FACTORS CONSIDERED IN MANAGEMENT OF WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AT SAFARICOM KENYA
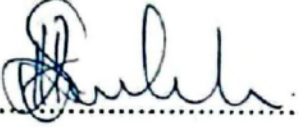
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A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MBA), SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

NOVEMBER, 2021

DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been presented for the award of degree in any other University.

Signature.. Date. 24th November 2021

Halima Kamanthe Salim

This Research Project has been submitted for presentation with the endorsement of the University supervisor.

Signature................................ Date ...... 03|12|2021

Prof Peter .O.Kobonyo

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my friends for their support.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CAK   Communication Authority of Kenya

HR   Human Resource

HRM   Human Resource Management

KIs   Key Informants

PSCK   Public Service Commission of Kenya

SEM   Structural equation modeling

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to establish the importance of factors considered in the management of workforce diversity at Safaricom Kenya. The study adopted a case study design. The study collected primary data with aid of the interview guide. Data was qualitative where a total of 3 KIs were interviewed as drawn from the Human resource department at Safaricom. Content analysis was adopted in processing the collected data and presented in form of narration. The study established that at Safaricom Kenya, gender diversity is highly practiced. Female employees were encouraged to take up executive leadership and senior management positions. There was an established diversity management policy at Safaricom. Recruitment practices at Safaricom allowed the company to deliberately target potential applicants from marginalized groups. The top management allocated funds towards diversity practices at Safaricom. The study concludes that management of workforce diversity improves the reputation of the firm while helping the firm to emerge as an equal opportunity employer. The study recommends that the top managers at Safaricom Kenya should promote more women to leadership positions. The management team at Safaricom including the Finance Managers should allocate adequate funds towards diversity programs in place. The HR managers at Safaricom should strictly adhere to the corporate diversity policy in the hiring and recruitment processes. The policymakers at Safaricom should carry out a regular review of the existing policies concerning workplace diversity so that they are aligned with the strategic goals. The policymakers at the Communication Authority of Kenya (CAK) should enforce relevant policies that obligate telecommunication firms like Safaricom to comply with employee diversity.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Workforce diversity is the coexistence of staff drawn from different social-cultural settings within the entity (William & O'Reilly, 1998). Such social-cultural parameters in assessing diversity include religious affiliations, age, sexual orientation, and language, levels of education, different beliefs, disability, and values. Management of workforce diversity is the ability of the firm to enable the available diverse employees to carry out activities at an optimum level (Torres & Bruxelles, 1992). According to Reichenberg (2001), management of workforce diversity focuses on the mindset of the firm and the prevailing climate in the organization. Managing workforce diversity requires an organization to consider several factors whose understanding can sustain the organization creating a competitive edge.

The social identity theory and similarity-attraction theory will provide anchorage to the study. Advanced by Tajfel and Turner (1986), the social identity theory argues that individuals strive to classify themselves and others into different categories for instance age and gender groups and in different religious affiliations which are key tenets of workforce diversity in an organization. Developed by Berscheid and Walster (1969), the similarity-attraction theory argues that employees tend to be attracted to other staff who have similar attributes in an organization which may result in the establishment of d diverse workforce in an organization.

Safaricom Ltd operates in the larger telecommunication industry and it is regulated by the Communication Authority of Kenya (CAK). From its humble beginning in 1997 when it was incorporated as a private limited liability firm, Safaricom later transformed into a public limited firm in 2002. Safaricom Ltd is the market leader in mobile voice services in Kenya and East Africa. However, in past years, Safaricom has lost a significant number of its workforce with the available

Human Resource (HR) reports indicating ethnic inequality in the workforce in place. In 2021, Safaricom was fined Kshs. 6 million for failing to hire an employee with a disability (Daily Nation Newspaper, Tuesday, 13, July 2021).

1.1.1 Concept of Workforce Diversity

Workforce diversity is the differences existing among employees in an organization and it includes primary elements like sexual orientation, physical attributes, gender, ethnic backgrounds, race as well as gender among other issues. Besides the primary attributes, workforce diversity goes further to cover secondary aspects like parental status, religious affiliations, levels of education, marital status, and income disparities. Workforce diversity is viewed by Lančarič, Chebeň, and Savov (2015) as a combination of tensions, similarities, and differences existing among components whose mixture is collective. McCann and Kohntopp (2017) argued that workforce diversity can well be understood from the perspective of some specific dimensions or criteria, resulting in primary and secondary diversity.

Workforce diversity is a strategic tool that supports the survival of the enterprise. For the firm to attract a broader pool of talents, a culture of workforce diversity is paramount (Mulu & Zewdie, 2021). Promoting workforce diversity results in an enhancement in the reputation of the firm while promoting compliance with laws regarding discrimination while establishing a multicultural work environment. In an organization, the key focus of workforce diversity is on different abilities that every staff would bring on board in the firm. Workforce diversity has emerged from being a mere legal issue to a concept that firms must embrace for successful operations (Bedi, lakra, & Gupta, 2014). Relating to the similarities and differences at an individual level, workforce diversity creates unique staff who feel they are different from others in the firm.

