

Effect of Performance Appraisal on Workplace Diversity in Public Universities in Kenya.

Dr. Wahida Mahmud Bana

Technical University of Mombasa, Kenya.

wahidabana62@yahoo.com

Telephone +254721527548

Corresponding Author

Dr. Wahida Mahmud Bana

Telephone: +254721527548

Address: P.O.BOX 81080, Mombasa 80-100, Kenya.

Email: wahidabana62@yahoo.com

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Abstract

The main objective of this paper is to study the effect of performance appraisal on workplace diversity in public universities in Kenya from the perspective of the senior administrators or managers of the administrative departments and the schools/faculties in order to provide empirical insights on the disparity in the workforce, which has been a challenge for the public universities' as they need to benefit from talented people with diverse backgrounds. The study adopted a research design being a descriptive cross sectional survey design. The sampling frame was the 22 chartered public universities out of which a sample size of 245 managers surveyed. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling. Correlation and regression analysis was used to determine relationships between the independent and the dependent variable. The study established that performance appraisal significantly affects workplace diversity.

Keywords: Performance Appraisal, Workplace diversity, Public universities in Kenya, Human Resource Management.

1. Introduction

It is only in the last three decades that some research interest has been directed at the status of HRM in developing countries. Instead, enormous amount of work on sub-Saharan African countries has been carried out on issues such as economic development, trade, foreign aid, eradication of poverty, disease and various factors such as economic mismanagement, political ineptitude and corruption which have affected economic and industrial development (Kamoche, Muuka, Horwitz and Debrah, 2004). Although the effective management of human resources is critical in the successful management and development of organizations, several studies have documented the problems and challenges that are affecting most organizations in Africa (Kamoche, 2004; Tessema and Soeters, 2006). Some of these challenges include inappropriate management practices, weak and inefficient decision making, political patronage and governmental interference, inability to fire people, inadequate and non-competitive rewards, particularistic recruitment procedures that includes nepotism and other forms of favouritism among other factors (Kamoche, 2000; Kamoche, 2001; Mulinge, 2001; Kamoche et al., 2004; Tessema and Soeters, 2006).

As a result of these challenges, most organizations, especially the public sector in Africa have been unable to attract, motivate and retain diverse employees resulting in high turnover and 'brain drain' levels as most trained employees seek greener pastures in other countries in Africa or overseas (Kamoche, 2004; Tetty, 2006). In order for the African public sector to move away from this culture of failure and managerial ineptitude, it is crucial that it strengthens the human resource function, which is often lowly regarded in organizations (Kamoche, 2000),

In Kenya, the issue of performance appraisal has become a determinant for the government workers to get salary increments especially after the adoption of the new constitution where the Salary Review Commission (SRC, 2012) was set up to evaluate the different jobs in the government and agencies offices. Diversity has also received a lot of attention since 2007 after the General elections which led to ethnic clashes, which further led to the enactment of the National Cohesion and Integration Act, (2008). Discrimination in the public service has reached a level of concern as one of the major challenges facing universities with existence of negative ethnicity and intolerance from university administrators (Kibaji, 2010; NCIC, 2012). While contemplating people as the most important asset of every organization, it is equally important for HR strategists to recognize human inequalities, otherwise called workforce diversity and manage these effectively (Barbosa, 2007). Particularly, in the context of expansion where interactions among socially and culturally differing people is desired and also inevitable, HR managers could increase individual and group commitment to organizational goals by creating conducive diversity climate (Cox 1993). As strategic partners, HR managers translate the business strategy into action (Ulrich, 2012). So it is also reasonable to infer that effective HRM and diversity management practices contribute to improve the overall organizational performance which in turn is pivotal for sustaining competitive strength.

