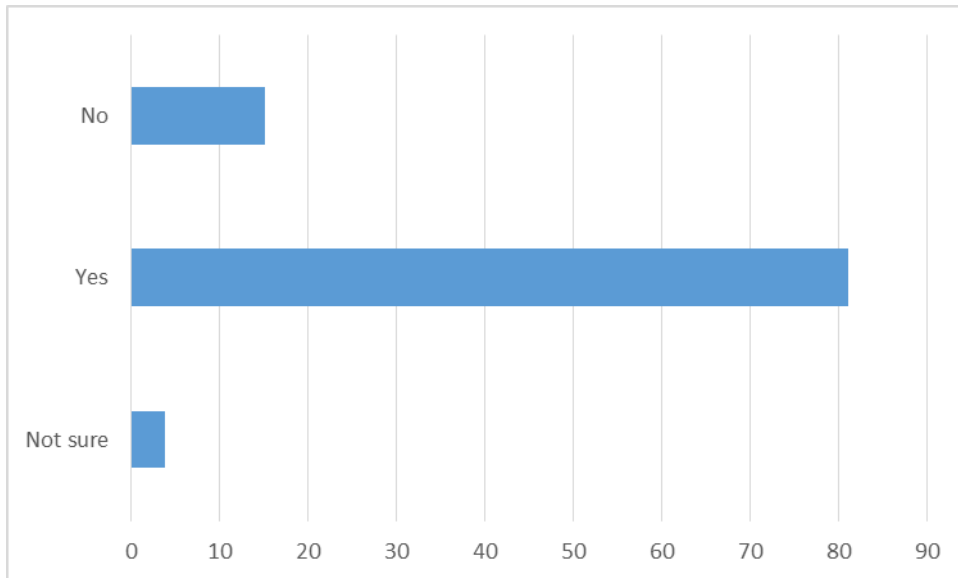


Figure 16 SMEs would benefit from Gender Diversity

Source: *Primary data*

4.6.7 Namibia environment promotes Gender Diversity

As illustrated by the figure below 73.6 % of the respondents agreed that the environment in Namibia promotes gender diversity, 20.8 % disagreed and 5.7 % were not sure.

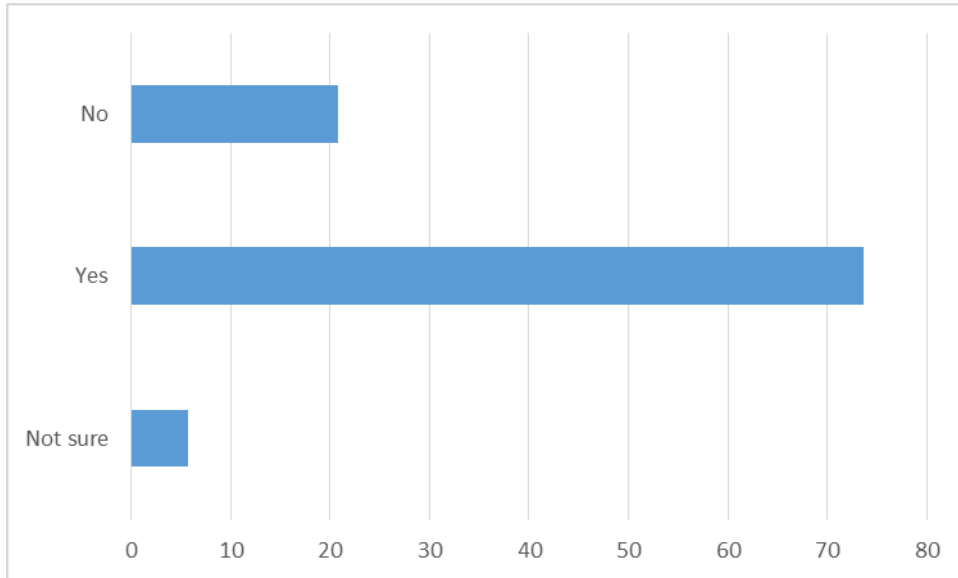


Figure 17 Namibia environment promotes Gender Diversity

Source: *Primary data*

4.6.8 Gender Diversity popular among Small and Medium Enterprises

Figure 18 below shows that responses that came from the respondents reveal that 41.6 % were not sure whether gender diversity is popular or not among SMEs, 26.4 % agreed that gender diversity is popular and 32 % responded that it is not popular.

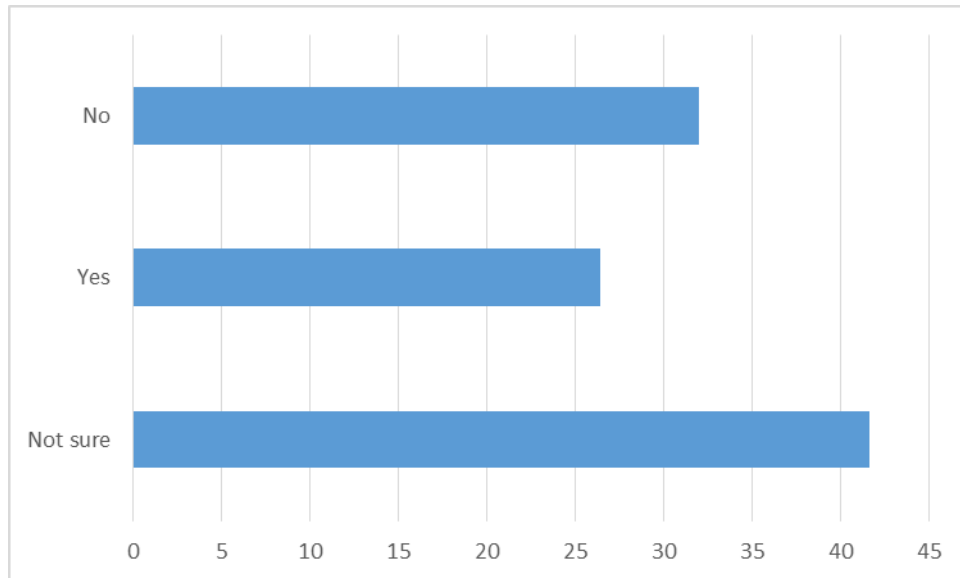


Figure 18 Gender Diversity popular among Small and Medium Enterprises

Source: *Primary data*

The mean levels ranges on whether gender diversity is popular among SMEs or not range from .278 to 8.466 from all the respondents. The p-value is statistically significant with a score of .034.

Table 7 ANOVA Descriptive Gender Diversity popular among Small and Medium Enterprises

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean of Square	f	Sig
Between Groups	16.933	3	8.466	30.460	.034
Within Groups	13.897	50	.278		
Total	30.830	53			

Source: *Primary data*

4.6.9 Gender Diverse leadership promotes Gender Diversity

Figure 19 below depicts that 66 % of the respondents strongly agreed that gender diverse leadership promotes gender diversity, whilst 9.4 % agreed, 15.1 % were undecided and 9.4 % disagree. None of the respondents strongly disagreed with this statement.