1.1.2 Management of Workforce Diversity

Management of workforce diversity is the integration of the collective similarities and differences of the employees in an organization. It is the proper examination, determination, and establishment of the differences and similarities among employees in an organization. Ali, Mathuva, and Mwenda (2019)   view the management of workforce diversity as a managerial philosophy where heterogeneity in the firm is valued to enhance the performance of employees. Management of workforce diversity, plans, and organizational practices and systems for managing people is implemented to maximize potential advantages while minimizing the disadvantages of diversity in an organization.

Different firms have put in place several practices and policies for managing the diversity of the employees to address concerns about the fairness of employees. Yegon, Kahara, and Okibo (2014) argue that the begging point in the management of workforce diversity is recruitment and selection processes. Ideally, it is at the hiring stage that an organization can establish a diverse team. At the same time, the prevailing culture in an organization plays an important role in creating a diverse workforce. Management of workforce diversity allows the organization to manage different national cultures in a multi-cultural firm. Diversity management allows the organization to develop and apply equal opportunities within the organization.

1.1.3 Factors Considered in Management of Workforce Diversity

The management of an organization needs to consider several factors when managing workforce diversity. Mulu and Zewdie (2021) identified the constructs of diversity management to include religion, gender, and ethnicity. Maqsoom, Khan, Musarat, Mubasit, and Umer (2020) identified internal workforce factors like income, psychological, technical skills, and motivation-related

concerns as influencing the management of workforce diversity. Ali, Mathuva, and Mwenda (2019) said that recruitment and selection is an important consideration when it comes to the management of diversity at the workplace. Dube and Guvheya (2017) shared gender and executive diversity on the board, board education diversity, and geographic location diversity as key issues considered in the management of workforce diversity. Muasaa, Egondi, and Mathuvac (2017) indicated that primary factors like race, ethnicity, gender, and age are important in the management of diversity in the workplace. Kaimenyi, Kidombo, and Senaji (2017) shared that the existing legal framework is an important consideration when managing diversity at the workplace

Bana (2016) said the prevailing culture in an organization influences diversity at the place of work. Dastaneb and Eshegbe (2015) identified the key elements in the management of diversity at the workplace to include ethnicity and gender. Jepchirchir (2015) noted that the existence of policies about gender, mainstreaming of concerns about disability, training are important when it comes to the top management of diversity at the place of work. Lančarič, Chebeň, and Savov (2015) identified the salient factors during the implementation of diversity management to include diversity training, mentoring, and formalization of the human resource management (HRM) procedures. Kioko (2014) identified these factors as generational differences and professional qualifications. Ayub, Aslam, and Razzaq (2013) shared the factors affecting issues of diversity at the workplace to include policies of the organization, management practices, and perceptions concerning inequality. Thus, it is evident that there are varied factors that need to be considered when managing diversity at the workplace. This study will focus on two broad factors, primary and secondary factors.

1.1.4 Safaricom Kenya

Having been incorporated in 1997, Safaricom Ltd has grown to become a giant in the telco industry in Kenya, East Africa, and Africa as a whole. Safaricom Ltd operates in the larger telecommunication industry that is regulated by CAK. In the year 2002, Vodafone Group PLC of the United Kingdom acquired a total of 40% of the stake of Safaricom turning it into a public limited liability entity. In 2008, Safaricom was listed on the Nairobi Securities Exchange (NSE) after having successfully launched the M-Pesa service in 2007.

M-Pesa allows the registered users to transfer money with the help of their mobile phones. Kenya was the first country around the world to have such an innovation. Among the services offered by Safaricom to customers include mobile telephony, money transfer through mobile phones, electronic commerce, data, fiber optic among others. As of the year 2020, Safaricom commanded a market share of 64.5%. Despite being ranked as the best employer by Forbes and BrighterMonday, concerns have been raised about discrimination of employees based on disability which is an important aspect when it comes to diversity management at the workplace. Media reports have indicated that gender and age disparities among employees at Safaricom and this pegs a question on the effectiveness of the systems of managing diversity at the place of work.

1.2 Research Problem

Having a diverse workforce creates harmony while improving the productivity of employees in an organization. The top management of an organization should see diversity management as a priority since it directly contributes towards improving the performance of the firm. Managing diversity in an organization should be regarded as a strategic issue that contributes towards the survival of the firm as it operates in a turbulent environment. Effective management of diversity

in the workplace starts by appreciating the relevant primary and secondary factors and their importance to the HR professionals in an organization (Mulu & Zewdie, 2021).

Safaricom Ltd is among the blue-chip firms that operate in the telecommunication industry in Kenya. Safaricom boasts itself as a market giant and leader in this telecommunication industry. However, the company has come under sharp criticisms with concerns about discrimination of employees based on disability issues. Safaricom prides itself as being an employer of a diverse workforce, although media reports point out that there are more male than female employees at Safaricom.

