

The effect of management of diversity dimensions on employee performance in selected Public Universities in Kenya

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Abstract: Diversity management plays a critical role in employee performance in institutions of higher learning across the world. This study examined the effects of management of diversity dimensions on employee performance in selected Kenyan Public Universities. A cross sectional descriptive survey design was employed for the study. The target population comprised all the 1,900 employees working in selected Public Universities in Kenya. A sample of 330 respondents was selected using both stratified and simple random sampling methods. Data was collected using semi-structured questionnaire. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed in the analysis of data. The study found existence of a positive correlation between employee performance and diversity dimensions on employee performance in Public Universities in Kenya of about 29 percent. Therefore, Public Universities in Kenya should ensure Diversity Dimension is well managed since it influences employee performance.

Key Words: diversity dimensions, employee performance, Public Universities

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I. Introduction

Diversity dimensions refers to different traits, backgrounds and abilities of employees in an organization. Diversity dimensions management determines negative or positive employee performance in an organisation (Rizwan et al., 2016). The diversity dimensions include aspects like age, ethnicity, education backgrounds, social economic status and difference in religions, amongst other aspects. Diversity dimension management entails planning and implementing systems and practices aimed at accommodating diverse groups of people, maximizing the benefits and minimizing the adverse effects of having a diverse workforce, Rizwan et al. (2016). While Rizwan et al. (2016) recognize that diversity has influence on the employee performance that study does not illustrate how the diversity aspects influence this performance. Instead, Rizwan et al. (2016) discusses the components of the diversity dimensions without an explanation on how each of these dimensions influences performance of employees. Employee performance refers to how well an employee discharges his or her duties and responsibilities, and creates an environment that enhances the performance of the entire organization. The tenets of employee performance include among others, employee relations, employee attitudes, employee turnover levels, creativity levels, and productivity levels. Employees' performance significantly determines organizational success or failure since organizations work through people (Hameed & Waheed, 2011).

II. Research Methodology

The research design that was adopted by this study is the cross sectional research design where the study is undertaken in a short period of time. According to Bethlehem (1999), study that employ this kind of research design are undertaken to approximate the frequency of the outcome of interests for a particular target group. The unit of observation has also been defined as the identifiable organizations or physical entities, which are able to report data about their activities (Mugenda, 2003). The unit of observation were Maasai Mara University, Chuka University, Multimedia University and the University of Eldoret. The study population comprised of a total of 1,900 employees of the four universities. These target population were aware and gave genuine and objective views on diversity dimension management in the sampled universities and its effect on employee performance. Subsequently, the total sample size for this study was determined using the formula by

Israel (1992) as shown below at 95% confidence level (e = 0.05) Thus calculating the sample size; n = Sample size, N= 1900 and e = Confidence level (0.05).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Thus;

$$n = 1900 / 1 + 1900(0.05)^2 = 330.4$$

Table 1: Sample distribution of the four sampled Universities

University	Population	Sample
Maasai Mara University	431	75
Chuka University	500	87
Multi-Media University	408	71
University of Eldoret	561	98
TOTAL	1900	331

III. Research Results

3.1 General Characteristics of respondents

The findings illustrated in table 2 evident that the males were the majority of the employees in Public Universities in Kenya representing 54.1% while 45.9% were females. 39% of the respondents were employees aged between 26-35 years, 27% were between 36-45 years, 18.8% were aged 46-55 years, 8.2% were 18-25 years, 5.5% were aged 56-65 years old while only 0.7% were over 65 years. On the other hand, majority at 40.8% of the university employees engaged in this study were undergraduates, 32.9% had a postgraduate degree, 23.3% had diplomas and only 3.1% had secondary school certificate. Out of the 292 respondents, 39% indicated that they had work experience of less than 5 years, 35.6% had worked for 5-10 years, 17.8% had worked for between 10 - 20 years while those with work experience of between 20-30 years were 5.5%. Only 2.1% had worked for over 30 years.

