

Effects of Gender Diversity on Organizational Performance of Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya

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Abstract

County governments face many challenges when dealing with workforce diversity and this prevented them from developing and employing diverse workforce to work with them. Performance of County Governments has largely been affected by gender diversity. County Governments are facing challenges when employing their workforce in terms of gender. So far there is still limited information as regards to gender diversity. The objective of the study was to establish the extent to which gender diversity affects organizational performance of Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya. The study used descriptive research design during collection of data. The study location was in Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya which is located in former Rift Valley Province in Northern part of it and the population consisted of 2,155 employees of Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya. The sample size was 400 employees. The sample was chosen through simple random sampling. The response rate of the study was 84.3% of the realized target. Reliability of the results was determined by the test-retest approach. Validity of the research instruments was established by using Elgeyo Marakwet County. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The hypothesis was tested using simple linear regression at 95% confidence level. The study revealed that age diversity has a positive effect on organizational performance of Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya.

Keywords: Gender diversity, organization performance, workforce diversity

1.1 Introduction

With the increased globalization and competition, gender diversity in all organizations has become increasingly homogeneous. The change in technology on the employment of workforce according to their gender has brought the increase in economy in most organizations and has led to increase in organizational performance and the organizational image. Organizations, businesses, educational systems, religious and other entities are looking for ways to better serve their constituents, bring people together and to attract and retain the best and most qualified workforce in organizations. The countries increasing competition requires more interaction among people from diverse gender than before. People no longer live and work in a narrow marketplace and homogeneous workplace, they are becoming part of the countries competition coming from nearly every part with different employee from all genders, (Gupta, 2013). The study on simple production technology which was done by Barton, (2004) showed that teams with more diversity in the same gender were significantly less productive in many organizations. The findings were in agreement with

those of Leonard & Levine, (2003) that revealed that retail stores with employees from one gender among its employees tend to be less productive. However, in a study which was done by Ilmakunnas, (2012) showed that there was no distinct relationship between gender diversity and organizational performance. It was observed from different studies that the same employees from same gender are less productive and are skilled as young ones in organizations.

Unlike race, ethnic or gender diversity, organizations hardly ever undertake initiatives to improve on gender diversity. The research on gender diversity is less developed than that on ethnicity and age diversity suggesting the need for new measures and new approaches to studying gender diversity in organizations. The majority of the studies which had been done in a Western setting by (Joshi & Roh, 2007) showed that gender diversity has a negative effect with organizational performance.

1.2 Statement of the problem

According to a report by National Cohesion and Integration Commission, (NCIC), 2015, ethnicity in county governments in Kenya have been extremely high during

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the past few years of devolution, and to maintain continuous success in county governments, they must identify and analyze workforce diversity practices and develop strategies to meet them in order to adopt to the competition both globally and internationally. There has been a debate by numerous researchers whether gender diversity has a positive or negative influence on organizational performance. Other study of workforce diversity was conducted in Pakistan on workforce diversity and organizational performance in education sector of Karachi Pakistan by, (Gupta, 2013) which reported that, gender diversity has a positive effect with organizational performance. Oghene & Ehimare, (2011) carried out a study in Nigeria banks which showed the effect of workforce diversity on organizational effectiveness in Nigerian Banks and he found out that gender diversity had a positive and significant effect on organizational performance.

Reviews of the past studies conducted in Kenya on organizational performance indicate that the researchers examined other contextual issues that influenced employee performance. Another study which was conducted in Kenya by Wanja, (2016) on the effect of workforce diversity and the performance of telecommunication firms showed that there is negative relationship between gender diversity and performance of the telecommunication firms. Mwatuma, (2016) investigated the effect of workforce diversity on employee work performance in County Government of Mombasa, Kenya. In his research he came out that, gender diversity had a positive effect on employee performance.

However, none of the literature focused on the county governments in Kenya a sector that offers essential services to humanity. It is against this background that this study was carried out to address the research gap and also provide a better understanding through the literature of gender diversity and its effect on organizational performance from the Kenyan context. This study seeks to answer the questions; does gender diversity help the county government of Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya to ensure survival of the employees and at the same time enhancing their performance? Are firm's organizational factors crucial in selecting the most effective ways of applying this gender diversity for the performance of the organization? This study sought to examine the influence of gender diversity on organizational performance of Elgeyo Marakwet County (EMC), Kenya. The organization has a great potential to improving on the age diversity.

1.3 Research Objective

To determine the effect of gender diversity on organizational performance in EMC, county

1.4 Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant effect between gender diversity and organizational performance of EMC, county.

