



Effect of Gender and Professional Diversity on the Performance of Quality Control Organization in Nairobi County, Kenya

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Abstract

In the recent years diversity management and workforce inclusion have been substantial and as such have forced companies to embrace these concepts in their companies with the aim of increasing productivity and profit. Workforce diversity has been found to affect employee performance at varying degrees. The study established the effect of gender and professional diversity on the performance of quality control organizations in Nairobi County, Kenya. The target population of the study was 107 quality control organizations which were located in Nairobi County, from which a sample size of 128 respondents was derived. These included the assistant human resource manager, departmental supervisors and staff. Questionnaires were used to collect the data that was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The Pearson product movement correlation coefficient (r) was used to determine the strength of the relationship between gender, professional diversity and performance of quality control organizations. A multiple regression model was used to test the significance of the effects of the gender and professional diversity on the performance. The study found that gender diversity was positively and significant related with performance. Similarly, professional diversity was positively and significantly related with performance. Based on the findings, the study concluded that gender diversity and professional diversity influenced the performance of quality control organizations in Kenya. The study recommended that the implications management should be mindful of in order to build a healthy working environment within the circles of workplace diversity. More so, the research

recommended that managers should have a more positive and proper perception regarding the implementation of workplace diversity.

Keywords: *Professional, Gender diversity, Performance and Quality control organizations*

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Diversity can generally be defined as recognizing, understanding and accepting individual differences irrespective of their race, gender, age, ethnicity and physical ability. Sexual orientation, spiritual practice among others (Grobler & Leornard, 2006). Diversity can be classified into two dimensions; primary dimension and secondary dimension. The primary dimension such as age, gender, sexual orientation exhibits the main differences between various individuals. This 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. The secondary dimensions such as religion, education, geographical location and income, are those qualities that are not noticeable in the first encounter and can even change throughout different encounters. These qualities are only noticed after some interactions occur between individuals (Ashton, 2010).

Gender-diverse workforce displays a host of different values, preferences and experiences, which makes it very likely that employees will also express differing opinions and approach problems in different ways. In comparison, within a homogeneous workforce, there is the risk that only highly similar ways of looking at and approaching problems emerged, which tends to engender more of an innovation-inhibiting culture (Wanjala, 2015).

Professional diversity refers to a situation where different professionals are involved in the organization's operations (Ndaire, 2010). Implementation of diversity strategies has leads to improved revenues; increased productivity; improved job satisfaction; reduced lawsuits; increased market opportunities and respect for individual difference (Ndaire, 2010). Having a diverse workforce and managing it properly is perceived as a competitive strategy that cannot only help attract diverse customers but also employees who have different perspectives that can contribute to the creativity of the organization.

In the past, most companies believed that assimilating new hires into the organization required that employees be socialized to conform to the company's existing culture. For a variety of reasons, over the last thirty five years, companies have realized that in many instances, the corporate culture itself must adapt if it hopes to attract and retain a competitive workforce (McCormick, 2007). The debate on diversity and inclusion attracted more attention in the late twentieth and early twenty-first Century than any other social phenomena.

In Kenya, one of the problems which the first independent government faced was the existence of deep rooted tribalism, attributed by some to the colonial powers' discouragement of contact or intermingling between the various tribes. However, these problems have been on the decline as affirmative action programmes designed to ensure that minorities and marginalized groups have equal rights as every other citizens including provision of special opportunities for access to employment have been put in place (Akiwumi, 2008). Similarly, in 2010 a new constitution was promulgated, while measures to improve diversity culturally meaningful in terms of tribes, ethnicity and gender are currently being implemented in the public sector. According to the constitution (2010) Article 27 (3) provides a broad guarantee of equal treatment of women and men "including the right to equal opportunities in political, economic, cultural and social

activities”. However, the efforts to improve diversity and inclusion, cases of discrimination are still prevalent.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In the modern days diversity management and workforce inclusion have been substantial and as such have forced companies to embrace these concepts in their companies with the aim of increasing productivity and profit. This forced integration has created divergence and uncertainty in the workforce, as management is not skilled enough to control the concept of diversity management and its ethics, and so managers are finding it difficult to effectively practice diversity management (Dike, 2013).