Table 2: General Characteristics of respondents

Variable	Response	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	158	54.1
	Female	134	45.9
	Total	292	100.0
Age	18-25 years	24	8.2
	26-35 years	114	39.0
	36-45 years	81	27.7
	46-55 years	55	18.8
	56-65 years	16	5.5
	Over 65 years	2	0.7
	Total	292	100.0
Education Level	Secondary	9	3.1
	Diploma	68	23.3
	Undergraduate	119	40.8
	Post graduate	96	32.9
	Total	292	100.0
Work Experience	Less 5 years	114	39.0
	Over 5 years	104	35.6
	Over 10 years	52	17.8
	Over 20 years	16	5.5
	Over 30 years	6	2.1
	Total	292	100.0

Table 3 shows the summary of cross-tabulation of demographic factors and employee performance. The results show that it is only the level of education that was found to have significant association with employee performance.

Table 3: Summary of Cross-tabulation of Demographic factors and employee performance

Variable	Pearson Chi-Square	P	Is there a significant association?
Gender	44.128	0.090	No
Age	216.598	0.090	No
Level of education	141.086	0.043	Yes
Work experience	138.873	0.769	No

3.2 Descriptive Analysis for Diversity Dimensions

The study sought to examine the effect of management of diversity dimensions on employee performance in selected Public Universities in Kenya. The variables considered for determining the effect of management of

diversity management included whether the university appreciated gender diversity management as a tool for enhancing employee performance. Results in table 4 shows that universities appreciate gender diversity management for enhanced performance since 63.7 percent agreed, 13.7 percent strongly agree, 10.3 percent were not sure, and 8.2 percent disagreed while only 4.1 percent strongly disagreed. The mean was 3.75 with a standard deviation of 0.937. On the aspect of whether the university valued education diversity among staff, 58.9 percent agreed, 17.1 percent strongly agreed while 13 percent were not sure. 6.2 percent disagreed with 4.8 percent strongly disagreeing with the statement whose mean was 3.77 and 0.965 standard deviation. Women are still not represented well in the country's workforce despite gender representation being front and centre in the country's discourse (Kaane, 2014). Despite these challenges, Africa is doing particularly well when it comes to women being represented at the top levels at workplace, compared to other developing countries (African Development Bank, 2015).

On whether the university recognized social diversity among staff for enhanced employee performance, 58.2 percent agreed with 17.1 percent strongly agree whereas 11.6 percent were not sure, 9.2 percent disagreed with 3.8 percent strongly disagree. This is in line with Swan et al. (2004) argument that managing diversity allows no group to dominate others and therefore people feel equal to each other and therefore identify with the group as a whole leading to more creativity and introduction of new insights into the group. The mean was 3.76 and standard deviation of 0.970. The other aspect the researcher sought to establish was whether age diversity management was valued as a means to enhancing employee performance and the majority at 46.6 percent agreed, 21.9 percent strongly agreed and 17.1 percent were neutral. Those who disagreed formed 9.9 percent of the total and 4.5 percent strongly disagreed. The mean was 3.72 with a standard deviation of 1.054. These results were at odds with a similar study on diversity and performance by Rizwan et al. (2016) in the banking industry in Pakistan. Although diversity dimensions like gender, education and ethnicity had positive influence on diversity, the age diversity dimension was the only dimension which was found to have a negative influence on employee performance.

The other aspect which the study investigated was the effect of appreciating persons with disability. The results showed that 50.3 percent agreed, 28.1 percent strongly agreed while 11.6 percent were neutral and 6.5 percent disagreed with 3.4 percent strongly disagree. The mean was 3.92 with a standard deviation of 0.982. The ILO (2016) in its publication on the business case for hiring persons with disabilities argues that they are dependable employees, they are a source of untapped skills and traits that are desirable to many employers, they have a comparable or even better safety record than their non-disabled colleagues, they have better retention rates and therefore reduce an organization's recruitment cost and also have better attendance records than their non-disabled peers.

Further, religion diversity dimension management was appreciated in the Universities for Enhanced Performance as was indicated by 50.7 percent of the respondents who agreed, 25.8 percent strongly agreed while 13.4 percent were neutral. Those who disagreed with the statement formed 7.9 percent while 2.1 percent strongly disagreed. The mean was 3.90 with a standard deviation of 0.942. This partly concurs with the findings of Ancarani et al. (2016) on the effect of religious diversity in healthcare teams. The study found that religious diversity in these healthcare teams enhanced performance but when sub groups are equally sized, they may become confrontational. In addition Ancarani et al. note in their findings that surgical teams benefit more from religious diversity than clinical teams from a moderate degree of religious diversity. The former are expected to carry out more complex activities which require a higher degree of interdependence as compared to clinical teams.

