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# Justice perceptions of affirmative action and attitudes towards affirmative action: The role of locus of control and perceptions of job opportunities among final year university students.

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# Justice perceptions of affirmative action and attitudes towards affirmative action: The role of locus of control and perceptions of job opportunities among final year university students.

Janine Claire Grasslin

Justice perceptions of affirmative action and attitudes towards affirmative action: The role of locus of control and perceptions of job opportunities among final year university students.

**JANINE CLAIRE GRASSLIN**

A research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (Industrial Psychology).

January 2005

# DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts (Industrial Psychology) to the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted for any other degree at any other University.

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JANINE CLAIRE GRASSLIN

_____

DATE

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this research project was to investigate final year university students' attitudes towards affirmative action. In particular the current research investigated the final year students' justice perceptions and attitudes towards affirmative action as well as their perceptions of job opportunities. The study also incorporated the role of locus of control in relation to the above mentioned variables. Prior research indicated that affirmative action is perceived as controversial in nature and has been accused of promoting inherent unfairness of practices and procedures that give preferential treatment to certain groups of people based on gender, race and ethnicity (Parker, Baltes and Christiansen, 1997). In addition affirmative action has been accused of reducing job opportunities for non-beneficiaries, as well as stigmatising those it aims to assist (Kravits and Plantainia, 1992). Therefore there arises a need to examine and explore affirmative action within South Africa, as much research has been conducted in the United States and is not applicable to South Africa.

The present research was conducted using a quantitative, non-experimental cross sectional research design. The sample consisted of fourth year bachelor of accounting students. Five hypotheses were tested. The results indicted that support was found for three of the hypotheses, indicating that attitudes towards affirmative action differ between beneficiaries and non – beneficiaries. There is a relationship between perceptions of job opportunities and attitudes towards affirmative action as well as a relationship between justice perceptions of affirmative action and attitudes towards affirmative action in both

beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. The findings are discussed in relation to previous research. The implications of the research and the limitations of the study are outlined in the research report.

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