Ndaire (2010) sought to find out the benefits that accrue to organizations that implement a workplace Diversity policy. The findings of this study established that implementation of diversity strategies has led to: improved revenues; increased productivity; improved job satisfaction; reduced lawsuits; increased market opportunities and respect for individual differences. The findings further established that having a diverse workforce and managing it properly was perceived as a performance strategy that can not only help attract diverse customers but also employees who have different perspectives that can contribute to the creativity of the organization. Gacheri (2012) investigated the effects of workforce diversity management on employee performance in the Banking industry in Kenya. Workforce diversity was found to affect employee performance at varying degrees. It is evident that so far no study has focused on the effects of gender and professional diversity on performance of quality controls organizations. The study addressed the effect of gender and professional diversity on performance of quality controls organizations.

1.3 Specific Objectives

- i. To establish the effects of gender diversity on the performance of quality control organizations in Nairobi County.
- ii. To determine the effects of professional diversity on the performance of quality control organizations in Nairobi County.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. To what extent does gender diversity affect the performance of quality control organizations in Nairobi County?
- ii. How does professional diversity affect the performance of quality control organizations in Nairobi County?

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review

The study relied on the gender inequality theory and upper echelon theory.

2.2.1 Gender Inequality Theory

Gender Inequality Theory was invented by Haralambos and Holborn in 1994. Gender-inequality theories are a subset of feminist theories. Gender-inequality theories recognize that women's experience of social situations is not only different but also unequal to men's (Bose, 2015). Liberal feminists argue that women have the same capacity as men for moral reasoning and agency, but that patriarchy, particularly the sexist patterning of the division of labor, has historically denied

women the opportunity to express and practice this reasoning. Women have been isolated to the private sphere of the household and, thus, left without a voice in the public sphere. Even after women enter the public sphere, they are still expected to manage the private sphere and take care of household duties and child rearing (Ritzer, 2003 & Goodman, 2004).

Gender discrimination in Africa, like elsewhere, is a mostly about socio-cultural factor resulting from a patriarchal socio-economic system. This includes ethnic discrimination, as well as the failing to provide equality in the legal system, in education, in public political and non-political institutions, and places of representation (the media for instance), employment, etc. Several models of solution have been suggested and some call for psychological and economic empowerment of women, others opine that there would be the need to demilitarize masculinity first either through affirmative action or through the suppression of the culture that promotes masculinity. Women and children are most vulnerable to sexual abuse and violence everywhere in the world and not just in Africa, but dramatic cases where women are sentenced to death on the basis of adultery or pregnancy outside of marriage, while the men named in the cases were acquitted for lack of evidence have captured the interest of international civil rights movements (Ritzer, 2003 & Goodman, 2004). It is not enough to say that the position of women in African society requires significant adjustments: the negotiation of conflicting understandings in order to set in motion new regulations regarding the issue of women and gender inequality in Africa are also important. This theory was relevant to our study since it focuses/advocates for gender equality which is amongst the diversity and inclusion that this study sought to address (van den Berg 193).

2.1.2 Upper Echelon Theory

Upper Echelon Theory was propagated by Hambrick and Mason, in 1984. Hambrick and Mason, (1984) argued that organizations wishing to attract, retain, and benefit from diverse talent are often advised to begin by increasing the diversity of their senior management (Nishii, 2007). Doing so has been proposed to help not only because of the signal that it sends to diverse employees about their advancement potential, but because a diverse senior management team is more likely to be sensitive to the issues requiring attention for the retention and advancement of diverse employees. Thus, organizations with more diverse senior managers are expected to adopt diversity initiatives, which help organizations, attract diverse talent and also facilitate organizational functioning through more careful attention to the needs of diverse employees.

