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## **Effect of Age and Culture Diversity on the Performance of Quality Control Organization in Nairobi County, Kenya**

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# Effect of Age and Culture Diversity on the Performance of Quality Control Organizations in Nairobi County, Kenya

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## Abstract

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. It is critical to organization performance in terms of innovation, creativity in addition to attracting and more importantly retaining key talent. However, cases of discrimination are still prevalent and workforce parity are still existing. The study established the effect of age and culture diversity on the performance of quality control organizations in Nairobi County, Kenya. The target population of the study was 107 quality control organizations located in Nairobi County and a sample size of 128 respondents was selected for the study. 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 age, cultural diversity and performance of quality control organizations. A multiple regression model was used to test the significance of the effects of the age and cultural diversity on the performance. Findings indicated that age diversity was positively and significant related with performance. Similarly, cultural diversity was positively and significantly related with performance. The study concluded that age diversity and cultural diversity affected 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:** *Age diversity, Cultural diversity, Performance and Quality control organizations*

## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Globalization in the recent time has triggered more interaction amongst people from different cultures and backgrounds than before. Diversity can either be a problem to an organization or a solution. It also comes with its disadvantages and benefits. The challenge then is to extract the very essence of diversity and tactically manage it for the improvement of the people and the organization. (Ashton, 2010). The study concentrated on age and cultural diversity.

Age diversity is that it tends to counteract the dominance of one particular age group and the ensuing organizational problems. A homogeneous and dominant age group might reduce career options for the up-and-coming age group, because they clog the corporate career ladder. Within a homogeneous age group, increased conflicts over scarce job vacancies can be expected, which diminishes the effectiveness of promotion based incentives as a result. Such reduced performance incentives, in turn, negatively affect the productivity of firms with age-homogeneous workforces. Conversely, the productivity of more age-heterogeneous workforces should be higher due to more effective promotion incentives (Pelled, Eisenhardt & Xin, 1999).

Cultural diversity is the quality of diverse or different cultures, as opposed to monoculture, as in the global monoculture, or a homogenization of cultures, akin to cultural decay. Globalization in this recent time has triggered more interaction amongst people from different cultures and backgrounds than before. There are five components to organizational culture that involves its practices, vision, value, people, place, and its history. Each organizational culture is unique and different from any other companies, therefore any decision made by a company about workplace diversity is based on the company's beliefs and norms, and must therefore reflect on that company (Coleman, 2013).

Kenya is faced by one of the problems which the first independent government faced, and that is 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".

Despite the efforts to improve diversity and inclusion, cases of discrimination are still prevalent. For instance, Mukobe (2013) points out that there exists multiple discrimination, based on gender and age, where women and the youth end up experiencing challenges in the labor market. In addition, PWDs in Kenya are economically deprived with limited employment opportunities. This is due to stigma, marginalization, poverty, limited access to opportunities and low self-esteem.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Workforce inclusion and diversity management have been substantial in the recent past. This has forced companies to embrace these concepts in their companies with the aim of increasing productivity and profit. However, the 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, 2003).

Past studies have divulged findings on the importance of workforce inclusivity and diversity management. For instance, 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 is 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. The results of the sector were different. This is because Quality control emphasizes testing of products to uncover defects and reporting to management who make the decision to allow or deny product release, whereas banks involves in banking operations that is execution of legal transactions in its daily business, such as providing loans, mortgages and investments, depending on the focus and size of the bank. Hence, this study sought to fill this gap by addressing the effect of age and culture diversity on the performance of quality control organizations in Nairobi County, Kenya.

## **1.3 Specific Objectives**

- i. To establish the effects of age diversity on the performance of quality control organizations in Nairobi County.
- ii. To establish the effects of culture diversity on the performance of quality control organizations in Nairobi County.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

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

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Theoretical Review**

The study was supported by on upper echelon theory and social identity theory.

