

Factors Affecting Workplace Diversity Management in Organizations: A Case Study of Lake Nakuru National Park, Nakuru County

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Abstract: *The purpose of the study was to investigate the factors affecting workplace diversity management in Lake Nakuru National Park (LNNP). The target population consisted of 200 employees from Lake Nakuru National Park. Stratified sampling was used to select 80 respondents. Data was collected by the use of questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented using tables. The study concludes that generational differences affected work place diversity management in LNNP. It is also concluded that professional qualification can help to improve and benefit from leadership skills in all generations. Finally the study concludes that there were factors hindering work place diversity management at LNNP. However, there was work place diversity management in LNNP. The study also concludes that gender balance, education policy and experience policy were considered in LNNP. The study has recommended that there should be a well structured, laid down policy and procedure for diversity management practices at LNNP especially in regard to generational differences, gender concerns and professional qualifications.*

Keywords: Organizational Culture, Diversity Management, Diversity, Gender Concerns, Generational Differences, Professional Qualifications

1. Introduction

The modern workforce is far more varied in its composition than ever before due to demographic and economic factors. In keeping with increasing level of diversity inherent in the modern workforce, diversity management has been increasingly a matter of academic and practical interest, and the rate at which diversity management programs have been adopted has been steadily growing. However, this relationship has not been carefree, and a number of companies have reported problems with failure of their diversity management approaches (Christian, Porter and Moffitt, 2006). One of the challenges in implementing diversity in the organization is the confusion between functional diversity and non-functional diversity. According to Barry & Bateman (1996) functional diversity is often the form of diversity intended in common workplace statements such as "we need to focus on diversity," or "diversity is something we strive for." However, in practice there are many forms of diversity that can be encountered in organizations, not all of which are related to improving organizational effectiveness. Many of these forms of diversity management have been termed social diversity (Barry & Bateman, 1996). The existing literature is often confusing on the difference between social diversity and functional diversity. This often leads to a feeling of disenchantment with diversity programs that do not seek to define the difference between these two concepts. However, many scholars agree that the understanding of this distinction may not be necessary in the world of business (Martins & Parsons, 2007; Major, Feinstein & Crocker, 1994).

According to Church et. al. (1995) diversity in an organizational setting is defined in terms of a collection of individuals who differ from each other on one or any number of dimensions including culture, values, education,

gender, marital status and age. According to Parvis (2003), dimensions of diversity include but are not limited to age, gender, race, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, work experience, ethnicity, physical abilities/qualities, educational background, geographic locations, income, marital status, military experience, parental status and job classification. In the context of the workplace, valuing diversity means creating a workplace that respects and includes these differences, recognizing the unique contributions that individuals with many types of differences can make, and creating a work environment that maximizes the potential of all employees. According to Armstrong (2009) cultural competence is arguably the most important skill for effective work performance in the 21st Century. The impact of cultural diversity varies with the type of environment and the firm's overall strategy. Management of cultural differences has become more important for creating advantages and getting competitive edge. Managing diversity means enabling diverse workforce to perform its full potential in an equitable work environment where no one group has an advantage or disadvantage. Simmons (1996) urges that dynamic companies look for people who are different because the diverse workforce may bring different talents, interests and viewpoints. The organizations which fail to embrace diversity effectively and do not take a holistic approach to eliminate discrimination and injustice may adversely affect both employees and customers. According to Hodges (1994), the focus of the workforce diversity issue has changed from equal employment opportunity to effective managing workforce diversity as an organizational imperative and managers must be able to tie the issue of managing cultural needs of the business and be well versed in business issues, goals and results.

Recent research has focused on the most common diversities in organizations namely generational differences, education versus experience, gender (sexual

orientation), and expatriates. Elements of the workplace across which members of different generations differ include their perception of what contributes to success in the workplace and their preferred leadership attributes. While there may be differences across generations, those differences are often context or age dependent rather than generational traits per se. Furthermore, there are similarities among generations. For instance, the generations share similar concerns about change, reasons for staying in an organization, values and preferred mode of communication (Deal, 2007). Similarly, workers from all generations want the freedom to set their own hours, indicating that this is not a preference of the young only.