Performance Appraisal when done fairly contributes to value creation by increasing intellectual capital within the firm (Ulrich, 2012). A flexible knowledge workforce represents competitive advantage for organizations focusing on strategic expansion. Ozbilgin & Tatli, (2008) highlight that in order to manage a multicultural workplace respecting traditions and culture, it is necessary to implement a new approach of performance appraisal which integrates and valorizes the diversity of the workforce. Performance appraisal should incorporate diversity management as a function. This should in the context of expansion of organizations to culturally and socially differing destinations,

as it can make substantial contributions to overall performance. To know how well performance appraisal practices of Kenyan public universities influence the expansion strategy, it is necessary to understand the existing practices and their conceptual convergences and differences.

Workplace diversity includes several dimensions starting from the legal aspect, equal opportunity, and non-discrimination to other valued people's identities and perspectives (Marquis, 2008). Diversity is based on informational differences reflecting a person's education, experience, and generational differences from the differences that exist within the workplace (Kerby & Burns, 2012; Douglas, 2010). A diverse workforce improves an organization's performance and boosts its bottom line (Ozbilgin & Tatli, 2008). The employers receive the most skilled and the most qualified candidates as building blocks of their company when they hire the employees belonging to different cultural thoughts and varied backgrounds. Diversity thus embraces difference of opinions and of ideologies and welcomes individuals to adopt each other's peculiarities while observing a better understanding of the workplace (Llopis, 2011). It helps organizations to develop their own mirrors to reflect global demographic trends which may affect global market (Kwak, 2002; Rahim, 2003). The presence of multiple generations in the workplace will not only help in information transformation but will promote cultural and social cohesiveness (Douglas, 2010).

2. Performance Appraisal and Workplace Diversity

Performance appraisal is among the most important human resource management practice because of its ability to provide valuable performance information for a number of human resource activities such as allocation of rewards, promotion, assessment of training needs and feedback on development (Kuvaas, Dysvik, Buch 2014). Consequently, it enables organizations to retain, motivate and develop productive and diverse employees. A good performance appraisal system can help to enhance employee performance by evaluating how employees are doing on the job and giving them the chance to correct their mistakes and acquire new skills (Armstrong, 2013).

Despite the importance of performance appraisals to organizations, the different methods of appraisal continue to pose challenges to managers and the employees who use them. Bernardin and Wiatrowski (2013) noted that organizations continue to express disappointment in performance appraisal methods despite advances in appraisal technology. Appraisal reliability and validity still remain major problems in most appraisal systems and new appraisal systems are often met with substantial resistance. Other problems that afflict performance appraisal process include subjectivity and intentional as well as inadvertent bias (Aggrawal and Thakur, 2013) Therefore, since application of appraisal often plays a role in decisions related to training and career development, promotions, rewards and redundancy programmes, perceptions of fairness must be a necessary consideration. Managers therefore must not be seen to deliberately omit potentially important performance criteria during assessment or include irrelevant factors which might result in resentment leading to job dissatisfaction or high turnover.

Kamoche (2004) reports that performance appraisals in organizations in Kenya have been complicated by cultural and social issues. For instance, employees who know influential people in the organization who can protect them, tend to be spared when performance appraisals are used to select workers for redundancy, thus placing politics and good interpersonal relationships above organizational goal-oriented performance. Arthur, Woehr, Akande and Strong (1995) in a study of 38 organizations in Ghana and organizations from Nigeria, found that there were no set performance goals and that the performance criteria were often vaguely defined.

This vagueness in performance criteria encourages subjectivity in the performance appraisal process. In addition, African cultural norms have been found to have a negative impact on the appraisal process (Aryee, 2004). Tessema and Soeters (2006) in a study of Eritrean civil servants found that appraisal systems are often one-sided whereby the supervisor's view of the subordinates' performance prevails. However, workplace diversity scholars point to the glass ceiling that is a barrier to promotion into management (Gupta, 2013). Multicultural employees are often perceived as not having the right skills to move into management positions. Thus, the glass ceiling creates artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upward in their organization (Nyambegeera, 2002).