The figurative representation was as shown on figure 1.

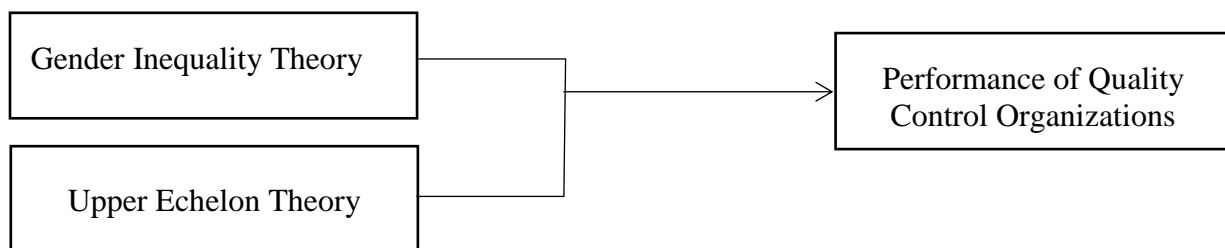


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

2.2 Empirical Review

In his study, Taylor (2008) utilized a sample of 381 employees who were matched with their supervisors. The study examined the relationships between diversity, inclusion, organizational commitment, and job performance. Gender, age, regional affiliation, education, and position within the organization emerged as diversity characteristics that were specifically related to employees' sense of inclusion. Specifically, men, older employees, and employees with higher position were more committed to the organization, while, inclusion had a significant impact on organizational commitment as well as job performance.

Kundu (2003) investigated employees' reactions on workforce diversity status. The study used a descriptive survey research method. The study used primary data based on 1,083 observations which were analyzed to examine the reactions and perceptions of male and female employees across categories about workforce diversity status in Indian organizations. The study found out prevalence of gender and category discrimination in Indian organizations. Male employees rated female employees less qualified, less competent, and less productive than females rated themselves. Even females believed that they had less chance of receiving working facilities, promotions, and salary increases than males from the general category. Further, each category of employees believed themselves to be more important than others. Females from all the categories valued diversity more highly than males. Females from the general category and both males and females from minority, disabled, and socially disadvantaged categories placed higher value on employers' efforts to promote diversity compared with general category males.

Ndaire (2010) carried out a study to find out the benefits that accrue to organizations that implement a professional diversity policy. The objective of the study was to establish the perceived benefits expected from implementing diversity Policies. The population of interest consisted of forty employees in senior and middle level management. The data was collected using both structured and unstructured questionnaires. The response rate was 65%. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings of this study established that implementation of diversity strategies has led to: improved revenues; increased productivity; improved job satisfaction; reduced lawsuits; increased market opportunities and respect for individual differences. The findings further established that having a diverse workforce and managing it properly is perceived as a competitive strategy that can not only help attract diverse customers but also employees who have different perspectives that can contribute to the creativity of the organization.

Gacheri (2012) investigated the effects of professional diversity management on employee performance in the Banking industry in Kenya. Descriptive survey research design was used. The target population included all the 4000 employees of the bank. Nairobi region was purposively selected because of nearness to the researchers, accessibility, and time limit. The respondents were selected using stratified random sampling technique from 3 branches in Nairobi region. The study revealed that the Banks had strategies such as balanced recruitment, support to minority groups, diversity training and equal employment opportunities. Other than an employee's level of education and performance ability, there was no other workforce diversity variable that determined an employee's compensation. Workforce diversity was found to affect employee performance at varying degrees considering both managers and non-managerial employees of the Bank. The managers registered a greater impact while the impact was less among the non-managerial employees. The various tests of hypotheses showed a significant level of association between employee performance and the mean productivity levels of the bank workforce when categorized by gender, age and level of education.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

A concept is defined by Nonaka and Konno, (2009) as an obstruction, a symbol, a representation of independent and dependent variables or of a behavioral phenomenon. The conceptual framework for the study presented gender, professional diversity and performance of quality control organizations together with their indicators. Figure 2 show the representation of the concepts.