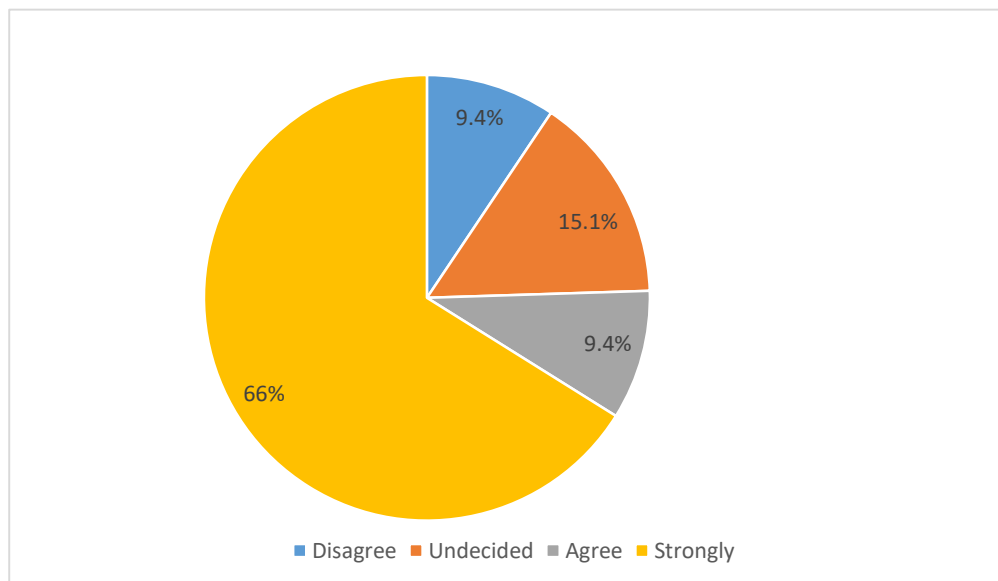


Figure 19 Gender Diverse leadership promotes Gender Diversity

Source: *Primary data*

4.6.10 Gender Diversity policies within my Organisation

Figure 20 below portrays that 15.1 % of the respondents strongly agree that there are gender diversity policies within their organisation, 5.7 % agreed, 11.3 % were undecided, whilst 13.2 % disagreed and 54.7 % strongly disagreed.

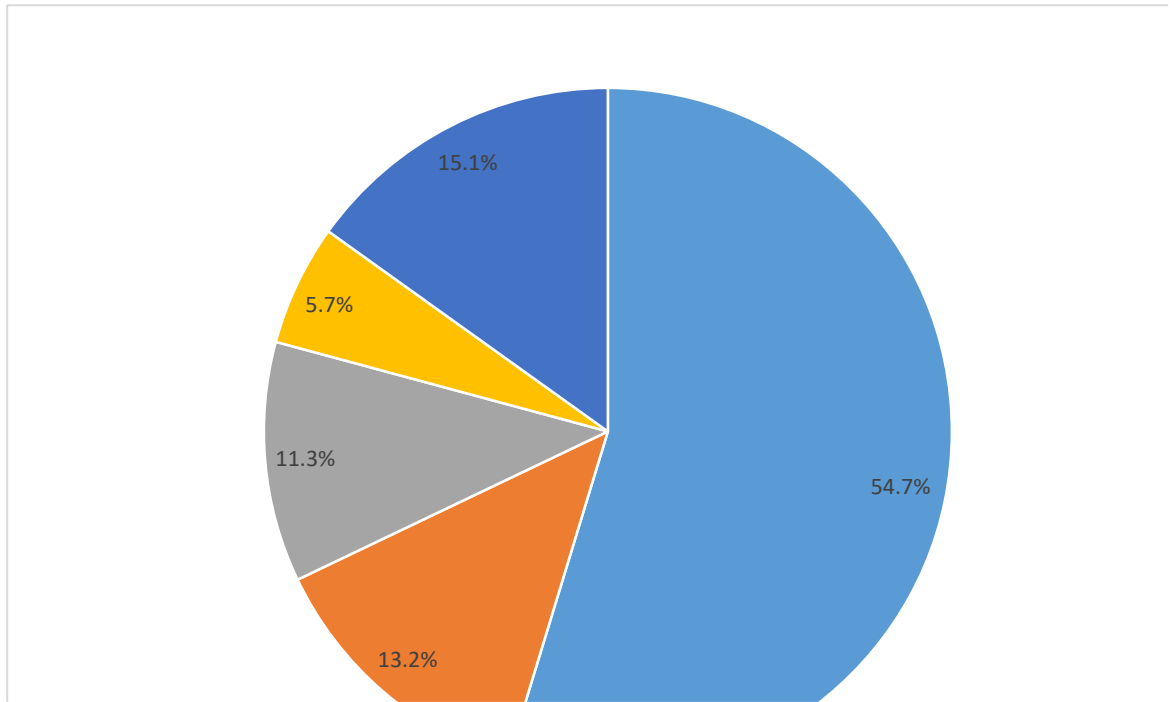


Figure 20 There are Gender Diversity policies within my Organisation

Source: *Primary data*

4.6.11 Organisation does not embrace Gender Diversity

In Figure 21 below data shows that 13.2 % of the respondents strongly agreed that their organisation does not embrace gender diversity, 7.5 % agreed, 58.5 % were undecided, 11.3 % disagreed and 9.4 % strongly disagreed.

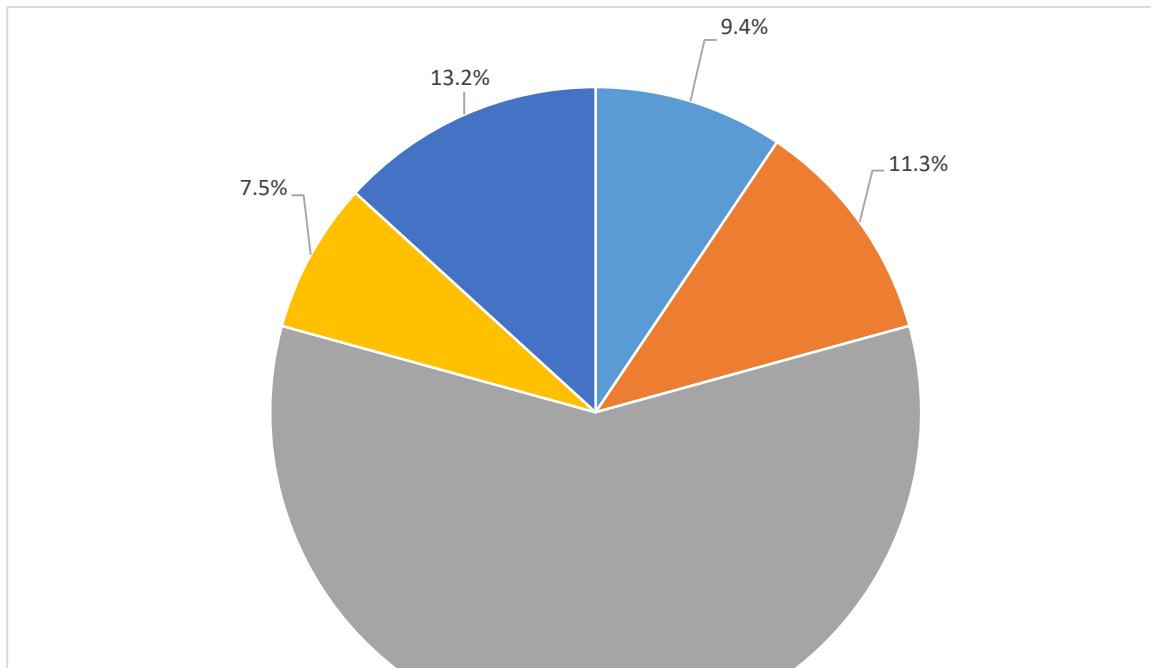


Figure 21 Organisation does not embrace Gender Diversity

Source: *Primary data*

4.6.12 Small and Medium Enterprises embrace Gender Diversity

Figure 22 below depicts that 5.7 % of the respondents strongly agreed that SMEs embraces gender diversity, 7.5 % agreed, 66 % were undecided, 9.4 % disagreed and 11.3 % strongly disagreed.