#### **2.1.1 Upper Echelon Theory**

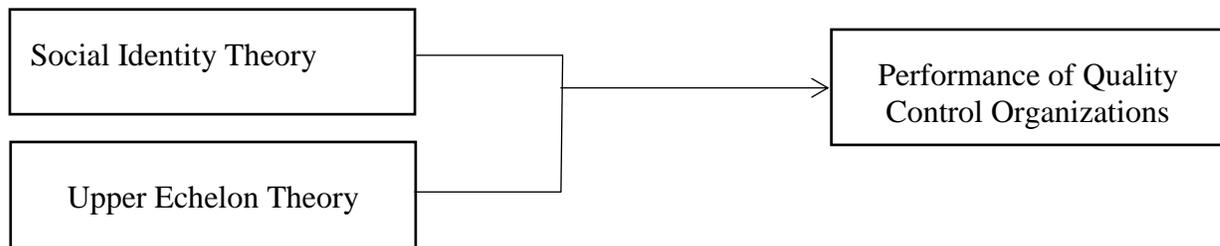
Upper Echelon Theory was developed by Hambrick and Mason, in 1984. Hambrick and Mason, (1984) argued that organizations wishing to attract, retain, and benefit from diverse talent are often advised to begin by increasing the diversity of their senior management (Nishii, 2007). Doing so has been proposed 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.

### 2.1.2 Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory was invented by Tajfel and Turner, in 1986. The social identity theory, people tend to classify themselves and others into various categories such as organizational membership, religious affiliation, gender and age cohort (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). According to the theory, people may be classified in various categories and different individuals may utilize different categorization whereby categories are defined by prototypical characteristics abstracted from members. (Tajfel, 1982) cites that stereotyping, prejudice, and conflicts are critical consequences of social identity and self-categorization. According to Korte (2007), social identity theory and self-categorization theory are complementary theories explaining social identity, in term of its elements and processes. Through self-categorization and group membership, individuals develop a social identity, which serves as a social cognitive schema for their group related behavior whereby the perceiver is likely to see these characteristics as central to his or her own identity and use these characteristics to categorize others (Kulik & Bainbridge, 2006).

The figurative representation was as shown on figure 1.



**Figure 1: Theoretical Framework**

## 2.2 Empirical Review

Backes-Gellner and Veen, (2009) conducted a study on the impact of aging and age diversity on company performance. The study propose a new type of theoretical analysis that borrows from economic theory to study the structural effects of workforce heterogeneity on company performance on the one hand side, and from a very diverse literature on aging and diversity to bring life to the structure and derive empirically testable hypotheses on the other hand side. The studies argue that changes in age diversity exert a systematic effect on firm performance and that the nature of this relationship depends on the nature of the tasks involved and on the business area in which an organization is active. The hypotheses are empirically tested with the aid of the so called LIAB, which is a representative linked employer-employee data set for Germany based on more than 18,000 companies and more than 2 million employees over a ten year period.

Page (2007) argues that the different perspectives, interpretations, heuristics and mental models within a relatively heterogeneous group represent a collection of cognitive tools that is enhanced by group diversity. This enlarged “tool box”, in turn, enhances the group’s flexibility and creativity, which ultimately leads to more creative, faster and flexible problem-solving processes with better outcomes (Page 2007; Canella, Park, Lin 2008; Hamilton 2004). However, it also has been shown that the company-specific context played a critical role with respect to productivity effects, because the relevance of the enhanced problem -solving competencies was basically

dependent on the type of task at hand. For example, it has been shown that social heterogeneity has clearly positive effects, particularly when the work to be done required a high degree of creativity and decision making skills or when dealing with strategic and complex decision -making and vaguely defined problems in a dynamic setting (Page 2007). The study therefore postulated that in dynamic work environments, increased age diversity exerts a more positive effect on firm productivity than in relatively routine work settings.