The Universities valued marital status of staff as a tool to managing diversity in the university as was indicated by the majority of the respondents at 44.5 percent who agreed, 21.6 percent strongly agreed and 18.2 percent were not sure. 11 percent disagreed while 4.5 percent strongly disagreed. The mean was 3.68 with a standard deviation of 1.069. According to Joslin (2015), a significant percentage of people in America believe that non marital families are bad for society. This is despite the fact that 50 percent of adults in America are unmarried. Similarly, Personal experience was considered to enhance diversity management among employees in the university as was indicated by 47.3 percent who agreed and 21.2 percent who strongly agreed with the statement. 15.1 percent were not sure, 11.3 percent disagreed and 5.1% strongly disagreed with the statement. The mean was 3.68 with a standard deviation of 1.086. These results are more in line with Harrison et al. (2010) who found in their study that white physical education teachers particularly in racially homogeneous schools tended to lack cultural competence compared to teachers of colour.

On whether Compensation policy was considered to ensure diversity management is encouraged among the employees in the university, 49.3 percent agreed while 17.5 percent strongly agreed with the statement while 9.9% disagreed with 3.8% strongly disagreeing. The mean was 3.67 with a standard deviation of 1.000. The policies that organizations have on compensation is a big issue as seen in the findings of Siddique et al. (2016) which found that many companies in Saudi Arabia have policies based on cultural beliefs that remunerate women at a lower rate than men. In addition, these policies even extended to national origins with

western expatriates being paid the highest, followed by Saudi nationals, then skilled workers from other Middle Eastern countries and finally workers from India, Pakistan and East Asian countries.

On the aspect of whether Diversity management was measured through equal employment opportunities in the university to everybody regardless of their tribe, the majority of the respondents at 45.5 percent agreed, 21.2 percent strongly agree while 12.3 percent were neutral and 13 percent disagreed with 7.9 percent strongly disagreeing. The mean was 3.59 and a standard deviation of 1.185. This is as an issue noted in a study by Nelson (2016) which found that negative ethnicity was a big challenge in many public secondary schools in Kenya.

The results also shows that majority of the respondents agreed that Public Universities in Kenya hire diverse employees. It is noted that Public Universities in Kenya appreciates the positive effect of hiring and managing staff with diverse diversity dimensions such as gender, education, social, age, disability, religious, marital status, personal experience, compensation policy and equal employment opportunity to enhance performance of employees and in achieving key objectives of Public Universities. The findings corroborate with those of Saxena (2014) who found that employment and proper management of diverse people can be a significant source of competitive advantage for organizations. Similar findings are reported in Patrick and Kumar (2012) who noted that a diverse workforce had higher levels of efficiency and effectiveness than a homogenous workforce.

Table 4: Diversity dimensions

Diversity dimensions	1 SD %	2 D %	3 NS %	4 A %	5 SA %	Mean	Stdev
The university appreciates gender diversity management for enhanced performance	4.1	8.2	10.3	3.5	13.7	3.75	.937
The university values education diversity among the staff for enhanced performance	4.8	6.2	13.0	8.9	7.1	3.77	.965
The university recognizes social diversity among its staff for promoting performance	3.8	9.2	11.6	8.2	7.1	.76	.970
Age diversity management is valued for the purpose of enhanced performance	4.5	9.9	17.1	6.6	1.9	3.72	1.054
The university appreciates person with disability for enhanced diversity management	3.4	6.5	11.6	50.3	8.1	3.93	0.982
Religious diversity management is appreciated in the university for enhanced performance	2.1	7.9	13.4	50.7	5.8	3.90	0.942
Marital status is valued in enhancing diversity management in the university	4.5	11.0	18.2	4.5	1.6	3.68	1.069
Personal experience is considered to enhance diversity management among employees in the university	5.1	11.3	15.1	47.3	1.2	3.68	1.086
Compensation policy is considered to ensure diversity management is encouraged among the employees in the university	3.8	9.9	19.5	49.3	7.5	3.67	1.000
Diversity management is measured through equal employment opportunities in the university to everybody regardless of their tribe	7.9	13.0	12.3	45.5	1.2	3.59	1.185

Stdev-Standard Deviation, SD-Strongly Disagree, D-Disagree, NS-Not Sure, A-Agree and SA – Strongly Agree.