3. Statement of the Problem

Kenya aims to achieve industrialization and sustained economic growth consistent with the Government's employment, wealth creation and poverty reduction objectives. All this is being done through many efforts among them the promotion of higher education, which are top priority under vision 2030. Through the efficient use of diverse human resources at the training level the experts can reap the benefits of the knowledge, skills and change in attitude about having a diverse workforce and consequently a higher growth rate can be achieved. Various authors have demonstrated that there is a link between performance appraisal practices and a firm's productivity (Mukanzi 2013, Kepha 2014, Sang 2015). Going by the above analysis, Kenya's growth target is seemingly ambitious and cannot be realized and sustained without serious human resource reforms (KIPPRA, 2012). According to Omolo, (2010), the gap between Kenya's economy and those of the high performing Asian tigers has widened tremendously since the country's independence in 1963 with Kenya recording low GDP compared to the Asian tiger countries. This is because developed countries and the Asian tigers, have over the years emphasized on performance plus diversity of human resources leading to increased productivity and to improve G.D.P as well as raised standards of living.

The concept of workplace diversity has increasingly become a "hot-button" issue in political, legal, corporate and educational arenas. Managing diversity is becoming a contemporary management issue with many organizations focusing on the same and investing in diversity management practices. Ozbilgin & Tatli, (2008) argue that a cultural diverse workforce is economically beneficial, and improves performance by 20% to 30%. While the trend of emphasis in workplace diversity is picking up internationally, the situation in Kenya, particularly in the public sector is far from the reality of the trends (Kibaji, 2010).

The HRM function is the custodian of the people management processes while the workplace diversity is an employee centered function that can be streamlined through HRM (Armstrong, 2013; Jie Shen, 2009). Nevertheless, most of these studies focus on diversity setting in developing countries. There are only a few local studies (Munjuri & Maina, 2013; Oluoch, 2006; Ikama, 2010; Mureithi, 2009; Shume, 2013) that focus on the diversity at workplace in Kenya. However, all these local studies focus on the status of workplace and do not attempt to address the gap from any perspective. There is therefore a dearth of information on how the performance appraisal function influences workplace diversity in Kenya. This study therefore examines the effect of performance appraisal practices on workplace diversity in Public Universities in Kenya. In the light of the above discussions, the following alternative hypotheses have been formulated: **H_a**: Performance appraisal practices have a significant effect on workplace diversity.

4. Methodology

The study used both quantitative and qualitative data. The data obtained through questionnaires was established by calculating response rate and descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and frequency distributions for the observed variables. These measures help to tell us the point about which items have a tendency to cluster (Kothari, 2004). Second, data collected on each of variables under study was analyzed using factor analysis and descriptive statistics. Lastly, correlation and regression analysis was used to analyze the data. The entire hypothesis was tested at 95% confidence level.

5. Data Analyses

This study used the percentages to present the study findings on factors used in examining the effect of performance appraisal on workplace diversity in public universities in Kenya. The purpose of descriptive analysis is to enable the study to meaningfully describe a distribution of scores of measurements using indices or statistics.

5.1 Construct Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal is a critical component of the human resource management function. It enables organizations to have the relevant skills necessary to achieve the desired objective. Organizations with good appraisal programmes have a competitive edge over their rivals as they know what they need as far as skills and knowledge of their workers is concerned. The study sought to establish the effect of performance appraisal on the workplace diversity in public universities in Kenya. The results are represented in table 4.9.

The study found out that majority of the respondent disagreed that appraisal is focused on the individual's performance, not personality with a rate of 65.8%. A respondent rate of 37.8% agreed that the organization have objective criteria and fair practices for everyone while 62.2% disagreed and did not know. A respondent rate of 63.3% agreed that the cultural background of the appraiser influences the performance ratings of the appraisee. The respondents 53.6% disagreed that there are several multicultural employees at top management of the organization whereas 69.4% from the respondent disagreed or did not know that the organization includes hiring and climate measures in performance appraisal criteria for managers. The respondents 58.2% disagreed that the appraisal policy in place is implemented by all managers, while the methods of appraisal are unbiased had a respondent rate of 32.1% in agreement but had a majority rate of 67.9% in disagreement or did not know.