Tougas and Beaton (1992) have established that gender disparity within the employment relationship comprises of disadvantages experienced by women as compared to men in paid employment. This includes lower level of remuneration, greater likelihood of being in part-time work, higher concentration of employment at occupational level and employment in low status jobs. According to Cork-Burn (1991), the bias in male attitudes may be less to do with the workplace itself than with the domestic responsibilities of parenting and as long as it is taken for granted that parenting cannot be shared on an equal basis, the problems facing female employees will persist. One of the major consequences of this new workplace diversity is that there is now an increased emphasis on the management of professionals. With fewer and fewer non professional employees in organizations, situations often arise where a highly skilled and trained employee reports to a direct supervisor who is not familiar with the nature of work being performed by subordinates. These technical workers need and want more autonomy in their responsibilities and seek greater input and participation in their work activities. At Lake Nakuru National Park (LNNP) the management has faced so many challenges in managing the workforce diversity. The challenges are faced during deployments, promotions, delegations and rewarding the employees.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In order for organizations to remain competitive it is absolutely necessary for employers not only to embrace diversity, but to seek out all available strategies that will attract the talent needed within the organization. The mix of four separate generations in the workplace has created a challenge for managers, who must deal with the competing values and priorities of the different groups. As Jones (1993) points out, gender has been an area of diversity that has increasingly been embraced by both large and small firms. It has also provided some challenges to employers from legal perspective beyond compliance and non-discrimination status. There's great debate over whether experience or a college degree is more important in a job search. Some argue that experience makes up for the lack of a degree; others say a degree provides something that experience can't. Therefore it was important to investigate how diversity management can improve the corporate culture of an organization and make the organization gain a competitive advantage. This study sought to examine the

factors affecting workplace diversity management in LNNP.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

- i. To establish the effect of generational differences on workplace diversity management in Lake Nakuru National Park.
- ii. To determine the effect of gender disparity on workplace diversity management in Lake Nakuru National Park.
- iii. To assess the effect of professional qualification on workplace diversity management at Lake Nakuru National Park.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review

Various theories and models have been formulated to explain the pertinent issues influencing diversity management in organizations. This study was based on two models namely the functionalist model and the critical perspective model.

2.1.1 Functionalist Perspectives

The functionalist perspective analyzes workplace diversity from an organizational effectiveness framework. This perspective assumes that positive and negative dimensions of workplace diversity can be identified, monitored, and controlled to benefit the organizations (Argyris, 2006). The goal of work from a functionalist perspective, in both research and practice, is to identify how workplace diversity can enhance overall organizational productivity, responsiveness, and effectiveness (Cox, 2004). Managing diversity means planning and implementing organizational systems and practices to manage people so that the potential advantages of diversity are maximized while its potential disadvantages are minimized. The management of diversity has important ethical, legal, and economic ramifications for the organization. According to Cox (2004) and Hultsman (2005) workforce diversification is not only the right thing to do, but it will ultimately enhance the economic performance and global competitiveness of the organization. This dynamism, then, leads to persistent clashes and efforts to resolve these tensions (Alvesson & Willmott, 2008). Thus, the analysis of workplace diversity, from a functionalist perspective, seeks deeper insights into the inner workings of organizations in order to lay bare the systemic inequities that exist at multiple levels of the organization. This uncovering of inequity, as it were, should ultimately foster the meaningful reorganization of such programs and provide opportunities for both workers and constituents. In the context of this study functionalist perspective can explain the motive for the implementation of workplace diversity management.

2.1.2 Legal Perspective

According to Jeffrey (2010) organizations first started paying attention to diversity in the mid 1960s, largely as a result of civil rights unrest and legislation that was passed that prohibited discrimination in employment against a variety of groups. Diversity was largely focused on

compliance with the law and maintained that focus until the early 1980s. By mid 1980s, however, the focus of diversity training shifted to improving work conditions by minimizing conflict between and among workers. In mid 1990s the focus evolved to understanding, accepting and leveraging diversity as a means of enhancing organizational performance and remains as such to this day. The history of diversity in organizations is rooted in social justice and civil rights, but its evolution into a strategic human resource and business issue has resulted in diversity becoming somewhat of an amorphous concept. Many organizations embrace diversity in concept but have not fully considered it as a strategic business issue relative to the mission and strategy of the organization. In view of this study it is conceptualized that workplace diversity management may be implemented as a legal requirement.