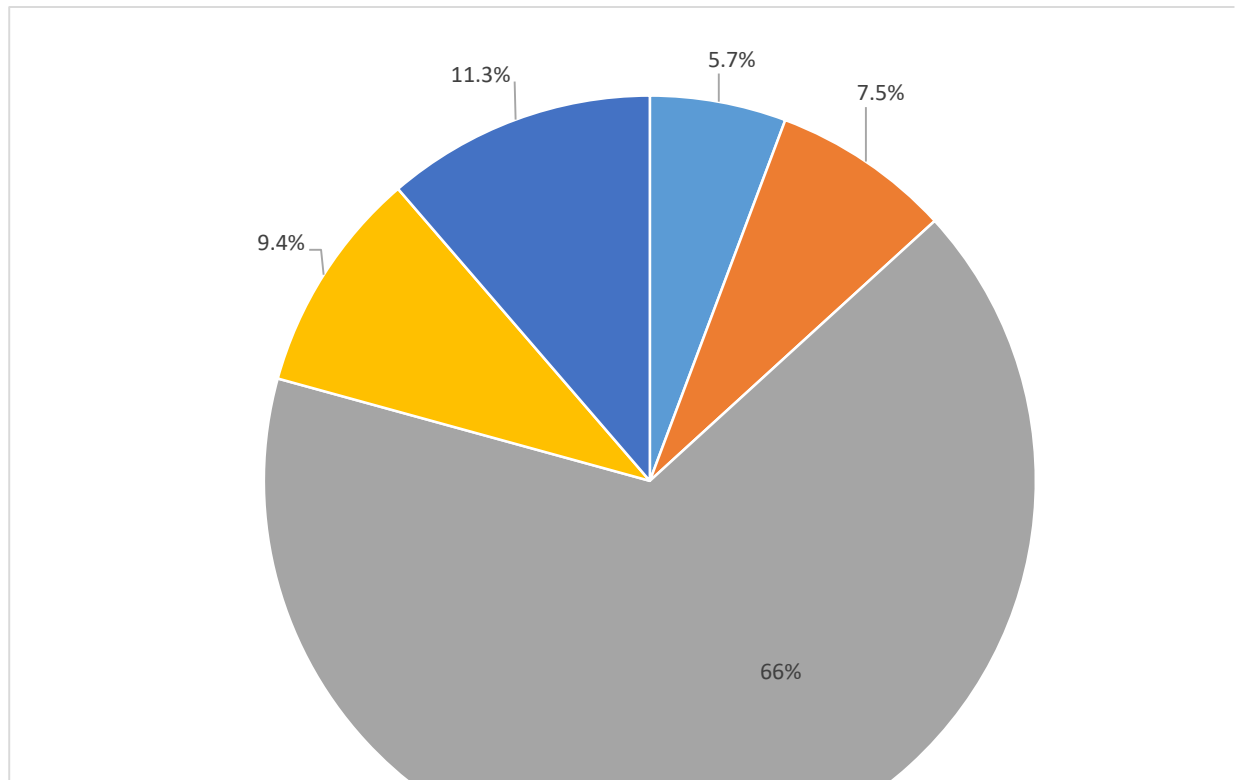


Figure 22 Small and Medium Enterprises embrace Gender Diversity

Source: *Primary data*

The table below indicates that the p-value for SMEs on embracing gender diversity is statistically significant with a score of .001 lower than .05 the cut off score.

Table 8 ANOVA Descriptive Small and Medium Enterprises embrace Gender Diversity

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean of Square	f	Sig
Between Groups	16.486	3	8.243	14.938	.001
Within Groups	27.590	50	.552		
Total	44.075	53			

Source: *Primary data*

4.6.13 Gender Diversity enhances business performance

In response to the question of gender diversity enhancing business performance Figure 23 below reveals that none of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the assertion, hence the 0 % represented in the figure above, 71.7 % strongly agreed and 28.3 % were undecided.

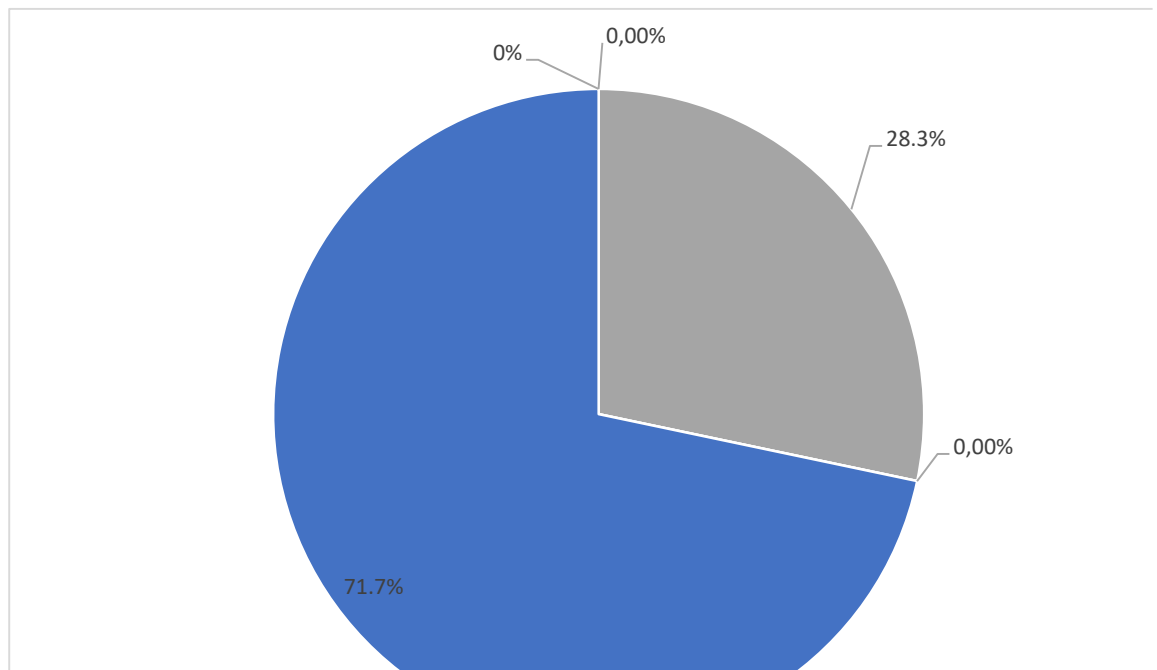


Figure 23 Gender Diversity enhances business performance

Source: *Primary data*

The table below indicates that the p-value for gender diversity enhancing business performance is statistically significant with a score of .015 less than .05 the cut off score.