Table 4.9 Descriptive Results on Performance appraisal

	N	Yes	No	Do not know	Total
Appraisal are focused on the individual's performance, not personality	196	28.1%	65.8%	6.1%	100%
The organization have objective criteria and fair practices for everyone	196	37.8%	53.1%	9.1%	100%
The cultural background of the appraiser influences the performance ratings of the appraise	196	27.0%	63.3%	9.7%	100%
There are several multicultural employees at top management of the organization	196	35.7%	53.6%	10.7%	100%
The organization includes hiring and climate measures in performance appraisal criteria for managers	196	32.7%	59.7%	7.7%	100%
Appraisal policy in place is implemented by all managers	196	32.7%	58.2%	9.2%	100%
The methods of appraisal are unbiased	196	32.1%	59.2%	8.7%	100%

Research also shows that performance appraisal offers many benefits as employees become more confident, open to change and supportive of each other (Joseph & Dai, 2009). In addition, employees are more motivated to achieve improved performance as a result of appraisal. Finally it can be said the changing business environment necessitates that organizations should conduct appraisals to know the shortcomings' of the present employees to enhance them and also know the organizational ability to positively respond to the dynamic environment (Jarventaus, 2007)

5.2 Construct Workplace Diversity

Workplace diversity in public universities in Kenya is very critical because it determines whether they achieve their objectives or not. Workplace diversity also tends to enhance their image in the

public sector. The study, therefore, sought to measure the extent of the indicators of workplace diversity in public universities. The results are presented in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Descriptive results on Workplace Diversity

	N	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The workforce profile is equally represented in the organization	196	11.2%	25.5%	13.3%	42.9%	9.2%
All groups are equally represented in the workforce	196	15.3%	25.5%	14.3%	35.7%	9.2%
The organization is broadening the pool of applicants by extended outreach efforts	196	12.7%	23.5%	18.4%	38.8%	7.7%
Employees among affirmative action groups are paid the same as dominant counterparts or those in similar positions	196	18.9%	37.2%	18.4%	20.4%	4.1%
Men and women are given equal pay for equal work in the same establishment	196	30.6%	41.3%	11.2%	10.7%	6.1%
Promotion rates for men, women and other affected are the same	196	21.4%	19.4%	15.8%	37.2%	6.1%
Voluntary and involuntary turnover by demographic category is reviewed annually	196	6.6%	18.4%	32.7%	28.6%	13.8%

The study sought to establish the extent of workplace diversity in the public universities. The data on table 4.2 shows responses on statements regarding the determinants of workplace diversity in public universities in Kenya. The data shows 36.7% of the respondents agree on the workforce profile are equally represented in the organization while 63.3% are do not agree or do not know. Also 40.8% respondents agree that all groups are equally represented in the workforce while 59.2% do not agree or were undecided. The respondents 64.9% disagree that the organization is broadening the pool of applicants by extended outreach effort. Of the respondents 56.1% agree that

employees among affirmative action groups are paid the same as dominant counterparts or those in similar positions. Men and women are given equal pay for equal work in the same establishment with a response rate of 71.9%, while a response rate of 40.8% agree on promotion rates for men, women and other affected are the same but 59.2% disagreed. Of the respondents 64.9% disagreed or did not know whether the Voluntary and involuntary turnover by demographic category is reviewed annually while 35.1% agreed.

The results concur with Mathews (2012), that diversity has been characterized as a function of human resource management and the policies and programs that constitute the diversity management function vary substantially among organizations, including mentoring opportunities, training programs, minority policies, and advocacy groups.

5.3 Correlation analysis for construct Performance Appraisal

Based on the results in table 4.26 the correlation coefficient (P) between the performance appraisal and workplace diversity was found to be $r(196) = .587$ $p < 0.01$, two tailed. These results indicate that according to the study, there was a significant linear correlation between the two variables (performance appraisal and workplace diversity). This implies that the relationship between the two variables is very close.