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Possible Differences of Generations

The culture and characteristics of workplace are shaped by those responsible for decision-making (Naff & Kellough, 2003). The perceived decline in work ethic is perhaps one of the major contributors of generational conflicts in the work place. Generation X for instance, has been labeled the slacker generation (Jenkins, 2007), and employers complain that younger workers are uncommitted to their jobs and work only the required time and a little more. Another point of contention among generations regards loyalty towards employers. While traditional and boomers have been characterized as being extremely loyal toward their employers, the lack of loyalty of younger workers has been noted (Bannon, 2001). While younger workers complain that there is lack of respect towards them in the workplace, older workers share similar complaints especially regarding the attitudes of younger and newer employees toward management (Deal, 2007).

2.2.2 Gender Concerns

According to Bannon (2001) men from certain minority groups have penetrated to a remarkable extent into certain professions but to a much lesser extent into the management of large organizations. Women workers are still concentrated in poorly paid, routine occupation such as clerical and secretarial work. Far more, women than men are in part-time occupation. To be sure, women have recently made some inroads into occupations defined as men's jobs only to a limited extent. Women are under-represented in all the higher managerial and professional grades. Those women who are successful economically have to fit into a world of maleness and masculine value systems where they feel they do not fully belong. One of the major factors affecting women's careers is the male perception that, for female employees, work comes second to having children (Stergaard, Timmermans & Kristinsson, 2011).

Stergaard, Timmermans and Kristinsson (2011) investigated the views of managers interviewing female applicants for positions as technical staff in health services, revealed that the interviewer routinely asked women applicants whether or not they had or intended to have children. Interviewers virtually never followed this practice with male applicants and when asked why not,

two themes ran through their responses; women with children may require extra time off for school holidays or if a child falls sick, and responsibility for childcare is seen as a mother's problem rather than a parental one.

According to Rose (2008), women are seen to be exploited because they undertake free labor for men by carrying out childcare and housework, and because they are denied access to positions of power. The exploitation of women in paid employment and their generally subordinate position in the occupation hierarchy is held to be a consequence of the emergence of lack of ownership property and the resultant lack of ownership of the means of production which deprives women of any power (Rose, 2008).

In the past, all women in the workplace were automatically assigned to temporary or part-time or low responsibility jobs because it was understood that their first priority was taking care of the families. Today, women are not generally seen as inferior to men and there are women who want to put work first and family second. Organizations have been slowly adjusting to these changes. Organizations compete for human resources and as the workforce becomes more heterogeneous, organizations will have to serve the diverse needs of this workforce or they will lose them to their competitors (Green, 2001; Holladay, Knight, Paige, & Quiñones, 2003).

Organizations that discriminate against women are forced to select workers from a smaller pool, reducing their ability to find performers. At the same time, some managers would point out that increased diversity can cause management problems such as social harassment, scheduling, and interpersonal communication. Most constitutions the world over requires progressive realization of the enforcement of the one-third gender rule in all public positions (Holladay, Knight, Paige, & Quiñones, 2003).

2.2.3 Professional Qualification

Differences exist between employees who have adequate academic credentials with success and employees whose vocational and on the job training enables their career progression. The differences between these two groups may be a source of conflict in some workplace issues when there's disagreement about theory versus practice in achieving organizational goals. For, instance, an employee who believes that a college degree prepared him for managing the processes and techniques of the employees in the skilled trade may not be as effective as he thinks when compared to employees with years of practical knowledge and experience.