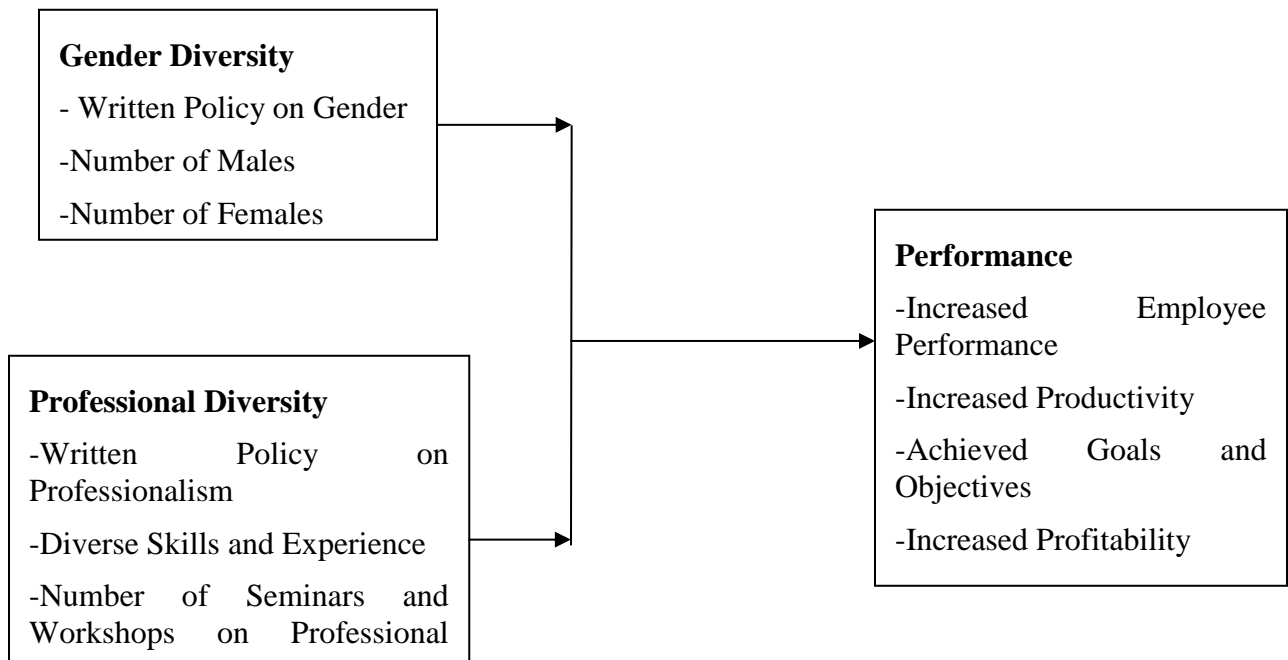


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

3.0 Research Methodology

The study was based on a descriptive approach. This is because the study sought to describe how employee gender and professional diversity affected the performance of quality controls organizations. The target population of the study was 107 quality control organizations which were located in Nairobi County and 128 respondents were selected as the sample size for the study using the stratified sampling technique. Data was collected through the administration of the questionnaires. The Pearson product movement correlation coefficient (r) was used to determine the strength of the relationship between gender, professional diversity and performance of quality control organizations. A multiple regression model was used to test the significance of the effects of the gender and professional diversity on the performance. The multiple regression model was laid as below.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + e$$

Where:

Y = Performance of Quality Control Organizations

X₁ = Gender Diversity, X₂ = Professional Diversity, e is error term and β_0 represents the constant.