Guest (2001) argues that policies are necessary to ensure that employee performance is evaluated, which in turn ensures that the appropriate training and development take place. With the help of the performance appraisal reports and findings, the organization can be able to identify development needs. However, individuals themselves can help to indicate the areas requiring improvement as a result of the issues raised in the performance appraisal process and their career path needs. Employee performance is normally looked at in terms of outcomes. However, it can also be looked at in terms of behaviour (Armstrong 2013). Holmes (2016) stated that employee's performance is measured against the performance standards set by the organization. There are a number of measures that can be taken into consideration when measuring performance for example using of productivity, efficiency, effectiveness, quality and profitability measures (Aggrawal and Thakur, 2013). As noted by Draft (1988), it is the responsibility of the company managers to ensure that the organizations strive to and thus achieve high performance levels. This therefore implies that managers have to set the desired levels of performance for any periods in question by setting policies in place. Therefore these findings indicate that there is a strong relationship between performance appraisal and workplace diversity in public universities in Kenya.

Table 4.27 Correlation Analysis for Construct Performance Appraisal

		Performance Appraisal	Workplace Diversity
PA	Pearson Correlation	1	.587**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	196	196
WD	Pearson Correlation	.587**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	196	196

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

5.4 Regression Analysis

To assess the effect of PA on workplace diversity in public universities in Kenya the study had the following alternative hypothesis; H_{a2} : Performance appraisal has a significant effect on workplace diversity. The results showed that performance appraisal had moderate explanatory power on workplace diversity in public universities in Kenya as it accounted for 34.5% with the coefficient of determination $R^2 = .345$ and $R = .587$ at significant level of 0.05. The results shown indicate that an increase in performance appraisal tends to increase the workplace diversity in the public universities by 34.5% and the remaining 65.5% can be explained by other factors. The results indicate that the explanatory power of performance appraisal on workplace diversity was slightly low as it accounted for 34.5% of the variability of change in workplace diversity ($R^2 = 0.345$). The individual regression results reveal statistically significant positive linear relationship between PA and workplace diversity ($\beta = 0.565$, P-value 0.000) as shown in table 4.37. Hence, H_{a2} is accepted as there is a significant relationship between performance appraisal and workplace diversity in public university in Kenya since $\beta \neq 0$ and P-value < 0.05 .

The findings revealed that diversity practices in the area of performance appraisal are essential to reduce discrimination in recognition of merit. The top management needs to intervene to ensure that diversity goals are met and need to consider the minority employees on promotion panels which will help to reduce notion of discrimination.

Dimba and K'Obonyo (2009) argued that appraisal systems are positively and significantly correlated with the performance of the employees in the organization which concurs with the study findings. Luring and Selmer (2012) study also concurs with the findings as effective performance can lead an organization to take strides towards success but an ineffective performance appraisal system can seal the fate of the organization by creating chaos and confusion from the top management to the bottom especially in a diversified workplace. Holmes (2016) study concurs with the finds as the goal of performance appraisal is to assess and summarize past performance and develop future work performance goals and expectations. Nyaoga, Kipchumba and Magutu (2010) found out that the system of performance appraisal is not effective in private universities in Kenya as the appraisal was not used for the stated purpose. Lastly, Katou, Budhwar and Patel (2014), argue that performance appraisals do not lead directly to business performance but influence employee motivation and it is these employee outcomes which ultimately influence performance.

The results are explained by the Goal setting theory (Locke, 1968) features of the willingness to work towards attainment of goal, specific and clear goals lead to greater output and better performance, while better and appropriate feedback of results directs the employee behavior and contributes to higher performance than absence of feedback. Goals should be realistic and challenging to give individual a feeling of pride when he attains them and lastly, participation of setting goal makes goal more acceptable and leads to more involvement. In the context of this study, it is indeed the knowledge, skills and abilities of individuals that create value, which is why the focus has to be on means of appraisal of the employees to maintaining the diversity they represent.

Table 4.33 Model Summary Performance Appraisal

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.587 ^a	.345	.341	.657

a. Predictors: (Constant), Performance Appraisal

The ANOVA was done to test the significance of the independent variable in table 5.5 which was performance appraisal practices. The analysis results revealed that the significance of F statistics is 0.000 which is less than 0.05. This implies that there is a significant relationship between performance appraisal practices and workplace diversity as seen in table 5.5.