The available studies from a global perspective include Maqsoom et al. (2020) that used a case of Pakistan to link the diversity factors and productivity of labor where the factors identified include technical skills, vacation training, and financial incentives. Dastane and Eshegbe (2015) focused on the hotels in Malaysia to come up with the effects of elements of diversity at the place of work where ethnicity and gender were some of the identified factors. In Zimbabwe, Dube and Guvheya (2017) looked at the factors that have an effect on the diversity of the workforce among listed entities where gender, education, geographic location was the identified factors. In South Africa, Strydom and Fourie (2018) looked at diversity factors and their influence on the need to implement strategies among higher education institutions. The inquiry failed to note a significant interplay between diversity factors and the need to implement strategies.

Locally, Kioko (2014) investigated the factors with an effect on diversity management at the place of work using Nakuru National Park as the point of reference where generational differences and professional qualifications were identified. Kaimenyi, Kidombo, and Senaji (2017) looked at the legal framework and the implementation of policies regarding diversity at the place of work, and

a positive relationship was noted. Jepchirchir (2015) looked at the challenges encountered as far as management of diversity at the place of work is concerned using the mining ministry as the case where the challenges were viewed to emanate at a strategic and managerial level. Muasaa *et al.* (2017) sought to bring out the primary factors concerning diversity at the workplace and their link with firm performance and these factors include race, ethnicity, gender, and age of the employees.

The reviewed studies create gaps, since some of them were conducted in other countries like Pakistan, Malaysia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa and not in Kenya. Other studies related the factors of diversity management with other constructs like strategy implementation, performance, and productivity. This creates gaps that the present study sought to fill by answering the following research question: what is the importance of factors considered in the management of workforce diversity at Safaricom Kenya?

1.3 Research Objective

The study sought to establish the importance of factors considered in the management of workforce diversity at Safaricom Kenya

1.4 Value of the Study

The policymakers at Safaricom Ltd may be able to understand the salient factors relevant to the management of workforce diversity. The findings of the study may guide policy in the telecommunication industry in Kenya which will lead to better management of workplace diversity. The policymakers in the government through the Public Service Commission of Kenya (PSCK) may be able to come up with relevant policies for managing diversity among employees at the workplace.

The management team at Safaricom Ltd may be able to enhance the factors supporting the management of diversity at the workplace. In particular, the human resource managers at Safaricom Ltd may be able to improve on the factors contributing towards the management of diversity in the workplace. This may promote a diverse work environment that would support the growth of the entire telecommunication sector in Kenya.

The study may add to the existing theories and knowledge on diversity management. This may allow further researchers and scholars to conduct related studies as they may be able to review the literature of this study. Hence, the study will provide important research for researchers to engage in more research on the importance of factors considered in the management of work.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is a review of the literature concerning factors considered in the management of diversity at the workplace. The review starts with the theories providing anchorage to the study and the past empirical studies. The reviewed literature is summarized to bring out the gaps.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation

The study was guided by the social identity theory and the similarity/attraction theory as discussed in the subsequent sections.

2.2.1 Social Identity Theory

This theory was developed by Tajfel and Turner (1986) and it describes the employees in an organization based on aspects like age, gender, or ethnicity. The theory argues that individuals' people tend to be classified and classify others in different categories like age cohorts, affiliations based on religion, and gender resulting in stereotypes in an organization. Tajfel (982) shared that the key consequences of social identity and self-categorization include conflicts, prejudice, and stereotyping. According to Jackson (2004), social category diversity is dissimilarity in membership of the social categories in an organization. This can arise when there exists variation in group membership in terms of age or gender or if they are drawn from different ethnic backgrounds.

The theory argues that personal identity is developed among individuals based on the group in which people have a greater fit. Having a membership to a given group arises when individuals stereotype themselves by attributing to them some given attributes, attitudes, and behavior. Kulik

and Bainbridge (2006) viewed self-categorization as the process where one sees him/herself as having membership with a given group. Hogg (1995) viewed social identity theory as one that relates to how individuals stand out as members of a given group while exhibiting related behavior. The theory will be used in this study to illustrate how employees relate and interact with each resulting in diverse groups.

2.2.2 Similarity-Attraction Theory

This theory was developed by Berscheid and Walster (1969) and it is based on non-salient aspects like education and values that raise the level of interpersonal attraction and attachment. The theory argues that people seek to be identified with others who are like-minded as they can help in reinforcing the values of each other (Pitts & O'Toole, 2010). According to Harrison, Price, and Bell (1998), as individuals get to interact with each other for a longer period; their differences in terms of education, age, gender, and ethnicity get to diminish once they know each other well after having reconciled their differences and stereotypes. However, the length of this interaction may not change some deep-rooted concerns about diversity.

This theory is used to support the fact that the outcomes of diversity in terms of education, ethnicity, age, and gender are severe on a short-run basis. However, frequent interaction gets to neutralize these differences between individuals and this outcome diminishes. Thus, based on this theory, individuals will be attracted to others who have similar, rather than dissimilar attributes. The theory explains how individuals are attracted to their specific social world. Byrne (1971) shared that individuals sharing given attitudes will tend to be attracted to each other. This theory will be used to illustrate how sharing of attitudes among employees at the workplace can create a diverse team that can contribute towards the overall performance of the firm.