4.0 Results and Findings

4.1 Response Rate

The number of questionnaires that were administered to the respondents' was 128 and a total of 112 questionnaires were properly filled and returned. This represented an overall successful response rate of 87.5% as shown on Table 1. Babbie (2004) also asserted that return rates of above 50% are acceptable to analyze and publish, 60% is good and 70% is very good. Based on these assertions, 87.5% response rate is very good for the study. Thus the response rate of 87.5% under this study was very good for study.

Table 1: Response Rate

Response	Frequency	Percent
Returned	112	87.5%
Unreturned	16	12.5%
Total	128	100%

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

4.2.1 Gender Diversity

The study assessed the effect of gender diversity on performance of quality control organizations. The respondents were asked to respond on statements on gender diversity. The responses were rated on a five likert scale as presented in Table 2. Majority of 64.5%(28.6%+ 35.7%) of the respondents agreed that there was a written policy on gender diversity in their organization, 64.3% disagreed with the statement that the employees in their organization were gender balanced, 71.4% of the respondents disagreed that when there was a vacancy in their organization, the gender with less employees were always encouraged to apply, 85.7% of the respondents disagreed that awareness programs were regularly held in their organization to discuss on importance of gender diversity while 50% of the respondents agreed that there was no gender bias within their organization. On a five point scale, the average mean of the responses was 2.81 which mean that majority of the respondents were disagreeing with most of the statements; however the answers were varied as shown by a standard deviation of 1.10.

Table 2: Gender Diversity

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Dev.
There is written policy on gender diversity in our organization	0.0%	21.4%	14.3%	28.6%	35.7%	3.79	1.15
The employees in our organization are gender balanced.	14.3%	50.0%	7.1%	28.6%	0.0%	2.50	1.06
When there is a vacancy in our organization, the gender with less employees are always encouraged to apply.	35.7%	35.7%	0.0%	7.1%	21.4%	2.43	1.55
Awareness programs are regularly held in our organization to discuss on importance of gender diversity	14.3%	71.4%	7.1%	0.0%	7.1%	2.14	0.92
There is no gender bias within our organization	0.0%	21.4%	28.6%	50.0%	0.0%	3.29	0.80
Average						2.83	1.10

4.2.2 Professional Diversity

The study established the effect of professional diversity on performance of quality control organizations. The results presented in table 3 show that 35.7% (21.4%+14.3%) of the respondents disagreed that there was written policy on professional diversity in our organization, 92.3% of the respondents agreed that the in their organization there were diverse professionals for instance, engineers, accountants and human resource managers, 64.2% of the respondents supported that their human resource practices supported the creation of a work force with diverse skills and experience, 50% disagreed that seminars and workshops were regularly held in their organization to discuss on importance of professional diversity while 42.8% agreed that their organization took care of diverse professions. Using a five point scale likert mean, the overall mean of the responses was 3.27 which indicated that majority of the respondents agreed to the statement of the questionnaire. Additionally, the standard deviation of 1.11 indicated that the responses were varied.

Table 3: Professional Diversity

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Dev.
There is written policy on professional diversity in our organization	21.40%	14.30%	35.70%	28.60%	0.00%	2.71	1.102
In our organization there are diverse professionals eg engineers, accountants and human resource managers	7.70%	0.00%	0.00%	30.80%	61.50%	4.38	1.082
Our human resource practices support the creation of a work force with diverse skills and experience.	7.10%	7.10%	21.40%	57.10%	7.10%	3.5	0.986
Seminars and workshops are regularly held in our organization to discuss on importance of professional diversity	28.60%	21.40%	28.60%	7.10%	14.30%	2.57	1.354
Our organization takes care of diverse professions.	7.10%	14.30%	35.70%	35.70%	7.10%	3.21	1.017
Average						3.27	1.11

4.3 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to establish the association between gender, professional diversity and performance of quality control organizations. The results revealed that gender diversity and performance was positively and significant related ($r=0.257$, $p=0.006$). Similarly, results indicated that professional diversity and performance was positively and significantly related ($r=0.275$, $p=0.003$). Results were presented on table 4.