Many employers want management-level employees or staff members in a specialized department to have a college degree. A degree signifies that you've studied under trained experts, have immersed yourself in a particular discipline and have obtained a broad set of educational and interpersonal experiences. A four-year degree is especially important for people who want to rise to executive-level positions during their careers, particularly in professions rather than trades. When an employer has a choice between two people with the same

degree, but one has experience, the experienced person will be more likely to get the job (Brickson, 1993).

there were three sets of variables. These were independent, dependent and moderating variables.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework shown in Figure 1 illustrates how various variables interacted. In the context of this study

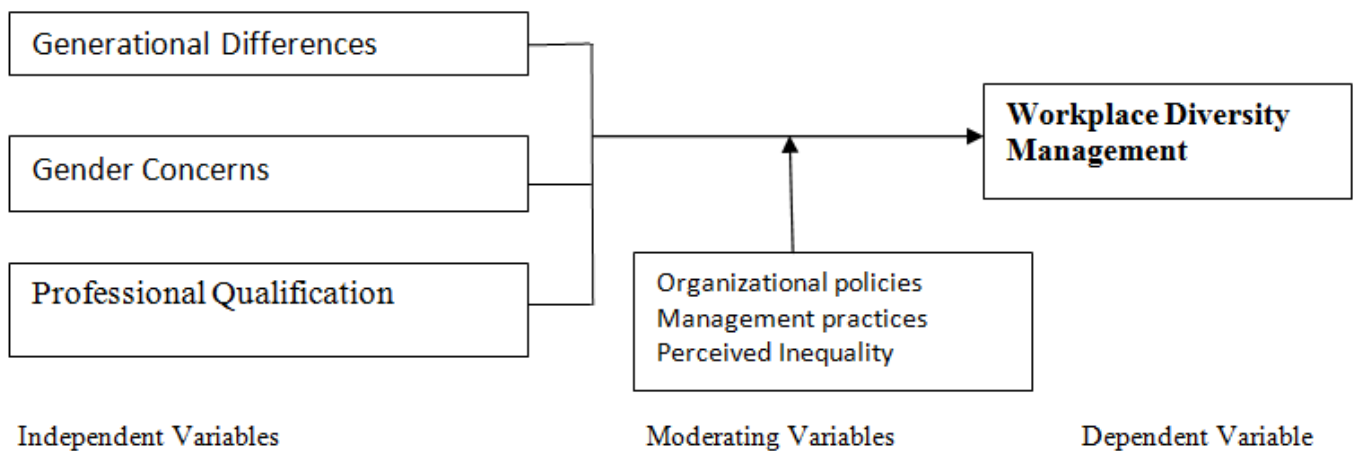


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework shows that the independent variables (professional qualification, gender concerns and generational differences) were hypothesized to influence the dependent variable (workplace diversity management). However, the moderating variables (organizational policies, management practices and perceived inequality) were considered to influence the dependent and independent variables. The study hypothesized that if generational differences were not well managed in the organization, there would always be conflicts and low performance due to lack of recognition. Also gender equality was essential for gaining a competitive advantage. If well managed, the organization could retain a well-balanced workforce. Finally, when education was blended well with experience, the management of workplace diversity faced less resistance.

3. Methodology

In this study, descriptive design was used. Descriptive design was chosen because it provided descriptions of variables in order to answer the research questions. The study was conducted at Lake Nakuru National Park. The target population comprised of 20 top managers, 35 middle level managers and 145 subordinates totaling to 200 staff. Stratified random sampling was used to select the sample size of 80 respondents. The researcher used primary data which was obtained through administering structured questionnaires. The data was collected, organized, edited and analyzed by the researcher based on specific research questions and objectives. Data presentation was made by the use of frequencies and percentages. Tables and graphs were used to summarize the various sets of results. The researcher carried out a pilot testing of the questionnaire at the Kenya Forestry Service to identify any mistakes that needed correcting. The purpose of pretesting was to determine whether the questions can be understood by all classes of respondent, whether additional or specifying

questions which were needed or whether some questions could be eliminated and whether instructions to respondents are adequate. Data was analyzed by the use of descriptive techniques.