2.3 Importance of Factors Considered in Management of Workforce Diversity

Literature indicates two broad considerations in the management of workforce diversity at the place of work; primary and secondary factors. Primary factors include capabilities, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, race, gender, culture, and age of the employees (Schwind, Das & Wagar, 2007). Some primary factors like physical abilities, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, gender, and age represent aspects that are either inborn or they place an extra effect on socialization at an early stage. Primary factors define employees providing an essence of who the employees are as human beings. Primary factors are the core elements of diversity among employees in an organization that cannot be varied for instance sexual orientation, mental and physical abilities, gender, race, and age of the employees in an organization. These factors are inborn and independent such that they shape how an employee behaves in an organization.

The higher the number of primary differences between individuals the more difficult it is to create respect and trust among employees. In essence, primary differences can create culture clashes and conflicts which may affect teamwork and human interaction in an organization. Gender diversity ensures adherence to the Constitutional requirements of a third gender rule. Considerations of age as a primary factor of diversity enable an organization to have in place a unique workforce comprising of the older, younger, and middle-aged employees and this may create cohesiveness among employees. Capabilities relate to concerns about engaging staff with disabilities at the workplace. This is important since it enables an organization to match individuals with a disability with the tasks that they can effectively carry out (Ayub, Aslam & Razzaq, 2013).

Secondary factors in diversity management are elements that can be changed through some degree of modification. Secondary considerations of diversity management include an array of factors

like marital status, religion, education, and socio-economic status of the employees as well as geographical affiliation (Sweetman, 2004). Secondary factors in diversity management are simply those elements which one has some degree of control throughout his/her life for instance language, religion, marital status, or education. Effective human relationships in an organization can only be well established when individuals can learn and appreciate other people's differences. Important to note is the fact that the interaction between the primary and secondary factors may determine perceptions, priorities, and values at an individual level (Bana, 2016).

2.4 Empirical Review

The study conducted in Pakistan by Maqsoom, Khan, Musarat, Mubasit, and Umer (2020) focused on internal factors of diversity and their link with productivity. The specific focus of the study was on construction projects. The inquiry shared the workforce diversity factors to include technical skills and motivation of the employees and these were seen to significantly contribute towards productivity at an organizational level. The study conducted among hotels in Malaysia by Dastane and Eshegbe (2015) focused on the elements of diversity at the place of work and the degree of satisfaction among staff towards diversity. It was shown that employees are satisfied with ethnicity and gender as the key factors of diversity in their organization. On the other hand, education and age were found to have no significant effect on the satisfaction of employees concerning the management of diversity in their organization.

Among listed entities in Zimbabwe, Dube and Guvheya (2017) sought to bring out the factors with an influence on the diversity of the employees. A total of 35 firms were covered and the methodology embraced was quantitative covering the horizon of 2009 all through to 2015. The salient factors noted by the study include gender, education, and geographical location. In South

Africa, Strydom and Fourie (2018) looked at the diversity factors and their influence on the implementation of strategies. The focus of the study was on institutions of higher learning. By adopting Structural equation modeling (SEM) during analysis, it was shown that diversity factors have no significant interplay with the implementation of strategies in an organization.

Kioko (2014) did a study whose focus was on bringing out the factors that affect the management of diversity among employees in an organization. Lake Nakuru National Park has used a case in this study. In total, 200 staff was targeted out of which 80 were sampled out through a stratified method. It was shown that professional qualification and generational differences have an effect on the management of diversity at the place of work. It was further noted that experience, education, and gender balance received consideration in the organization. Kaimenyi, Kidombo, and Senaji (2017) carried out a study on the legal framework with an influence on the implementation of the policies of diversity at the place of work. The study emphasized public institutions of higher learning in Kenya's context. The design embraced was a cross-sectional survey and 22 institutions were covered from which 7 were purposively selected. It was noted that the legal framework has a negative and significant link with the implementation of concerns about diversity at the place of work.

Jepchirchir (2015) conducted a study whose focus was on determining the challenges as far as management of diversity at the place of work is concerned. The study used the ministry of mining in Kenya as the case. Thus, the case study approach was embraced in this study with the use of a semi-structured questionnaire. It was shown that policies about disability mainstreaming and gender were in place. However, policies on age and ethnic considerations were not evident. Muasaa, Egondi, and Mathuvac (2017) conducted a study whose focus was on primary factors considered in the management of diversity and their effect on the performance of the firm. The

survey approach was embraced with emphasis on cargo freight stations in Mombasa. It was shown that diversity in terms of ethnicity, race, gender, and age all influence the performance of the firm.

2.5 Summary of Literature and Knowledge Gap

Table 2.1 gives a breakdown of the reviewed studies with the gaps arising from them.