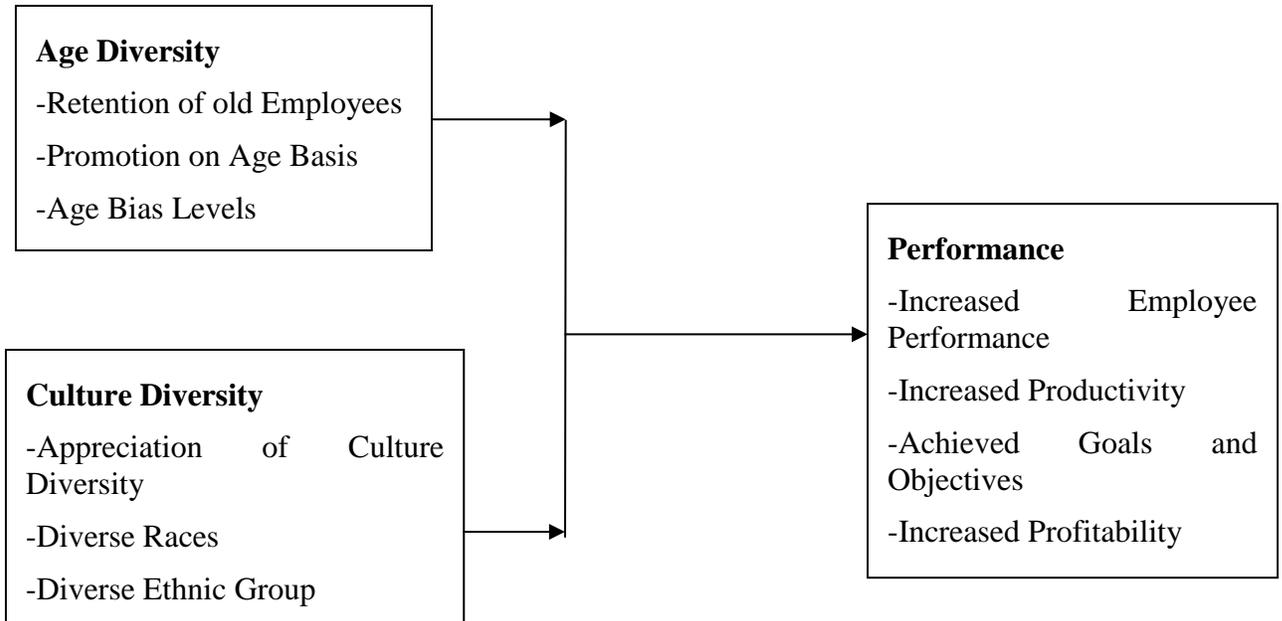
Pelled, Eisenhardt and Xin (2009) argued that greater age diversity tends to counteract the dominance of one particular age group and the ensuing organizational problems. A homogeneous and dominant age group might reduce career options for the up-and-coming age group, because they clog the corporate career ladder. Within a homogeneous age group, increased conflict s over scarce job vacancies can be expected, which diminishes the effectiveness of promotion based incentives as a result. Such reduced performance incentives, in turn, negatively affect the productivity of firms with age-homogeneous workforces. Conversely, the productivity of more age-heterogeneous workforces should be higher due to more effective promotion incentives.

Dike (2013) sought to explore how companies manage workforce diversity and its consequences to the company's existence as well as examine how companies' deal with challenges that comes with employees from diverse cultural backgrounds. The study focused on five companies in Finland and Ghana in order to acquire answers to the question that was being focused on. To gather the required data for this thesis, the study used material that contained Human Resource Management studies. The study used qualitative research method to gather and analyze the data on the companies. To study used an interview guide to collect data from the companies. In addition, the study gathered information on the internet on the Companies. The result showed that workplace diversity plays an effective role in some companies. However, inadequate mentoring and guidance could cause a company low productivity. For this reason must be regular improvement in ways to effectively manage a diverse workforce as the world keeps advancing. In the conclusion, the findings of the thesis indicated that workplace diversity has contributed to more productivity but some factors such as differential treatment could hinder its successful implementation and hence company success. Big companies are more passionate about diversifying their workforce and see its implementation as a norm and continuously strive to improve diversity management, whereas small companies see it as a choice and evitable when they feel it a burden or cannot effectively manage it.