Table 9 ANOVA Descriptive Gender diversity enhances business performance

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean of Square	f	Sig
Between Groups	156.486	3	78.243	250.943	.015
Within Groups	15.590	50	.312		
Total	172.072	53			

Source: *Primary data*

4.6.14 Gender Diversity is a common phenomenon in Namibia

Figure 24 below illustrates that 24.5 % of the respondents strongly agreed that gender diversity is a common phenomenon in Namibia, 9.4 % agreed, 34 % were undecided, 9.4 % disagreed and 22.6 % strongly disagreed.

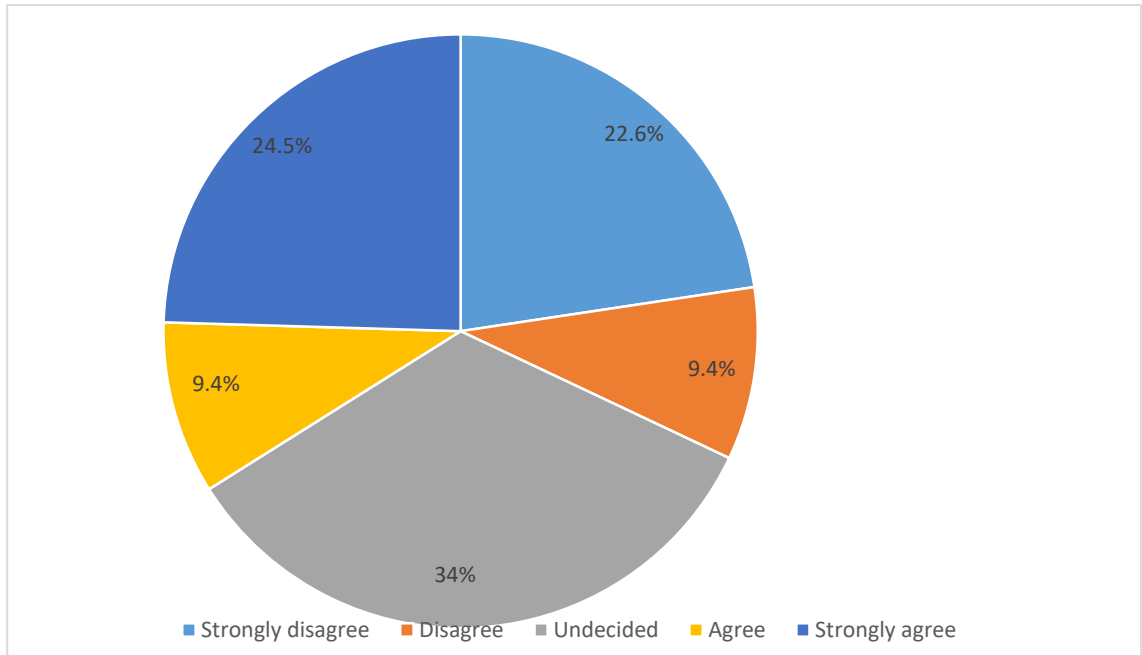


Figure 24 Gender Diversity is a common phenomenon in Namibia

Source: *Primary data*

In the table below, the p-value for gender diversity as a common phenomenon in Namibia is statistically significant with a score of .038 less than .05.

Table 10 ANOVA Descriptive Gender diversity is a common phenomenon in Namibia

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean of Square	f	Sig
Between Groups	69.027	2	34.514	42.195	.038
Within Groups	40.897	50	.818		
Total	109.925	52			

Source: *Primary data*

4.6.15 Steps are taken to promote Gender Diversity

Figure 25 below shows that 11.3 % of the respondents strongly agreed that their organisation are taking steps to promote gender diversity, 3.8 % agreed, 32.1 % were undecided, 1.9 % disagreed and 50.9 % strongly disagreed with this assertion.

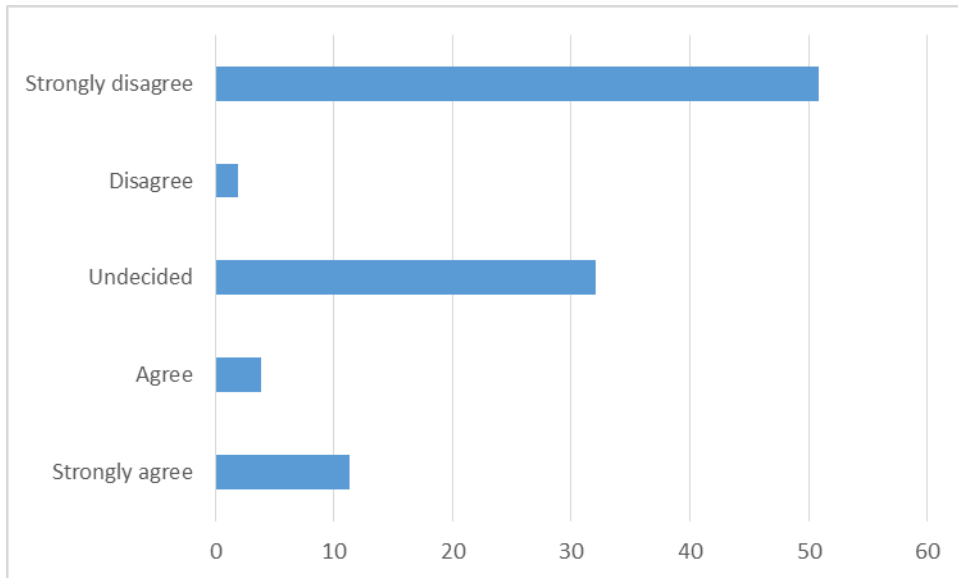


Figure 25 Steps are taken to promote Gender Diversity

Source: *Primary data*

4.6.16 Gender diversity is a consideration in the selection of employees

In relation to the question of gender diversity as a consideration in the selection of employees Figure 26 below shows that 34 % of the respondents strongly agreed with this assertion, 5.7 % agreed, 35.8 % were undecided, 7.5 % disagreed and 17 % strongly disagreed.