Table 2.1: Summary of Literature and Knowledge Gap

Author & Year	Study	Findings	Gaps	The focus of the present study
Maqsoom et al. (2020)	Internal factors of diversity and their link with productivity. The specific focus of the study was on construction projects	The workforce diversity factors include technical skills and motivation of the employees and these were seen to significantly contribute towards productivity at an organizational level.	The study was done in Pakistan, with a specific focus on internal factors of diversity	The present study will be done in Kenya using Safaricom Ltd as the case
Dube and Guvheya (2017)	to bring out the factors with an influence on the	salient factors noted by the study include gender, education,	The study was done among hotels in Zimbabwe	The present study will be done in Kenya

	diversity of the employees	and geographical location		using Safaricom Ltd as the case
Kaimenyi *et al.* (2017)	legal framework with an influence on the implementation of the policies of diversity at the place of work	the legal framework has a negative and significant link with the implementation of concerns about diversity at the place of work.	The study focused on public institutions of higher learning in Kenya's context	The present study will use Safaricom Ltd as the case
Muasaa *et al.* (2017	primary factors considered in the management of diversity and their effect on the performance of the firm.	diversity in terms of ethnicity, race, gender, and age all influence the performance of the firm.	The study related primary diversity factors with performance.	The present study will look at the importance of these primary factors in diversity management.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter details the research design, data collection, and analysis of the findings. These sections are presented in line with the objectives that guided the study.

3.2 Research Design

The study adopted a case study design. According to Creswell and Poth (2017), a case study ensures that the researcher can obtain detailed information from the targeted respondents. Through a case study, the researcher was able to gather in-depth information on factors considered in the management of diversity at Safaricom Ltd. Similar related studies that also embraced case study design include Kioko (2014). A case study of Safaricom was used in this study to establish the importance of factors addressed in workplace diversity management.

3.3 Data Collection

The study collected primary data with aid of the interview guide. Data was qualitative, to allow the key informants (KIs) an opportunity to share relevant information in detail. A total of 3 KIs were interviewed, to be drawn from the Human resource department at Safaricom. These included the Human Resource Manager, assistant HR manager, and training manager. These people were selected because they were deemed to be well informed on issues of diversity in an organization and thus had relevant information to share.

3.4 Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected in this study was analyzed thematically through content analysis. The key themes from the data were analyzed and presented in form of narratives. The content analysis allowed the researcher to interpret the information sought from the KIs by the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The chapter is set out to provide the results of analysis on data that was gathered. The study relied on content analysis where relevant themes were explored and incorporated in the analysis.

4.2 General Information

The study sought to establish the total number of employees at Safaricom PLC. A summary of the total number of employees at Safaricom is given in Table 4.1.

Table 4. 1: Total Employees at Safaricom

	FY20	FY19	FY18	FY17
No. of permanent male employees	2 278	2 251	2 190	2 080
No. of permanent female employees	2 237	2 252	2 186	2 165
Total no. of permanent employees	4 515	4 503	4 376	4 245

Source: Safaricom reports

4.3 Employee Diversity at Safaricom

The study sought to establish the diversity of employees at Safaricom in terms of age. The study noted that Safaricom had put in place a graduate trainee program that attracted a pool of young graduates who are equipped with hands-on experience. From the findings, it was observed that employees at Safaricom were drawn from different age categories. The study noted that there were young professionals, adults, and some other employees in their early 50s. This according to respondents provided a good platform where staff in different age groups interacted and learned from each other.

Respondents were asked to indicate diversity at Safaricom Plc in terms of gender. It emerged that female and male gender were equally represented among employees at Safaricom. However, the study noted that due to the technical nature of some tasks in given departments, more males as compared to females were given more preference. These observations were consistent with the stipulation of the 2010 Constitution in Kenya regarding gender rule. Table 4.2 and Figure 4.1 give the analysis of the employees at Safaricom in terms of gender.

Table 4.2: Distribution of Employees at Safaricom by Gender

	FY20		FY19		FY18		FY17	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Permanent staff (overall)	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	49%	51%
Executive leadership	64%	36%	73%	27%	75%	25%	75%	25%
Senior management*	65%	35%	66%	34%	68%	32%	69%	31%