4. Results

4.1 Generational Differences and Work Place Diversity Management

The researcher sought to establish whether generational differences affected work place diversity management at Lake Nakuru National Park. This was done by analyzing the extent to which different indicators of generational differences influenced work place diversity management at LNNP. The findings obtained are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Effects of Indicators of Generational Differences on Work Place Diversity Management

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	N (%)
I have confidence in management of generational differences at LNNP	37(40)	23(29)	9(11)	16(25)	3(3)	80(100)
There is adequate involvement of all generations in leadership and planning.	11(14)	20(25)	14(18)	26(32)	9(11)	80(100)
Management play favoritism in promotions and delegations	10(13)	15(19)	7(9)	25(31)	23(29)	80(100)
LNNP rewards all workers according to their Performance and contribution	31(41)	19(24)	14(18)	9(11)	7(9)	80(100)
LNNP embraces cultural diversity	36(47)	23(30)	12(14)	5(4)	5(4)	80(100)

In regard to whether employees had confidence in the management of generational differences at LNNP, majority of the respondents 60 (69%) agreed compared to 19 (28%) who disagreed. The findings also show that majority of the respondents 35 (43%) disagreed that there was adequate involvement of all generations in leadership and planning compared to compared to 31 (29%) who agreed. In addition, majority of the respondents 25(32%) agreed that the management did not play favoritism in promotions and delegations compared to 48(60%) who disagreed. Concerning whether the LNNP rewards all workers according to their performance and contribution,

majority of the respondents 50 (65%) agreed compared with 20(16%) who disagreed. Finally, regarding whether LNNP embraces cultural diversity, majority of the students 59 (47%) agreed compared to 10 (8%) who disagreed.

4.2 Gender Concerns

The study examined whether gender concerns influenced diversity management in LNNP. This was done by analyzing the responses on the extent to which different indicators of gender concerns influenced work place diversity management at NLNNP. The results obtained are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Influence of Gender Concerns on Work Place Diversity Management

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	N (%)
LNNP recognizes all gender	30(38)	23(29)	9(11)	16(20)	3(4)	80(100)
All top positions are equally distributed between the two genders in LNNP	31(39)	19(24)	14(17)	9(11)	7(9)	80(100)
Work-life balance (especially to women) is embraced in LNNP	35(44)	23(29)	12(14)	5(6)	5(6)	80(100)
Most routine work is done by women	10(13)	17(16)	11(5)	27(33)	15(19)	80(100)

In regard to whether LNNP recognizes all gender, majority of the respondents 53 (67%) agreed compared to 19 (24%) who disagreed. This implies that LNNP considered gender in many decisions made. The researcher also wanted to know whether all top positions are equally distributed between the two genders in LNNP. The respondents were requested to give their views and responses obtained were recorded. Majority of the respondents 50 (63%) agreed compared to 16 (20%) who disagreed. The researcher also asked the respondents whether work-life balance (especially to women) was embraced in LNNP and found out that majority of the respondents 53(67%) agreed compared to 10(12%) who disagreed. Concerning whether most routine work was done by women, majority of the respondents 42 (52%) disagreed that most routine work was done by women compared with 27 (29%) who agreed.

of professional development. The findings obtained are presented in Table 3.

4.3 Professional Qualification

The study examined the effects of professional qualification on workplace diversity management. This was done by analyzing the responses to different indicators

Table 3: How professional Qualification affects Work place Diversity Management

<i>Statement</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Total</i>
	<i>F (%)</i>	<i>F (%)</i>	<i>F (%)</i>	<i>F (%)</i>	<i>F (%)</i>	<i>N (%)</i>
I have opportunities for career growth	11(14)	8(10)	10(14)	36(45)	14(18)	80(100)
I have a clearly established career Path at LNNP	11(14)	9(11)	10(14)	29(36)	21(26)	80(100)
My educational level and skills are well utilized in my work	23(29)	16(20)	18(23)	32(40)	12(15)	80(100)
Promotions are based on education level	23(29)	18(23)	7(9)	21(26)	9(11)	80(100)
My work experience is recognized and appreciated	20(25)	17(21)	12(15)	9(11)	22(28)	80(100)
If I do good work I can count on being promoted	25(31)	32(40)	10(14)	7(9)	7(9)	80(100)
I feel I am valued at LNNP	24(30)	15(19)	10(14)	24(30)	7(9)	80(100)
LNNP gives enough recognition for work well done	20(25)	24(30)	16(20)	10(14)	10(14)	80(100)