Table 5.5 Anova

ANOVA ^a					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	10.979	1	10.979	38.229	.000 ^c
Residual	116.844	194	.602		
Total	127.824	195			

a. Dependent Variable: WD

b. Predictors: (Constant), PA

The ANOVA test results on PA revealed F statistic of 38.229 which was significant at 0.05 ($p < 0.05$). This means that 38.23% of the change in workplace diversity was influenced by PA measures.

6. Summary of Findings

6.1 The effect of performance appraisal practices on workplace diversity

The study sought to find out the effect of performance appraisal on workplace diversity and to test the hypothesis that the effect of performance appraisal practices significantly influence workplace diversity. From the descriptive analysis majority of the respondents felt that the appraisal are focused on the individual's personality not performance (65.8%) while on the issue of the organization have objective criteria and fair practices for everyone the respondent disagreed (53.1%). On the cultural background of the appraiser influences the performance ratings of the appraise respondents also disagreed (64.3%). The respondents disagreed (53.6%) that there are several multicultural employees at top management of the organization. The respondents disagreed that the organization includes hiring and climate measures in performance appraisal criteria for managers (59.7%) and also disagreed on whether the appraisal policy in place is implemented by all managers (58.2%). Majority of the respondents agreed on the methods of appraisal are biased (59.2%) in the public universities in Kenya.

The computed Cronbach's Alpha of the items of performance appraisal was 0.707; this meant a high reliability of the study instrument and data. The inferential analysis and findings showed that there is a positive significant linear relationship between performance appraisal and workplace diversity, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.587 and a p-value of 0.000 and an R Square value of 0.345. This means that performance appraisal contributes to 34.5% to workplace diversity and is significantly positively correlated to workplace diversity. This implies that an improvement in performance appraisal leads to an increase in workplace diversity.

These findings indicate that performance appraisal will influence workplace diversity. This implies that when employees' link appraisal based on their performance, this act like an incentive, which encourages better performance and finally enhances a performance driven culture. Organizations need to encourage managers to include hiring and climate measures in performance appraisal criteria for managers to increase workplace diversity. The study therefore concludes that performance appraisal plays a significant role in influencing workplace diversity, and accepts the alternative hypothesis.

These results therefore revealed that it is possible to have diversity in the staff for public universities in Kenya if they practice on achieving and implementing unbiased performance appraisal practices when evaluating their employees. There should be wider communication of performance appraisal policies within organizational as it makes employees clear about their specific role.

6.2 Conclusions and Recommendations

The conclusions were based on the objectives of the study that aimed at establishing the effect of performance appraisal practices on the workplace diversity in public universities in Kenya. The results established that performance appraisal practices were found to significantly and positively influence workplace diversity. When the stated hypotheses were tested in the regression model they were found to have a significant relationship between themselves and workplace diversity. The findings of the study revealed that public universities in Kenya should undertake performance appraisal practices which are aimed at helping them to achieve their goals. These practices were found to be influential in predicting workplace diversity in public universities Kenya. Although the public universities in Kenya have undertaken the performance appraisal practices, they are not consistent on their application. This implies that they are doing well in some areas, whereas they face major challenges in some aspects of the practices. Nonetheless, they do appreciate the fact that they cannot be able to achieve their desired objectives if effective performance appraisal practices are not put in place. This is supported by the fact that their strategic plans are aligned on the basis of the best HRM practices. In adopting the best performance appraisal practices, they aim to attract and retain the most qualified employees, continuously develop them and motivate them to achieve a university with diversity and attain their visions to be centers of excellence. They should also be able to compete in ranking with other leading universities in Africa and the world.

6.3 Suggestions for further research

There is need to undertake further studies in order to establish reasons for inconsistency in the application of performance appraisal by public universities in Kenya. This is because the findings indicate those performance appraisals are applied inconsistently. The tools used for appraisal should be given considerable care as the universities are academic institutions and their job is considerable

different. Since the study has concentrated on public universities which are government owned, there is also need to undertake similar or comparative studies with international universities operating in Kenya.

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