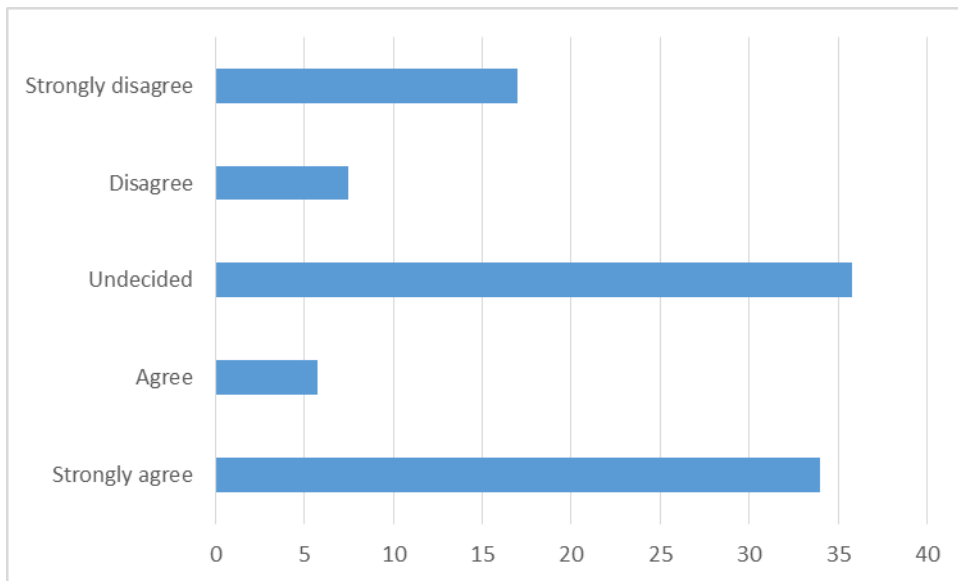


Figure 26 Gender diversity is a consideration in the selection of employees

Source: *Primary data*

4.6.17 Gender Diversity promotes organisational growth

Figure 27 below illustrates that 49.1 % of the participants in the survey strongly agreed that gender diversity promotes organisational growth, 1.9 % agreed, 24.5 % were undecided, 3.8 % disagreed and 20.8 % strongly disagreed with this statement.

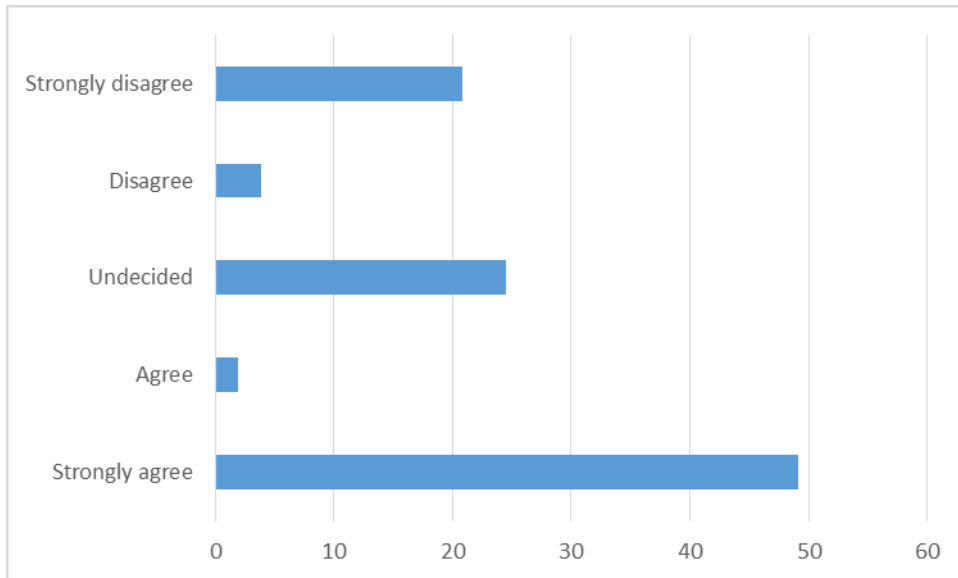


Figure 27 Gender Diversity promotes organisational growth

Source: *Primary data*

4.6.18 Gender diverse workforce handles a gender diverse clientele more effectively

Figure 28 below shows that 39.6 % of the respondents strongly agreed a gender diverse workforce effectively handles a gender diverse clientele, 11.3 % agreed, 30.2 % were undecided, 13.2 % disagreed and 5.7 % strongly disagreed with this assertion.

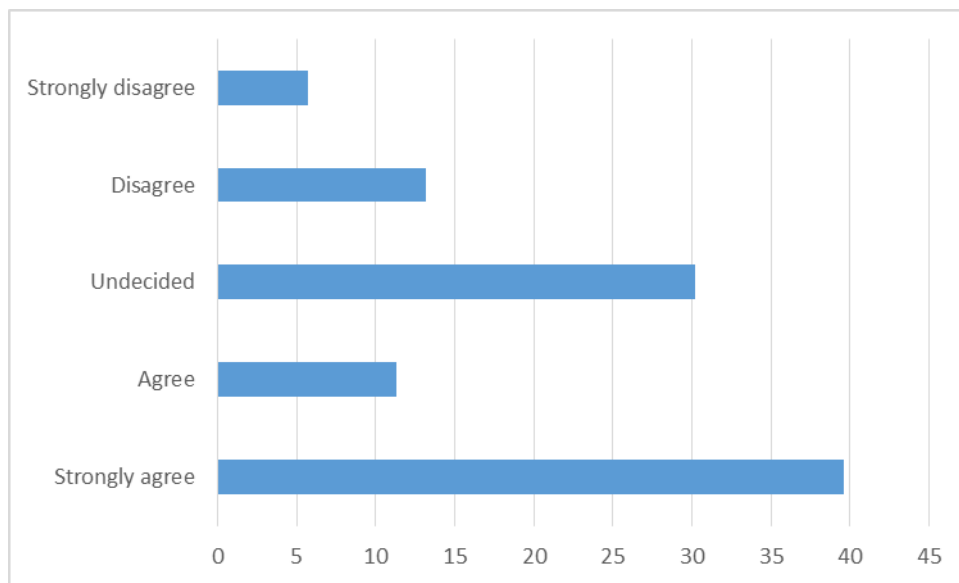


Figure 28 Gender diverse workforce handles a gender diverse clientele more effectively

Source: *Primary data*

4.6.19 Is there a time when your career has been hindered because of your gender?

As depicted in the table below respondents were asked if there was a time when their careers were hindered because of their gender. The majority of the respondents, constituting 54.7 % cited lack of support from employer as a reason for the hindrance, 35.8 % cited unfair treatment, 5.7 % cited maternity reasons and 3.8 % indicated education as a reason.

Table 11 Is there a time when your career has been hindered because of your gender?

	Frequency	Percent
Lack of support from your employer	29	54.7
Unfair treatment	19	35.8
Maternity/paternity	3	5.7
Education	2	3.8
Total	53	100.0

Source: *Primary data*

4.6.20 How should your recruitment promote gender diversity?

Respondents were asked to choose ways on how their recruitment should promote gender diversity. The table below illustrates that 96.2 % of the respondents indicated that their organisations should consider gender composition as well as encourage all genders to apply. Among the respondents, 1.9 % indicated that their organisations should only consider gender composition whilst the remainder 1.9 % indicated that their organisations should only encourage all genders to apply.

Table 12 How should your recruitment promote gender diversity?

	Frequency	Percent
Consider gender composition	1	1.9
Encourage all gender to apply	1	1.9
All of the above	51	96.2
Total	53	100.0

Source: *Primary data*

4.6.21 What are the characteristics your organisation seek when recruiting?

Table 13 below illustrates that 30.3 % indicated that their organisations seek relevant skills when recruiting, 24.5 % cited academic qualifications, 24.5 % cited experience, 18.9 % cited gender and 1.9 % cited none of the suggestions.

Table 13 What are the characteristics your organisation seek when recruiting?