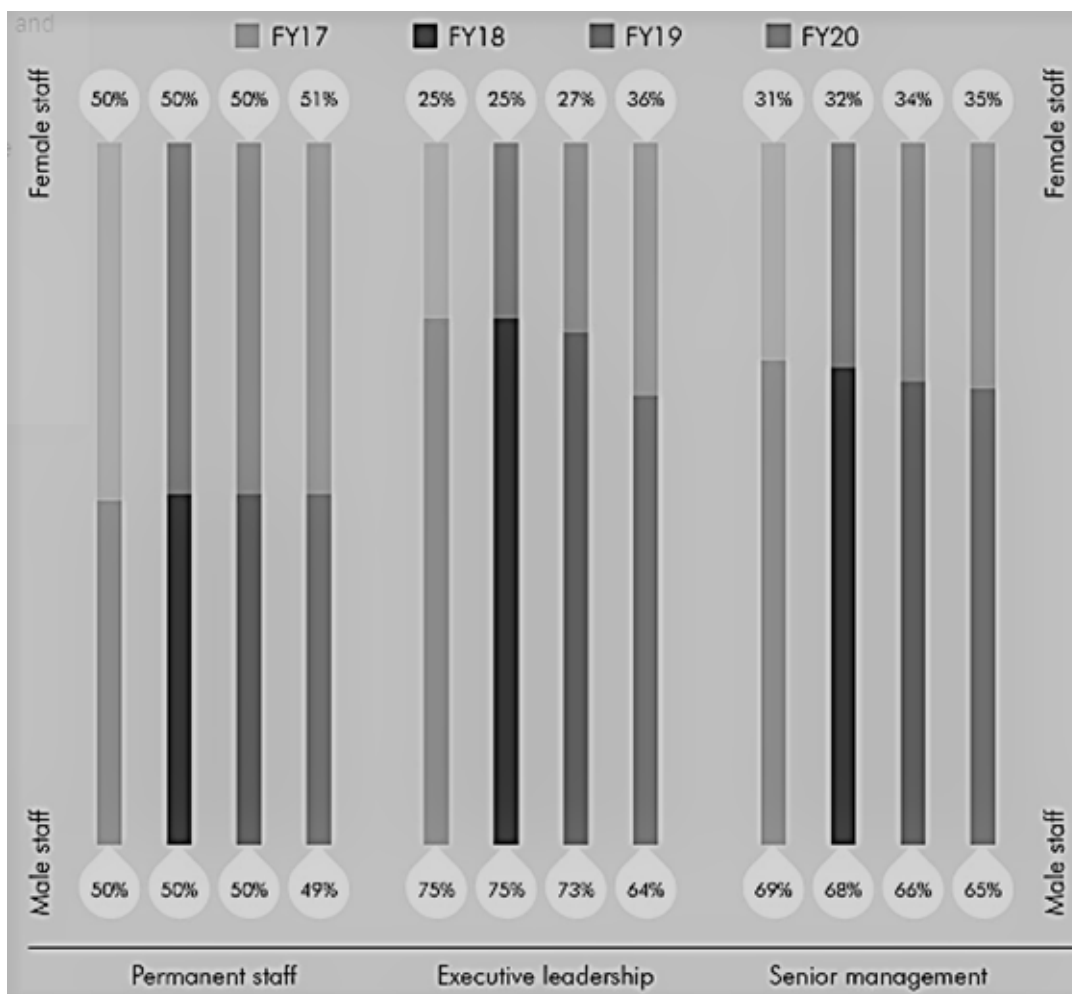Source: Safaricom reports

Figure 4.1: Graphical Representation of Safaricom Employees by Gender

Source: Safaricom reports

The study probed to establish the diversity of employees at Safaricom in terms of ethnicity. The study noted that employees at Safaricom were drawn from different ethnic groups. It emerged that the hiring practices within the firm considered ethnic balance. Having an ethnically diverse workforce is an important factor in an organization. This allows different groups including the marginalized ones to be included in the workforce.

The diversity of employees at Safaricom Plc in terms of the level of education was analyzed. The findings were that employees at Safaricom were hired based on their level of education. The study noted that while some of the employees especially in senior management positions had master's degrees, others had undergraduate degrees, diplomas as well as certificates. The level of education is a strong predictor of the general knowledge and expertise of the employees which illustrates the level of competence of the professional.

The diversity of the employees at Safaricom Plc in terms of socio-economic background Plc was examined. The findings showed that at Safaricom, employees were hired from different social and economic backgrounds. The fact that different ethnicities have different social practices meant that the staff in place are also diverse in terms of social backgrounds. The economic backgrounds were largely informed by the academic courses and programs undertaken by the employees. Some had specialized in business courses while specialists in science and technology-oriented courses.

4.4 Employee Diversity Management

The study sought to establish if employee diversity management was practiced at Safaricom Plc. The findings showed that efforts were in place at Safaricom of employee diversity management. The study observed that employee diversity management at Safaricom started with the hiring process, where the emphasis was placed on ensuring that new employees have relevant personal

specifications. During the hiring process, the study established that emphasis was on ensuring that all the ethnic groups in Kenya have been represented. The company allowed employees from different cultural backgrounds to work together as they remained innovative and creative.

The study noted that Safaricom was committed to ensuring there is 50:50 gender parity at the senior management by the year 2025. As of the year 2020, the study observed that representation of women in senior managerial positions stood at 35% while that of executive leadership was at 36%. It emerged that Safaricom was guided by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) when it came to concerns about diversity management. This is the key force that informed considerations about persons with disabilities (PWDs) and women in senior management and leadership positions at Safaricom as critical components of employee diversity management. Table 4.3 gives a breakdown of the PWDs at Safaricom as an aspect of workforce diversity.