3.3 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing is a process by which the researcher infers the result of sample data on the larger population based on a presupposition made prior to commencement of research Gujarati, (2003). This study performed hypothesis testing and determined the statistical significance of explanatory variables' coefficients, in verifying the null hypothesis by the use of the sample results. Multiple regression analysis was conducted and the results used to test the null hypothesis of the study from which objectives' conclusions were drawn. Significance level for testing the hypothesis was 5 percent.

H₀: Management of diversity dimensions has no statistically significant effect on employee performance in selected Public Universities

Regression analysis was conducted to determine the significance of the effect of diversity dimensions on employee performance in Public Universities in Kenya. As shown in the model summary table 5, R is the correlation coefficient between the dependent variable and independent variable. Thus the value of R of 0.294 implies that there is a positive and relatively moderate correlation between employee performance and diversity dimensions on employee performance in Public Universities in Kenya.

Table 5: Model summary of diversity dimensions and employees performance

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	R ² Change	Change Statistics	
					F Change	Sig. F Change
1	.294 ^a	.087	.083	.087	27.314	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Diversity Dimensions

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) shown in table 6, the model fit is appropriate for this data since the p-value of 0.000 is found to be less than 0.05 further implying a statistically significant effect of diversity dimensions on employee performance. Additionally, this implies a statistically significant effect of management of diversity dimensions on employee performance. In this regard, the null hypothesis that management of diversity dimensions has no statistically significant effect on employee performance is rejected and thus alternative hypothesis that management of diversity dimensions influences employee performance is accepted.

Table 6: ANOVA of diversity dimensions

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10.389	1	10.389	7.314	0.000 ^b
	Residual	109.543	88	0.391		
	Total	119.932	289			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Diversity Dimensions

From the results in table 7, the fitted model ($Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1$) becomes:

$$Y = 2.934 + 0.269X_1$$

Where X_1 is the diversity dimensions regressed on employee performance (Y). The fitted model shows that a unit change in diversity dimensions leads to an increase in employee performance by a rate of 0.269 and that even if diversity dimensions were non-existent, employee performance would be at positive 2.934, meaning that there are other factors that have an effect on employee performance other than diversity dimensions. Similar studies indicate that workforce diversity significantly and positively influence the performance of employees (Maingi & Makori, 2015). More specifically, a study by Munjuri (2012) found that education diversity dimension had a statistically significant influence on employee performance. Other studies report that some organizations in Kenya have policies and strategies for promoting disability and gender diversity, but lacked policies for managing ethnicity, sexual orientation, and age dimensions (Ojango, 2014).

Table 7: Coefficients of diversity dimensions

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Coefficients Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.934	0.196		14.454	0.000
	Diversity Dimensions	0.269	0.051	0.294	5.512226	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee performance

IV. Discussions

The objective of the study was to examine the effect of management of diversity dimensions on employee performance in selected Public Universities in Kenya. Diversity Dimensions comprised of nine dimensions which include Gender Diversity, Education background diversity, Social Economic Diversity, Ethnicity Diversity, Age Diversity, Persons with Disability, Religious diversity, Sexual Orientation and Marital Status.

This study clearly shows the role of diversity dimension in employee performance. Various analysis were done to arrive at the findings. The analysis methods included descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and regression analysis. The overall model revealed that there is a positive correlation between employee performance and diversity dimensions on employee performance in Public Universities in Kenya of about 29 percent. Majority of the respondents confirmed that Universities appreciate gender diversity management, value education diversity among the staff, recognizes social diversity among its staff, age diversity management, appreciate persons with disability, religious diversity management, marital status, personal experience, compensation policy and equal employment opportunities to everybody regardless of their tribe.

The study had hypothesised that management of diversity dimensions has no statistically significant effect on employee performance in selected Public Universities. However, the results reveal that there exists a statistically significant effect of management of diversity dimensions on employee performance. This led to rejection of the null hypothesis that management of diversity dimensions has no statistically significant effect on

employee performance and thus alternative hypothesis that management of diversity dimensions statistically influence employee performance is accepted.

V. Conclusion and Recommendation

From the findings of this study, it was evident that Diversity Dimension is important factor that affects employee performance in Public Universities in Kenya. The positive correlation between employee performance and diversity dimensions is as a result of Universities appreciating gender diversity management, valuing education diversity among the staff, recognizing social diversity among its staff, age diversity management, appreciating persons with disability, religious diversity management, marital status, personal experience, compensation policy and equal employment opportunities in the universities to everybody regardless of their tribe.

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