	Frequency	Percent
Academic	13	24.5
Relevant skills	16	30.2
Experience	13	24.5
Gender	10	18.9
None	1	1.9
Total	53	100.0

Source: *Primary data*

4.6.22 Are there any steps your organisation is taking in promoting gender diversity?

The table below indicates that none of the respondents indicated that gender diversity programmes as a step their organisation is taking in promoting gender diversity. Among the respondents 32.1 % indicated coaching and mentoring as one of the steps whilst 24.5 % indicated Affirmative Action. The majority of the respondents cited none of the suggested steps as being taken by their organisation to promote gender diversity.

Table 14 Are there any steps your organisation is taking in promoting gender diversity?

	Frequency	Percent
Gender Diversity Programmes	0	0
Coaching and mentoring	17	32.1
Affirmative action	13	24.5
None of the above	23	43.4
Total	53	100.0

Source: *Primary data*

4.6.23 What are the barriers that hinder Gender Diversity?

Respondents were asked about the barriers that hinder gender diversity. Table 15 below shows that 11.3 % of the respondents specified stereotype as one of the barriers, 13.2 % indicated traditional beliefs, 13.2 % indicated lack of awareness, 11.3 % indicated lack of top management support whilst 51.6 % indicated all, that is, stereotyping, traditional beliefs, lack of awareness and lack of top management support.

Table 15 What are the barriers that hinder Gender Diversity?

	Frequency	Percent
Stereotyping	6	11.3
Traditional beliefs	7	13.2
Lack of awareness	7	13.2
Lack of top management support	6	11.3
All of the above	27	50.9
Total	53	100.0

Source: *Primary data*

4.7 Summary

This chapter evaluated the perceptions of SME employees with regards to employers' attitudes towards gender diversity. Advantages of gender diversity were explored. The researcher presented the discussion of the findings of the study based on the results. In respect of management's attitude towards gender diversity, the majority of the respondents (77.4 %) indicated that they were dissatisfied with management's attitude towards gender diversity and only 3.8 % agreed that their organisations' recruitment practices support gender diversity. According to 73.6 % of the respondents, the environment in Namibia supports gender diversity. Half of the respondents agreed that same genders work well together. With regards to pay gaps, 88.7 % of the respondents agreed that gender influences pay gaps. According to 60.4 % of the respondents, it is possible to adopt gender diversity in SMEs.

Based on the literature review and findings presented in this study, the next chapter highlights conclusions and recommendations. The researcher analysed the literature in relation to the findings in this research to suggest pragmatic recommendations that will positively influence gender diversity at the workplace for SMEs in Namibia.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to provide an evaluation of gender diversity in Namibia Small and Medium Enterprises situated in the Windhoek Central Business District Area, BRB Building, in Ausspannplatz. This was done through determining the perceptions of SME employees and attitudes of SME employers towards gender diversity and exploring the relationship between gender diversity and team synergy. Furthermore, it was aimed at exploring the impact of gender diversity in SMEs and establishing whether it is a common phenomenon among SMEs in Namibia.

5.1.1 Is gender diversity a common phenomenon among SMEs?

Literature reveals that gender diversity is still obscured in Africa and Namibia, especially with regards to the participation of women in SMEs. Hence the Namibian Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (2010 – 2014) 5 Year Strategic Plan, encourages men and women's equal rights and opportunities, employment creation with special emphasis on women entrepreneurship, gathering of statistics of women in the workplace for both private and public organisations, women in leadership and management positions and ongoing awareness to address discrimination of women at the workplace as well as culture and stereotyping of male dominance in the society (Jauch, 2015)

Respondents revealed that 41.5 % were not sure whether gender diversity is popular among SMEs or not whilst 26.4 % indicated that it was not. This is in agreement with the response on the question of whether SMEs embrace gender diversity or not,

30.2 % of the participants in the survey indicated that their organisations embrace gender diversity whilst 69.9 % disagreed and were not sure. Furthermore, respondents constituting 66 % strongly disagreed, disagreed or were undecided on the question of whether gender diversity is a common phenomenon in Namibia or not.

5.1.2 Attitudes of SME employers towards gender diversity

With reference to the literature, SMEs often lack the time, means and expertise to address gender diversity issues. They usually have more urgent operational concerns and their priority is first and foremost to stay afloat. At first glance, gender diversity management appears to most SME managers as an immaterial and non-financial concern (European Commission, 2015). On the question of whether SMEs embrace gender diversity or not 49.1 % were not sure, 20.8 % indicated that they did not whilst 30.2 % agreed that their organisations embraced gender diversity. This is an indication that a few SMEs embrace gender diversity.

The findings revealed that 77.4 % of the respondents were dissatisfied with management's attitude towards gender diversity. This is in consilience with the reports by the European Commission (2015) that showed that management in SMEs does not have a buy in on gender diversity issues. However, 60.4 % of the respondents agreed that it is possible to adopt gender diversity within SMEs. Among the respondents 73.6 % agreed that the environment in Namibia promotes gender diversity. This is in line with the National Development Goals 4 (NDP4) administered by the National Planning Commission of Namibia and the Harambee Prosperity Plan (HPP) launched by President Hage Geingob in 2016. The two are targeted at inclusive economic participation, development and poverty eradication.

The findings revealed that the respondents understood gender diversity because the majority comprising of 81.1 % of the respondents indicated that they understood gender diversity. It is only when a workforce can understand diversity that businesses can achieve equality and cohesion in the workplace (Salomon and Schork 2003).

5.1.3 The relationship between gender diversity and team synergy

As reflected by literature in a study by the National Centre for Women and Information Technology USA (NCWIT) (2014), it was found that a positive relationship exists between gender diversity and organisational cultures that value teamwork, participation, and cohesiveness. However, at the Kenya Ports Authority, gender is still a major issue as a significant number of males believe that females are poor at communication, conflict management and solving disputes which leads to greater team disintegration (Ngao & Mwangi, 2013). In this research results indicate that 73.6 % of the respondents agreed that gender diversity leads to productivity. A significance of .048 indicates that there is a strong relationship between gender diversity and productivity. This is consistent with Jayne and Dipboye (2004) who stated that inclusion of all genders leads to better cohesion of teams which results in productivity. There is value in having diversity in gender, age, skills and experience. Such diversity can lead to increased innovation and more productivity (Post, 2009).

Further, the response to the question of whether diverse genders work well together or not was noteworthy in that 69.8 % of the respondents responded in the affirmative whilst 30.2 % of the respondents were either not sure or disagreed that same genders work well together. Some schools of thought such as Jackson (2012), highlighted that a more diverse group can be less integrated and the likelihood of dissatisfaction

and turnover is higher. In this research findings show that gender diverse workforces work well. A significance level of .001 illustrates a strong relationship between gender diversity and team synergy.

Among the respondents 35.8 % indicated that there are barriers that inhibit gender diversity. According to Dougan (2012), traditional cultures from home, lack of buy in from management, recruitment processes and interpersonal issues are some of the factors that inhibit gender diversity. None of the respondents indicated that there were no barriers inhibiting gender diversity.

Findings also revealed that 66 % of the respondents strongly agreed that gender diverse leadership promotes gender diversity. According to Cedric (2009) the market place is diverse and requires a diverse workforce that can cater to the multifarious needs of clients. As long as women are not included in leadership positions, associating leadership with women will continue to be difficult (Warren, 2009). Milliken and Martins (1996) and Fray and Guillaume (2007) suggest that a diverse team has access to a larger network and, associated with this, access to a larger pool of information, skills, and support that fall within the network.