Table 4.3: Supporting PWDs at Safaricom

	Target 2025	FY20	FY19	FY18	FY17
Persons living with disabilities	5%	2.3%	2.1%	1.7%	1.4%

Source: Safaricom reports

4.5 Policy on Workforce Diversity Management

The study sought to establish if Safaricom had a policy on workforce diversity management. The findings showed that there existed a policy about workforce diversity management at Safaricom. The study established that this workforce diversity management policy specified the relevant steps that need to be taken to have in place a diverse workforce. The study noted that the workforce diversity management policy was well aligned with the strategic goals at Safaricom. This policy was regularly reviewed in light of the changing environment that Safaricom operates from. The

study acknowledged that all the functions and departments at Safaricom were required to adhere to the established policy on workforce diversity. The relevant workforce diversity practices noted at Safaricom include the women in the leadership program and hiring of staff from diverse backgrounds.

4.6 Reactions towards Discrimination at the Workplace

Several aspects of workplace discrimination were established and respondents were asked to indicate how Safaricom reacted towards each of them. The first aspect was about the sexual orientation of the employees. The study acknowledged the fact that Safaricom was committed to being a world-class employer and aims at promoting equal opportunity employment. As such, discrimination on the sexual orientation of the employees was taken seriously by the management. The study established that the company hired and retained employees from different religious affiliations and no discrimination existed in this regard.

The differences in age of employees at Safaricom provided an opportunity for continuous learning that was needed to come up with an innovative and creative workforce. Gender diversity was utilized to support the learning activities in the company. Employees were not allowed to discriminate against each other based on their gender. Teamwork was highly encouraged between different genders of employees in the company. Education, social backgrounds, and political affiliations of employees were appreciated and no discrimination was permitted in any of these regards.

4.7 Employment Practices at Safaricom

The study sought to establish the reasons why Safaricom management should deliberately target marginalized groups or religions in its employment practices. Respondents noted that the

marginalized groups in Kenya were targeted in the recruitment practices at Safaricom. This was informed by its strategic goal of emerging as a world-class employer. Being a strong proponent of sustainability practices as established in the SDGs, the need to target staff from marginalized groups was evident at Safaricom.

4.8 Budgetary Allocation for Diversity Management

The study sought to establish whether Safaricom management had a budgetary allocation for diversity management activities. The study observed that the management of Safaricom appreciated the need for diversity management and this was demonstrated through resource allocation. The study observed that to establish a diverse team, training employees in different areas was critical. This was a fact that management gave a lot of consideration and thus allocated adequate funds towards training of employees. Table 4.4 gives a breakdown of the investment in employee training as a way of creating a diverse workforce at Safaricom.

Table 4.4: Budgetary Allocation towards Employee Training at Safaricom

	FY20	FY19	FY18	FY17
Investment in staff training (KSh million)	273	310	298.7	298.7
Percentage of staff attending training	81%	83%	83%	79%

Source: Safaricom reports

4.9 Evaluation of Diversity Management

The study sought to establish whether Safaricom periodically evaluated how well it was doing in its diversity management. Respondents said that regular surveys were conducted to rank the performance of the company in terms of diversity management. One of these surveys was the SEMA Survey. For instance, in 2020, diversity and inclusion at Safaricom were rated at 83% by this SEMA Survey. Additionally, periodic reviews were done, mostly on annual basis to compare

the established targets like gender parity and representation of PWDs in employment against actual results.

4.10 Discussion

This study was set out to establish the importance of factors considered in the management of workforce diversity at Safaricom Kenya. The study established that at Safaricom Kenya, gender diversity is highly practiced. Female employees were encouraged to take up executive leadership and senior management positions. The importance of this was the fact that it promoted gender equality and inequality besides being well aligned with the Constitutional requirements in Kenya. These findings are supported by Jepchirchir (2015) conducted a study whose focus was on determining the challenges as far as management of diversity at the place of work is concerned where it was shown that policies concerning disability mainstreaming and gender were in place. Kioko (2014) noted that gender balance received consideration in the organization. Among listed entities in Zimbabwe, Dube and Guvheya (2017) sought to bring out the factors with an influence on the diversity of the employees where the salient factors noted by the study include gender. Dastane and Eshegbe (2015) focused on the elements of diversity at the place of work and the degree of satisfaction among staff towards diversity and established that employees are satisfied with gender as the key factor of diversity in their organization.

The study acknowledged the fact that PWDs were considered in the recruitment practices at Safaricom. The importance of this was that it showed the commitment of the company towards the realization of SDGs. This also improved the reputation of the company as an equal opportunity employer. This finding is in line with Ayub, Aslam, and Razzaq (2013) who established that capabilities relate to concerns about engaging staff with disabilities at the workplace and that this is important since it enables an organization to match individuals with a disability with the tasks

that they can effectively carry out. The study established that there was an established diversity management policy at Safaricom. This policy guided all the efforts aimed at creating a diverse workforce at Safaricom. It stated the targets that need to be realized within a specified timeframe concerning workforce diversity. These findings are supported by Jepchirchir (2015) who noted that the existence of policies about gender, mainstreaming of concerns about disability, training are important when it comes to the top management of diversity at the place of work.