Concerning whether the respondents had opportunities for career growth, majority of the respondents 50 (63%) disagreed compared with 18 (24%) who agreed implying that perhaps there were fewer opportunities for growth. Regarding whether there were clearly established career path at LNNP, majority of the respondents 50 (62 %) disagreed compared to 20 (25%) who agreed. Further, respondents were asked whether their educational level and skills were well utilized in their work. Most of the respondents 44 (55%) disagreed compared to 39 (49%) who agreed. In regard to whether promotions were based on education level, majority of the respondents 41 (52%) agreed compared to 30 (42%) who disagreed. The researcher also wanted to know whether employees’ work experience was recognized and appreciated. The respondents were requested to give their views and responses obtained were recorded. Majority of the respondents 37 (42%) agreed compared to 31 (39%) who disagreed. The researcher also asked whether the

respondents could be promoted if they did a good work and majority of the respondents 57(61%) agreed compared to 14(18%) who disagreed. The researcher also sought to ascertain whether the respondents felt that they were valued at LNNP. The results show that majority of the respondents 39(49%) agreed compared to 36(39%) who disagreed. Finally the findings indicated that majority of the respondents 44(55%) agreed that LNNP gives enough recognition for work well done compared to 20(24%) who disagreed.

4.4 Work Place Diversity Management

The study sought to establish the extent to which there was diversity management in LNNP. The respondents were asked to respond to selected indicators of work place diversity management in LNNP. The findings obtained are presented in table 4.

Table 4: Indicators of Work Place Diversity Management

<i>Statement</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Total</i>
	<i>F (%)</i>	<i>F (%)</i>	<i>F (%)</i>	<i>F (%)</i>	<i>F (%)</i>	<i>N (%)</i>
There is workplace diversity management	7(9)	35(44)	9(11)	21(26)	6(7)	80(100)
There is gender balance	7(9)	43(55)	8(10)	10(12)	10(12)	80(100)
There is education policy	12(15)	28(35)	5(6)	19(24)	16(20)	80(100)
There is experience policy	7(9)	37(46)	9(11)	21(26)	6(7)	80(100)

Concerning whether there was work place diversity management in LNNP, majority of the respondents 42 (53%) agreed compared with 27 (33%) who disagreed. Regarding whether there was gender balance, majority of the respondents 50 (64 %) agreed compared to 20 (24%) who disagreed. Further, respondents were asked whether there was education policy and most of the respondents 40 (50%) agreed compared to 35 (44%) who disagreed. In regard to whether there was policy on experience, majority of the respondents 44 (55%) disagreed compared to 27 (33%) who agreed.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study has concluded that generational differences affected work place diversity management in LNNP. However, employees had confidence in management of generational differences at LNNP and the management did not play favoritism in promotions and delegations. LNNP also rewards all workers according to their performance and contribution. Finally, LNNP embraces cultural diversity. It is also concluded that gender was considered in promotions and selections at LNNP. However, LNNP recognizes all gender and all top positions are equally distributed between the two genders in LNNP. Work-life

balance (especially to women) was also embraced in LNNP. However, most routine work was done by women. The study also concludes that professional qualification can help to improve and benefit from leadership skills in all generations. This is because LNNP had opportunities for career growth and there were clearly established career path. The study also concludes that the educational level and skills of employees were well utilized in their work and promotions were based on education level. Employees' work experience was also recognized and appreciated and they could be promoted if they did a good work. It is also evident that employees were valued at LNNP and given enough recognition for work well done.

The study shows that there is still considerable confusion over what diversity actually consists of in LNNP. To effectively manage diversity, it is necessary for LNNP to understand the difference between functional and social diversity, and to treat these forms of diversity differently in terms of creating functional and innovative teams. It is also recommended that all departments should be reorganized and restructured to give room for generational considerations which play a major role in diversity management. There should also be a well structured, laid down policy and procedure for diversity management practices especially in regard to gender concerns in order to boost employees' morale to perform better. The management should enhance the use of open-door policy on promotion in order to improve the relationship among employees and the management at large.

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