5.1.4 Effects of a gender diverse workforce

Olsen & Martins (2012) suggest that there are mixed feelings, positive and negative towards gender diversity that necessitates an interrogation of its impacts on the organization. In this research results showed that 81.1 % of the respondents agreed that SMEs would benefit from gender diversity. In response to the question of gender

diversity enhancing business performance, most of the respondents constituting 71.7 % agreed that a gender diverse workforce enhances business performance. Businesses which effectively support gender diversity perform better financially, enjoy exceptional team dynamics, and attain greater productivity (National Centre for Women and Information Technology (NCWIT) 2014). This is also consonant with Martins and Parsons (2007) who accentuated that gender diversity can open up access to an untapped pool of resources. Extensive literature has been published around gender diversity with the economic imperative for organisations to nurture and retain the best talent for their leadership pipelines (Followell, 2014).

Among the participants 1.9 % agreed that gender diversity promotes organisational growth, 49.1 % strongly agreed, 24.5 % were undecided, 20.8 % strongly disagreed and 3.8 % disagreed. This is consistent with what literature revealed. Businesses which effectively support gender diversity perform better financially, enjoy exceptional team dynamics, and attain greater productivity (NCWIT 2014).

Literature reveals that a diversified workforce enables an organisation to deal with a diversified client base in meeting their different needs (European Commission, 2015). The majority of the respondents constituting 39.6 % strongly agreed that a gender diverse workforce effectively handles a gender diverse clientele.

In response to the question regarding gender pay gaps, the majority of the respondents, 88.7 %, indicated that gender influences pay gaps. This is in agreement

with a report by the Ministry of Gender and Child Welfare in Namibia (2016) that highlighted that men are paid five times more than women for doing the same job.

Stereotypes rule when evaluating others, making gender based discrimination in hiring influences the attainment of gender diversity in organisations. According to Followell (2014), SMEs do not have sound recruitment processes that can enable them to improve on selection and hiring a diverse workforce. Findings from the data demonstrates that 56.6 % of the respondents were not sure whether or not their organisation's recruitment process supports gender diversity. Respondents constituting 54.7% strongly disagreed that there are any gender policies in their organisations. The European Commission (2015) cited an issue of lack of resources and proper knowledge as one of the reasons why SMEs do not have gender policies and processes. With regards to the question of gender diversity as a consideration in the selection of employees, 17 % of the respondents strongly disagreed and 7.5 % disagreed with this assertion. The rest of the respondents either strongly disagreed, disagreed or were not sure.

Data reveals that most of the SMEs are not taking initiatives to promote gender diversity. Whilst 50.9 % of the respondents strongly disagreed that their organisations were taking steps are to promote gender diversity, 1.9 % disagreed with this assertion, 32.1 % were undecided and 3.8 % agreed and 11.3 % strongly agreed. By not taking steps to promote gender diversity, achieving inclusivity becomes a futile exercise.

When asked if it was possible to adopt gender diversity in SMEs, the majority of the respondents constituting 60.4 % strongly agreed that it is possible. SMEs often lack the time, means and expertise to address gender diversity issues. According to

Ozbilgin (2014) SMEs usually have more urgent operational concerns and their priority is first and foremost to stay afloat. At first glance, gender diversity management appears to most SME managers as an immaterial, non-financial and thereby superfluous concern. In reality, however, evidence shows that, when well-managed, gender diversity encourages constructive dialogue, contradictory debate, collaboration, creativity and innovation.

Respondents were asked about the steps their organisations were taking to promote gender diversity. Table 14 reveals that among the respondents, 32.1 % indicated coaching and mentoring, 24.5 % indicated implementation of affirmative action policies, and 43.4 % indicated none of the above. This shows that little is being done to promote gender diversity in SMEs.

Table 13 shows that 1.9 % of the respondents indicated that their organisations consider gender composition in their recruitment to promote gender diversity, 1.9 % indicated that their organisations encourage all genders to apply while 96.2 % indicated that their organisations consider gender composition and also encourages all genders to apply.

Respondents were asked about the barriers that hinder gender diversity. Table 15 shows that 11.3 % of the respondents specified stereotype as one of the barriers, 13.2 % as traditional beliefs, 13.2 % as lack of awareness, 11.3 % indicated lack of top management support whilst 50.9 % indicated stereotyping, traditional beliefs, lack of awareness and lack of top management support. Olsen and Martins (2012) mentions that it is essential to address mindsets that develop a more inclusive agenda.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.2.1 Policies and Practices that promote gender diversity

Based on the findings, this research concludes that there is a significant need for SMEs to address gender diversity within their organisations. SME employers need to recognise the positive impact of gender diversity, leverage them and create real value for their employees and organisations. This can be done through integrating policies and adopting practices that support gender diversity. Policies should embody hiring strategies that promote gender diversity. Inclusive goals and objectives should be set and managers and leaders should be held accountable.

5.2.2 Gender Diversity Charters

It is government's duty to sensitise SMEs on the importance of gender diversity for their organisations and the nation at large. This can be done by initiating charters similar to the European Commission Diversity Charters aimed at encouraging companies to implement and develop diversity policies. Diversity charters can contribute to fighting discrimination in the workplace and promoting equality.

5.2.3 Mentorship Programmes

Diversity mentorship programmes can be designed in order to provide professional support to SMEs. Through mentorship programmes SMEs will be able to grow, learn, transform and accomplish gender diversity goals. In addition, workshops can be organized nationally to benefit SMEs in understanding and sharing tips on gender diversity.

5.2.4 Training

Training programmes are important ways of dispelling myths about gender diversity, tackling unconscious bias and overcoming stereotypical beliefs held by employees and managers (Ozbilgin, 2014). To achieve this successfully, every employee needs to get training on gender diversity.

5.2.5 Management Buy-In

A top down approach is more effective if gender diversity has to be achieved by SMEs. Management buy in and commitment is crucial in supporting and spreading support across various levels and functions within the organisation. When change starts from the top, it cascades easily to the bottom. Organisational gender diversity approaches need to be informed by a comprehensive framework that takes into cognisance organisational structures, culture, vision, mission and objectives.

5.2.6 Everyone's business

Gender diversity is everyone's business, therefore it is important that every employee is involved. There is no single way to achieve effective gender diversity, SMEs need a whole ecosystem of measures where everybody is involved.

5.2.7 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is important in assessing the impact of interventions and tracking implementation and output systematically (Gage and Dunn, 2009). When gender diversity programmes are initiated, SMEs should measure their effectiveness. Monitoring and evaluation can be used to demonstrate that the programme efforts have had a measurable impact on expected outcomes and have been implemented effectively. It is essential in helping managers, planners, implementers, policy

makers and donors acquire the information and understanding their need to make informed decisions about programme operations.