Mondo (2014) sought to explore issues of human resource diversity in the multi-ethnic societies of sub-Saharan Africa, on assertion that ethnicity constitutes a primary dimension of diversity. The influence of ethnicity on employment relations in organizational life in this region is examined and whether the discourse of managing diversity could be applied to manage such diversity. The study argues that if the ethnic diversity found in African organizations is well managed, this could enhance organizational harmony and effectiveness. The study further argues that if organizations in Africa deliberately embrace approaches of 'inclusion' rather than 'exclusion' in managing their human resource and appreciate the inherent employee 'difference', it could improve the image and effectiveness of organizations operating here. At the same time, there is a need to adapt such approaches to the cultural specificity of local contexts.

### 2.3 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for the study presented age, culture 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 employed a descriptive research design. This is because the study sought to describe how age and culture diversity affected the performance of quality controls organizations. The target population of the study was 107 quality control organizations 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 age, culture diversity and performance of quality control organizations. A multiple regression model was used to test the significance of the effects of the age and culture diversity on the performance of quality control organizations. The multiple regression model was laid as shown.

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

Where:

Y = Performance of Quality Control Organizations

X<sub>1</sub> = Age Diversity

X<sub>2</sub> = Culture Diversity, e is error term and β<sub>0</sub> represents the constant.

## 4.0 Results and Findings

### 4.1 Response Rate

The total 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. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) and also Kothari (2004) a response rate of above 50% is adequate for a descriptive study. Based on this assertions, 87.5% response rate is very good for the study. Consequently 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%
<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 4.2 Descriptive Statistics

### 4.2.1 Age Diversity

The study determined the effect of age diversity on performance of quality control organizations in Kenya. The results presented in table 2 show that 64.3% (42.9%+ 21.4%) of the respondents agreed that there was age diversity within their organization. Additionally, results found that 63.4% of the respondents were neutral that their organization retains the old and experienced employees. Results also showed that 42.9% of the respondents agreed that their human resource practices supported the creation of a work force of diverse age groups. Furthermore, results show that 42.9% of the respondents agreed that the organization did not promote employees on age basis but rather on performance. Moreover, 50% of the respondents were neutral that there was no age bias within their organization. The average likert scale of the responses was 3.43 which indicated that majority of the respondents agreed to the statements. The standard deviation was 1.04 which indicated that the responses were varied.

**Table 2: Age Diversity**

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
There is an age diversity within our organization	7.10%	7.10%	21.40%	42.90%	21.40%	3.64	1.114
Our organization retains the old and experienced employees	7.10%	7.10%	64.30%	14.30%	7.10%	3.07	0.887
Our human resource practices support the creation of a work force of diverse age groups.	14.30%	7.10%	35.70%	42.90%	0.00%	3.07	1.037
Our organization does not promote employees on age basis but rather on performance	14.30%	7.10%	14.30%	42.90%	21.40%	3.5	1.301
There is no age bias within our organization	0.00%	7.10%	21.40%	50.00%	21.40%	3.86	0.837
<b>Average</b>						<b>3.43</b>	<b>1.04</b>

#### 4.2.2 Culture Diversity

The also established the effect of culture diversity on performance of quality control organizations in Kenya. Results in table 3 show that 85.7% (71.4%+ 14.3%) of the respondents agreed that their organization appreciates cultural diversity, 50% of the respondents agreed that their board committee was served by individuals from different ethnic groups, 42.9% of the respondents were neutral that their human resource practices supported the creation of a work force of diverse culture, 50 % of the respondents agreed that their employees were from diverse races and ethnic groups while 50% of the respondents disagreed that their organization was not biased towards one ethnic group. On an average likert scale the responses had an overall mean of 3.23 which indicated that the respondents agreed to the majority of the questions asked. The standard deviation of 1.06 indicates that the responses were varied.