2.1 Literature Review

In Kenya today, we live in a male dominant country with most cultures around the globe adhering to that notion of gender diversity. Accordingly, many organizations prefer to hire men compared to women because men are perceived to have better performance and ability to manage their jobs and women are stereotyped against their work in those characteristics, (Quast, 2011,) who carried out a research on the consequences and causes of the increasing numbers in the workforce and also (Leonard & Levine, 2003). In the year 2006-2008 it was expected that women occupied up to 30% of the total labor force. This means that organizations must deal with family conflict, child care, dual career couples and sexual harassment. One issue affecting gender is the "glass ceiling" condition which refers to the difficulty or the problem women face in many organizations. Only few women reach top management positions in organization because of gender disparity in organizations. In the USA for example, it's predictable that men hold (97%) of the top positions in most organizations. Also in South Africa they it is believed that men hold (87%) percent of the top positions compared to women.

In a research which was done by McMillan-Capehart, (2003) and Frink *et al*, (2003), came out that, the constructive influence of gender diversity on organizational performance is very important by making use of the useful theory of resource based view. The research from Kundu, (2003), stated that hiring woman, minorities, and others from diverse workforce helps the organization to know areas of interest markets and areas of improvements. Based on the study of Joshi & Jackson, (2003), an optimistic relationship was found between gender diversity and intra-staff cooperation. In the evaluation of the research results, Jayne & Dipboye, (2004) argued that gender diversity does not necessarily convey constructive final result similar that increases motivation, improve talents, build commitment and turn down conflict in the organization. Gupta, (2013) observed that if there is a medium level of gender diversity which increases competitive competencies of employees in the organization whilst a higher stage of gender diversity decreases organizational performance. Frink *et al*, (2003) studied gender composition and organization performance and the results showed that an inverted U-shaped relationship was found between gender composition and organization performance.

The study which was done by Frink *et al*, (2003) showed that organizational performance would be greater when gender diversity is maximized. Addressing legal concerns in an organization can promote gender equality, therefore managing gender diverse helps in addressing important issues against discrimination which is illegal in the working situation and this helps in improving human rights. Organizations prefer to employ male workers compared to women because they are perceived and believed to have better performance and

ability to perform their jobs well. According to Brown, (2008), important amount of gender diversity remains ineffective if gender issues are not first known and managed. The research and study also state that the most constitutional challenge is overcoming and eliminating the thought that women are not equal to men. Kossek, Lobel, & Brown, (2005), states that, only 54% of working aged women are in the workforce worldwide compared to 80% of men. Furthermore, women continue to have the upper hand on the invisible care economy, which relates to care giving to domestic work.

However, according to Kochan, Bezrukova, Ely, Jackson, Joshi, Jehn, Leonard, Levine, & Thomas, (2002), states that providing an equal job opportunity to women is vital to improve performance of employees and performance in an organization. The community mandates were eliminated from formal policies that discriminate against positive classes of employees and raises the costs of organizations that fail to implement fair employment practices in the organizations. Discrimination on hiring workers based on gender has resulted in organizational sharing workers who are paid higher wages than alternative workers, but are not more productive (Barrington & Troke, 2001). Furthermore, Wentling & Palma Rivas, (2000) study states that organization with diverse workforce provides superior services because they can understand customers better. Kundu, (2003) also stated that hiring woman, minorities and others helps organization to tap niche markets.

2.1.1 Gender diversity and organizational performance

Richard, Barnet, Dwyer, & Chandwick, (2004) in their research observed an inverted U-shaped effect between management group gender heterogeneity and productivity with heterogeneous management groups exhibiting better performance than gender homogeneous management groups in many organizations. Similarly, finding results of a study by Frink, Robinson, Reithel, Arthur, Ammeter, Ferns & Morrissette, (2003) showed an inverted U-shaped connection between gender diversity and organizational performance. Gender diversity showed a positive effect in service industry and a negative effect on the manufacturing industry. Thus, service industries might benefit more from gender diversity than firms in the manufacturing industries. Therefore, high gender diversity has a greater positive effect on performance in the service industry than in the manufacturing industry. According to a research which was done by Gupta, (2013), stated that moderate level of gender diversity increases competitive advantage of organizations while a higher level of gender diversity decreases organizational performance. Richard, & Shelor, (2006) observed an inverted U-shaped association between management group gender heterogeneity and productivity with moderate heterogeneous management groups exhibiting better performance than gender homogeneous management groups.

2.1.2 Similarity/Attraction Theory

This theory was proposed by Byrne in 1996 where he argued that demographic variables increase interpersonal attraction and liking. He also said that, individuals with similar backgrounds and gender may find that they have more in common with each other than with those from different backgrounds making it more comfortable for them to work together and collaborate towards producing a product or solving a problem. Various researchers from a variety of fields such as marketing, political science, social psychology, and sociology have supported the assumptions of similarity/attraction theory. The argument is that people of similar religious background, ethnicity, age group and gender may tend to prefer to work together due to their common characteristics thus enhancing group cohesiveness and improved performance in organizations. In addition, interactions that may be perceived to be discriminatory on the basis of religion, ethnicity, age and gender may lead to conflict, harmful and negative effects on team cohesiveness among the employees in the organization, (Triana, Garcia and Colella, 2010).