5.3 Summary

This study sought to undertake an evaluation of gender diversity in SMEs based in the Windhoek Central Business District Area, at the BRB Building in Ausspannplatz, with the intention of determining perceptions of SME employees and attitudes of SME employers towards gender diversity. It also explored the impact of gender diversity in SMEs. The researcher used the quantitative method for data collection and analysis. This study used the probability sampling method called the Simple Random sampling to select the sample members and Slovin's formula to calculate the sample size. The researcher chose a sample of 53 SMEs out of a population of 61 SMEs operating from the BRB Building in Ausspannplatz, Windhoek Central Business District. A questionnaire was used as the data collection instrument. During the research, one of the limitations was the unavailability of adequate Namibian literature in terms of gender diversity in SMEs. Diversity management as a topic has received little attention especially in the Namibian context. However, the researcher made use of the limited available information together with some Afro-centred and Euro-centred literature.

5.4 Limitations & Areas for Future Research

This research mainly focused on gender diversity. This means that there is a narrow possibility of the research results being used as a conclusive guide when dealing with other attributes that are different from the aforementioned one. This paves way for further studies on other attributes of employee differences, such as age, ethnicity, race, ancestry, physical abilities and qualities, sexual orientation, educational background, geographical location, income, marital status, differences in thought and political views.

Based on the findings, this research concludes that there is a significant need for SMEs to apply a multifaceted approach that involves concerted efforts which are pursued constantly and consistently in order to correct the significant marginalisation of any specific gender.

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Annexure A – Consent Letter

Dear Respondent

You are invited to participate in a research on diversity management in SMEs. Completing the questionnaire will take you about 15 minutes. My name is Erica Gatawa and I am a student pursuing a Master of Business Administration (MBA) Management Strategy degree at the University of Namibia, Namibia Business School. The Business School is academically an integral part of the University of Namibia and is a department within the Faculty of Economics and Management Science.

My thesis is entitled “An Evaluation of Gender Diversity in SMEs Situated in the Windhoek Central Business District Area, BRB Building Ausspannplatz, Windhoek”.

Your participation is completely voluntary and will remain anonymous.

For your consent, sign on the space provided on the bottom of the page.

Yours Faithfully,

Erica Gatawa

I have read the above information regarding this research study on gender diversity, and consent to participate in this study.

Name of Participant.....

Signature

Date.....

Annexure B - Questionnaire

Read carefully and answer all questions by indicating your preferred answer with an X.

PART A Demographic information

Gender of respondents	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Age group of respondents	21-30	<input type="checkbox"/>	31-40	<input type="checkbox"/>	41-50	<input type="checkbox"/>	51-60	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Indicate Level of Education		
	Grade 10	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Grade 12	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Diploma	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Degree	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Masters/Doctorate	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Level in organisation	Junior	<input type="checkbox"/>	Middle	<input type="checkbox"/>	Senior	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Period of employment	1-3 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	4-6 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	7-9 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	10-12 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Indicate the size of your organisation	Micro	<input type="checkbox"/>	Small	<input type="checkbox"/>	Medium	<input type="checkbox"/>
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PART B Gender diversity (“Yes”, “Not sure” or “No”)

	No	Not sure	Yes
Do you have an understanding of gender diversity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you ever been trained on gender diversity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your organisation embrace gender diversity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you think gender diversity leads to productivity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can you recommend gender diversity to your management?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Are you satisfied with management's attitude towards gender diversity?			
Are there barriers that inhibit gender diversity at your workplace?			
Are there gender influence pay gaps at your workplace?			
Are there recruitment practices to support gender diversity?			
Do diverse genders work well together?			
Do same gender work well together?			
Does the environment in Namibia support gender diversity in SMEs?			
Do you think SMEs will benefit from Gender Diversity			
Does the Namibian environment promote Gender Diversity?			
Is it possible to adopt Gender Diversity within SMEs?			
Is gender diversity is popular among SMEs?			

PART C Gender diversity (Likert scale)

SD – Strongly Disagree, D – Disagree, U – Undecided, A – Agree, SA – Strongly Agree

	SD	D	Undecided	A	SA
Gender diverse leadership promotes a gender diverse workforce.					
There are gender diversity policies in my organisation					
organisation does not embrace gender diversity					
Small and Medium Enterprises embraces Gender Diversity					
Gender diversity enhance business performance					
Gender diversity is a common phenomenon in Namibia					
Gender diversity is a consideration in the selection of employees					
Steps are taken to promote gender diversity					
A gender diversity promotes organisational growth					
Gender diverse workforce handles effectively gender diverse clientele					

Is there a time when your career has been hindered because of your gender?

If yes, tick a reason

- lack of support from your employer
- unfair treatment
- maternity/paternity
- education
- none

How should your recruitment promote Gender Diversity

- Consider gender composition
- Encourage all genders to apply
- All of the above

What are the characteristics your organisation seek when recruiting?

- academic
- relevant skills
- experience
- gender
- none

Are there any steps your organisation is taking in promoting gender diversity? Tick appropriate box.

- Gender Diversity programmes
- coaching and mentoring
- Affirmative Action
- None of the above

What are the barriers that hinder gender diversity?

- Stereotyping
- Traditional beliefs
- Lack of awareness
- Lack of top management support
- All of the above

Thank you for taking your time.

Annexure C – Namibia Business School Letter – E Gatawa



01 April 2016

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: MS. ERICA GATAWA, STUDENT NUMBER: 201312274

It gives me enormous pleasure to render this testimonial on behalf of Ms. Erica Gatawa (Student number: 201312274), whom I have the privilege of knowing while she is studying towards a Masters in Business Administration (Management Strategy) with the University of Namibia through Namibia Business School.

Through this interaction, the Business School came to know Ms. Gatawa as a very enthusiastic and hard-working student. Therefore, I have no doubts in stating that should she be given the opportunity she will make a meaningful contribution to the further advancement of the environment around her, by striving for higher professional standards.

With that background in mind, I have no doubt to recommend Ms. Gatawa for any academic or job opportunity that may come her way. Feel free to contact me for any further information you may require.

Sincerely,

Ms Jennifer Haihamba
Academic Officer

Tel: +246 61 413 500

Fax: +246 61 413 512

Email: academicofficer@nbs.edu.na



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Annexure D – Language and Copy Editing Certificate



The Rev. Dr. Greenfield Mwakipesile
TSD, MBA, MBS | gm@unam.na

CONTACT

PO Box 40529,
Ausseposplats,
Windhoek,
Namibia

LANGUAGE & COPY-EDITING CERTIFICATE

27th January 2017

RE: LANGUAGE, COPYEDITING AND PROOFREADING OF ERICA GETEWE'S THESIS FOR THE MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION DEGREE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

This letter serves to confirm that I copyedited and proofread ERICA GETEWE's Thesis for the degree of MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION entitled: **AN EVALUATION OF GENDER DIVERSITY IN SMALL TO MEDIUM ENTERPRISES SITUATED IN THE WINDHOEK CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT AREA, BBS BUILDING, AUSSEPOSPLOTS, NAMIBIA**

I declare that I professionally copyedited and proofread the thesis and removed mistakes and errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation. In some cases, I improved sentence construction without changing the content provided by the student. I also removed some typographical errors from the thesis and formatted the thesis so that it complies with UNAM's guidelines.

I am a trained language and copy editor and have edited many Postgraduate Diploma, Masters' Thesis, Dissertations and Doctoral Dissertations for students studying with universities in Namibia, Zimbabwe, Swaziland and South Africa.

Please feel free to contact me should the need arise.

Yours Sincerely,

The Rev. Dr. Greenfield Mwakipesile



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