Table 4: Correlation Matrix

		Performance	Gender Diversity	Professional Diversity
Performance	Pearson Correlation	1.000		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
Gender diversity	Pearson Correlation	.257**	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.006		
Professional diversity	Pearson Correlation	.275**	0.000	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.003	0.996	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.4 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was conducted to establish the relationship between gender, professional diversity and performance of quality control organizations. The results presented in table 5 present the fitness of model used of the regression model in explaining the study phenomena. Gender diversity and professional diversity were found to be satisfactory variables in explaining performance. This was supported by coefficient of determination also known as the R square of 73.5%. This means that gender diversity and professional diversity explain 73.5% of the variations in the dependent variable which is performance of quality control organizations in Kenya.

Table 5: Model Fitness

Indicator	Coefficient
R	0.858
R Square	0.735
Adjusted R Square	0.725
Std. Error of the Estimate	0.3995619

In statistics significance testing the p-value indicates the level of relation of the independent variable to the dependent variable. If the significance number found is less than the critical value also known as the probability value (p) which is statistically set at 0.05, then the conclusion would be that the model is significant in explaining the relationship; else the model would be regarded as non-significant.

Table 6 provided the results on the analysis of the variance (ANOVA). The results indicate that the overall model was statistically significant. Additionally, the results imply that gender diversity and professional diversity were good predictors of performance. This was supported by an F statistic of 74.328 and the reported p value (0.000) which was less than the conventional probability of 0.05significance level.

Table 6: Analysis of Variance

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	47.466	4	11.867	74.328	.000
Residual	17.083	107	0.16		
Total	64.549	111			

Regression of coefficients results in table 7 shows that gender diversity and performance was positively and significant related ($r=0.179$, $p=0.002$). This implies that an increase in any unit of the gender diversity leads to an improvement in performance. This finding was consistent with that of Badal and Harter (2014) who studied the relationship between gender diversity and financial performance at the business-unit level and whether employee engagement moderates this relationship and found out that diversity independently predicted financial performance at the business-unit level. The study recommended that making diversity an organizational priority and creating an engaged culture for the workforce may result in cumulative financial benefits.

The result also indicated that professional diversity and performance are positively and significantly related ($r=0.155$, $p=0.019$). This implies that an increase in any unit of the professional diversity leads to an improvement in performance. This finding was consistent with that of Nguata (2013) who sought to establish the challenges of implementing workforce diversity

policies in public universities in Kenya who study found out that public universities in Kenya have in place workforce diversity policies with laid down strategies for effective implementation.

Table 7: Regression of Coefficients

Variable	B	Std. Error	t	Sig
(Constant)	-0.274	0.256	-1.07	0.287
Gender Diversity	0.179	0.056	3.189	0.002
Professional Diversity	0.155	0.042	2.312	0.019

Thus the optimal model of the study is;

$$Y = -0.274 + 0.179X_1 + 0.155X_2.$$

Where

Y= Performance

X₁= Gender Diversity

X₂= Professional Diversity

5.0 Conclusions

The study concluded that diversity and inclusion strategy is essential for companies to be competitive on a global scale; with many crediting diversity and inclusion for assisting them achieve their business objectives. Diversity and inclusion is critical to organization performance in terms of innovation, creativity in addition to attracting and more importantly retaining key talent. Therefore gender diversity and professional diversity influenced the performance of quality control organizations in Kenya.

6.0 Recommendations

The study recommended that the implications management should be mindful of in order to build a healthy working environment within the circles of workplace diversity. More so, the research recommended that managers should have a more positive and proper perception regarding the implementation of workplace diversity. Companies constantly device ways to effectively manage diverse employees. The study also recommended for companies to sponsor their managers to attend workshops and annual conferences; Regular internal emails should create Awareness when the need arises. This is necessary in regards to the lack of knowledge on the part of managers about workplace diversity management.

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