This theory has been criticized that, it cannot fully explain how people perceive others in terms of similarity, particularly in relation to their multiple social categories. For example, in a dyadic relationship, how does a middle-aged Chinese man perceive a middle-aged American male of Anglo-Saxon descent? Another criticism of SAT concerns an assumption that interaction is a necessary condition of the similarity/attraction paradigm which was proposed by Byrne in 1971. In addition, SAT assumes erroneously that people in different social categories should all respond in the same way to being similar or different to others (Chatman and O'Reilly, 2004), For example, the similarity/attraction mechanism between two people at different ages might be different from between two persons having different education backgrounds.

Similarity in organizations encourages interaction among workers and stakeholders in the organization and helps people to interact and discover similarities. Also, we like similar people like others, we think those people we like are similar and assume that similar people brings love to the organization. Attraction/similarity mutually reinforces each other which results in deeper and intense associations over time among employees. Along parallel lines people may not like others who share negative personality characteristics with them, rather than be constantly reminded of their faults in a given dimension through the presence of someone similar. People may prefer to interact with others who they believe brings out the best in them.

3.1 Methodology

The study was done in Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya as at July, 2017 and as such sampling of the population was done through simple random sampling. The results of this

method were accurate due to the fact that each unit to be measured was included in the sample. The study was carried out in Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya. The population of the study comprised of 2,155 employees of the County. The researcher target to get information from 400 employees who included the Directors, Deputy Directors, Head of Departments, Head of sections and non-management staff. These were chosen because they have the information required for the purposes of the study. Sekaran (2003) states that population refers to the entire group of people, events or things of interests that the researcher wishes to investigate. In this study, the results were subjected to determine the applicability or feasibility and the strength of the effect in the dimension variables. Descriptive method was employed in this study. The questionnaires were distributed in a random method to the respondents. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The hypothesis was tested using simple linear regression coefficient at 95% confidence level.

4.1 Data analysis and presentation on age diversity and organizational performance

From the responses to the item of gender diversity and the correlations of the tested variable, it became clear that gender diversity is not well embraced phenomenon at the County Government of Elgeyo Marakwet. It could be deduced from the findings that gender diversity at County Government of Elgeyo Marakwet is not fully utilized but it appeared gender diversity influence the attitude of worker with respect to performance.

4.1.1 Descriptive statistical analysis

The study sought to determine the effect of gender diversity and organizational performance of Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya. The respondents responses were rated on a five-Likert scale showing what extent the respondent agree or disagree with the researcher statements on gender diversity and organizational performance.

Table 1: Gender diversity at Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya

Statement	SA%	A%	FA%	D%	SD%
The Employees have not been discriminated by employer while hiring and recruitment process on the gender basis.	109(32.3%)	201(59.6%)	27(8.0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
Fair treatment is given to all employees whether they are male or female.	120(35.6%)	103(30.6%)	57(16.9%)	45(13.4%)	12(3.6%)
Employees from both genders are involved in the organization's decision making both the male and female employees.	234(69.4%)	98(29.1%)	5(1.5%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
Opportunities for growth and advancement exist for both employees of all genders	212(62.9%)	87(25.8%)	38(11.3%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
Gender diversity has a positive effect on organizational performance.	270(80.1%)	57(16.9%)	10(3.0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)

Source: Researcher, 2017

Key: SA-Strongly Agree-5, A-Agree-4, FA-Fairly Agree-3, D-Disagree-2, SD-Strongly Disagree

Table 2: Organizational performance of Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya

Statement	SA%	A%	FA%	D%	SD%
Organization has good relationship with their customers both outside and within the organization	221(65.6%)	92(27.3%)	24(7.1%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
My organization offers reliable services to their customers without favoring any of them	203(60.2%)	91(27.0%)	33(9.8%)	10(3%)	0(0%)
My organization has a complaint handling procedure in place and promptly addresses customer complaints.	266(78.9%)	71(21.1%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
My organization believes that, opposite gender can perform well in the organizational performance.	122(36.2%)	198(58.8%)	17(5.0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
Good organizational performance is important for the future growth of my organization and does well in meeting the needs of the customers.	199(59.0%)	134(39.8%)	4(1.2%)	0(0%)	0(0%)

Source: Researcher, 2017

Key: SA-Strongly Agree-5, A-Agree-4, FA-Fairly Agree-3, D-Disagree-2, SD-Strongly Disagree-1

(Table 1) 59.1% of the respondents agreed that employees are not discriminated by the employer while hiring and recruitment. Also, 35.6% strongly agreed that the organization treats all the employees fairly despite their gender in the organization. Lastly, 80.1% of the respondents strongly agreed that gender diversity has a

positive effect on organizational performance of Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya.