**Table 3: Culture Diversity**

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Dev.
Our organization appreciates cultural diversity.	0.00%	0.00%	14.30%	71.40%	14.30%	4	0.537
Our board committee are served by individuals from different ethnic groups	14.30%	7.10%	28.60%	21.40%	28.60%	3.43	1.354
Our human resource practices support the creation of a work force of diverse culture	14.30%	7.10%	42.90%	35.70%	0.00%	3	1.004
Our employees are from diverse races and ethnic groups.	7.10%	28.60%	14.30%	35.70%	14.30%	3.21	1.211
Our organization is not bias towards one ethnic group.	28.60%	21.40%	21.40%	28.60%	0.00%	2.5	1.185
<b>Average</b>						<b>3.23</b>	<b>1.06</b>

#### 4.3 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to establish the association between age, culture diversity and performance of quality control organizations. The results revealed that culture diversity and performance were positively and significantly related ( $r=0.773$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). Similarly, results showed that age diversity and performance were positively and significantly related ( $r=0.696$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). Results were presented on table 4.

**Table 4: Correlation Matrix**

		Performance	Culture Diversity	Age Diversity
Performance	Pearson Correlation	1.000		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
Culture diversity	Pearson Correlation	.773**	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		
Age diversity	Pearson Correlation	.696**	.543**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	

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

#### 4.4 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was conducted to establish the relationship between age, culture 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. Age diversity and culture diversity were found to be satisfactory variables in explaining performance of quality control organizations. This was supported by coefficient of determination also known as the R square of 73.5%. This means that age diversity and culture 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

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 age diversity and culture diversity were good predictors of performance of quality control organizations. 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 0.05 significance level.

**Table 6: Analysis of Variance**

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

Regression of coefficients results in table 7 shows that culture diversity was positively and significantly related with performance as supported by ( $r=0.533$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). This implies that an increase in any unit of the culture diversity leads to an improvement in performance of quality control organizations. Helou and Viitala (2007) investigated whether corporate culture plays a significant role in providing a framework where different motivational issues can act. A study based on these issues was carried on IT Industries in Finland and Sweden. The results were then analyzed and compared with each other with the intention of disclosing possible differences. The study concluded that culture does influence motivational practices.

Similarly, results showed that age diversity and performance were positively and significantly related ( $r=0.352$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). This implies that an increase in any unit of the age leads to an improvement in performance of quality control organizations. Social psychological research shows that communication and the formation of social relationships between highly dissimilar individuals generally entail higher costs than that within homogenous groups of individuals (Harrison, Price, Gavin, Florey 2002; Horwitz, Horwitz 2007; Lazear 1999; Page 2007; Prat 2002; Richard, Shelor 2002). Employees communicate better with people who are similar to themselves, because they share similar lifetime experiences, a common language and a common set of symbols. Therefore communication costs tend to be higher with a more age-heterogeneous workforce than with an age-homogenous workforce and the cost curve increases with heterogeneity (Milliken, Martins 1996).

**Table 7: Regression of Coefficients**

Variable	B	Std. Error	t	Sig
(Constant)	-0.274	0.256	-1.07	0.287
Culture Diversity	0.533	0.064	8.318	<b>0.000</b>
Age Diversity	0.352	0.057	6.151	<b>0.000</b>

Thus the optimal model of the study is;

$$Y = -0.274 + 0.533X_1 + 0.352X_2$$

Where

Y= Performance

X<sub>1</sub>= Cultural Diversity

X<sub>2</sub>=Age Diversity

## 5.0 Conclusions

The study concluded that changes in diversity exerted a systematic effect on firm performance and that the nature of this relationship depends on the nature of the tasks involved and on the business area in which an organization is active. Human diversity in workgroups creates a richer flow of ideas and thus has the potential to increase creativity and innovation; this, in turn, can improve organizational financial performance. Diverse perspectives create a potential for better problem solving in workforces that are culturally diverse.

## 6.0 Recommendations

The study recommends for organizations' Managers should be prepared to change some part of their company techniques, when the diversity management techniques adopted are not working effectively but before doing so, the vision for the change must be communicated effectively. Moreover, managers should adopt some change management principles to guide them on the decision making of the change. Some of the Steps involve constantly developing the company's Strategy and vision, appointing a person with high influence to lead the change. And finally the company should give tangible reason as to why managers and employees should accept the change.

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