Table 2 shows the correlation between gender diversity and organizational performance. The table was used to find an answer to the study of the second objective that is to examine the effect of gender diversity

and organizational performance of Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya. To achieve this objective, the study set out the following hypothesis.

H₀₂: Gender diversity has no significant effect on organizational performance in Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya.

From the results in table 3 above, 65.6% of the respondents strongly agreed that, the organization has good relationship with their customers both from outside and within the organization. Also majority 60.2% of the respondents strongly agreed that the organization offers reliable services to their customers without showing a sign of favoritism. Lastly, 59.0% of the respondents strongly agreed that good organizational performance is important for the future growth of Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya.

4.1.2 Inferential statistical analysis

The study sought to determine the effect of gender diversity and organizational performance of Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya. Data was analyzed in relation to each research objective by generating correlation and regression coefficients from SPSS version 16 software as tabulated in Table 3 and 4. The main aim of the correlation analysis was to test the strength and significant of the effect between gender diversity and organizational performance and regression analysis was meant to test for research hypothesis, whether to accept or reject.

Table 3: Effect of gender diversity on organizational performance of Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya

		Gender Diversity	Organizational Performance
Gender Diversity	Pearson Correlation	1	.566**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	337	337
Organizational Performance	Pearson Correlation	.566**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	337	337

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Source: Research study, 2017

Table 4: Regression analysis on gender diversity and organizational performance of Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.566 ^a	.320	.318	.33190

a. Predictors: (Constant), Gender diversity

ANOVA^b

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	17.380	1	17.380	157.778	.000 ^a
	Residual	36.903	335	.110		
	Total	54.283	336			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Gender diversity

b. Dependent Variable: Organizational performance

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	2.297	.180		12.783	.000
	Gender diversity	.510	.041	.566	12.561	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational performance
Source: Research study, 2017

The results of the study revealed that gender diversity had a positive effect on organizational performance of EMC with (r=0.566; p=0.000). This shows that gender diversity significantly accounted for 56.6% variance in Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya. Therefore, the second

null hypothesis was rejected as gender diversity has a significant effect on organizational performance of Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya. These results are consistent with the past studies of Darwin, and Palanisamy, (2015) which found out that gender diversity had a positive

effect on employee performance in Singapore Organizations.

Table 4.18 model summary regression results have an R-Square of 0.320 indicating that gender diversity accounts for 32.0% of the variability in organizational performance in Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya. The correlation coefficient of 0.566 shows that there is a positive effect between gender diversity and organizational performance of Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya. The study results concur with the study findings of Darwin, and Palanisamy, (2015) which found out that gender diversity had a positive effect on employee performance in Singapore Organizations. Table 4.18 results on ANOVA examined the significance of the overall regression model in order to determine the feasibility of the model to measure the study variables. The results show that gender diversity is significant $F=157.778$, p -value=0.05 thus the overall regression model was significant in applying to either reject or accept the study null hypothesis.

The results of regression analysis coefficient in table 4.18 show the extent to which gender diversity predicts organizational performance of Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya. Based on the results, the equation for simple linear regression model was in the form of $Y=2.297+0.510X_2+e$ where Y represents organizational performance, X_2 represents gender diversity and e the error term. A beta of 0.510 means that for every 0.510 units of use of gender diversity there is a corresponding 1 unit in organizational performance. The results also show that gender diversity is statistically significant $\alpha = 0.000$ and p -value=0.05 thus in explaining organizational performance in Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya. The study agrees with Darwin, and Palanisamy, (2015) which found out gender diversity had a positive effect on employee performance in Singapore Organizations.

5.1 Conclusion

Gender diversity positively affects the organizational performance of Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya. The study established that 56.6% of the organizational performance in Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya was accounted for gender diversity. Focused and successful diversity strategy must address organizational culture change to create a work environment that nurtures teamwork, participation and cohesiveness which positively affect organizational performance.

5.2 Recommendations

Elgeyo Marakwet County leaders should try to implement policies in promoting the gender diversity, diversity as the influence of the organizational performance. The organization should also improve on the gender diversity to reduce biasness among the employees and this also enhances the organizational performance. This study could serve as a guide for future researches at the Elgeyo

Marakwet County. The focus of this research was on age diversity and organizational performance. The results indicated that organizational performance is significantly affected when the diversity variable of age, is considered. It is therefore important for the County to realize the need to capitalize on this age diversity in order to stay ahead of other Counties. Smith (2010) argued that good workforce diversity practices are believed to enhance organizational performance. However, at the Elgeyo Marakwet County, there seems to be no link between age diversity and organizational performance. To fully understand the scenario at the Elgeyo Marakwet County, further studies need to be conducted in order to unearth the challenges of age diversity.

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