It was established that the employment practices seriously considered issues on workforce diversity. The study established that the recruitment practices at Safaricom allowed the company to deliberately target potential applicants from marginalized groups. This was an important step towards improving the reputation of the company. These findings are strongly supported by Yegon, Kahara, and Okibo (2014) who argue that the begging point in the management of workforce diversity is recruitment and selection processes. Ideally, it is at the hiring stage that an organization can establish a diverse team. At the same time, the prevailing culture in an organization plays an important role in creating a diverse workforce. Similarly, Ali, Mathuva, and Mwenda (2019) said that recruitment and selection is an important consideration when it comes to the management of diversity at the workplace. The findings were that the top management allocated funds towards diversity practices at Safaricom. The importance of this was that it allowed the company to invest in training programs for employees so that they gain diverse experience and exposure that is needed for the competitive advantage of the company.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The section provides a summary of the analyzed findings with a conclusion and recommendations. The limitations and areas requiring further research are also pointed out.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

This study was set out to establish the importance of factors considered in the management of workforce diversity at Safaricom Kenya. The study established that at Safaricom Kenya, gender diversity is highly practiced. Female employees were encouraged to take up executive leadership and senior management positions. The importance of this was the fact that it promoted gender equality and inequality besides being well aligned with the Constitutional requirements in Kenya. The study acknowledged the fact that PWDs were considered in the recruitment practices at Safaricom. The importance of this was that it showed the commitment of the company towards the realization of SDGs. This also improved the reputation of the company as an equal opportunity employer.

The study established that there was an established diversity management policy at Safaricom. This policy guided all the efforts aimed at creating a diverse workforce at Safaricom. It stated the targets that need to be realized within a specified timeframe concerning workforce diversity. It was established that the employment practices seriously considered issues on workforce diversity. The study established that the recruitment practices at Safaricom allowed the company to deliberately target potential applicants from marginalized groups. This was an important step towards improving the reputation of the company. The findings were that the top management

allocated funds towards diversity practices at Safaricom. The importance of this was that it allowed the company to invest in training programs for employees so that they gain diverse experience and exposure that is needed for the competitive advantage of the company.

5.3 Conclusion

Workforce diversity is a strategic tool that supports the survival of the enterprise. For the firm to attract a broader pool of talents, a culture of workforce diversity is paramount. Promoting workforce diversity results in an enhancement in the reputation of the firm while promoting compliance with laws regarding discrimination while establishing a multicultural work environment. Management of workforce diversity improves the reputation of the firm while helping the firm to emerge as an equal opportunity employer.

An array of factors needs to be considered when managing workforce diversity. These include gender differences, sexual orientations, and employee capabilities including PWDs as well as employment practices. Having in place a policy regarding employee diversity is an important step that can allow the organization to develop a diverse working environment. The management needs to set aside an adequate budget to successfully implement diversity policy. To be effective, the progress made by an organization about workplace diversity should be reviewed periodically.

5.4 Recommendations for Management and Policy

To achieve the 50-50 gender parity by 2025, the top managers at Safaricom Kenya should promote more women to leadership positions. The management team at Safaricom including the Finance Managers should allocate adequate funds towards diversity programs in place. The HR managers at Safaricom should strictly adhere to the corporate diversity policy in the hiring and recruitment processes.

The policymakers at Safaricom should carry out a regular review of the existing policies concerning workplace diversity so that they are aligned with the strategic goals. The policymakers at the Communication Authority of Kenya (CAK) should enforce relevant policies that obligate telecommunication firms like Safaricom to comply with employee diversity.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

The present study adopted a case study approach, where only a single firm Safaricom was involved. This limited the scope of the study as it may be hard to generalize the findings to the rest of the telecommunication firms. From the 3 respondents that were targeted, only 2 have out their responses which provides a further limitation of the study. Given the fact that no scientific method was adopted for sampling, this limits the generalization of the findings.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

Future studies should be conducted focusing on all the telecommunication firms in Kenya. Additionally, the focus of future studies should be on non-telecommunication firms like commercial banks. This will provide room for a comparison of the findings. It will generate an adequate sample size that can permit robust generalization of the findings of the study. Future studies can be conducted regarding diversity and the implication on constructs like employee engagement.

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APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What is the total number of employees at Safaricom PLC?

....

2 . How diversified are Safaricom employees in terms of the following

    i.   Age   ……………………………………………………………

    ii.   Gender   …………………………………………………………….

    iii.   Ethnicity   ……………………………………………………………………

    iv.   Levels of education   …………………………………………………………….

    v.   Socio-Economic background ……………………………………………………..

3. Is employee diversity management practiced at Safaricom?

…………………………………………………………

4. Does the company have a policy on workforce diversity management?

…………………………………………………………….

5. If the answer to item 4 is yes. What are the key practices?

    i.   ……………………………

    ii.   ………………………..

    iii.   ………………………

    iv.   ……………………….

    v.   ………………………..

6. If such a policy is not in place, does Safaricom management give importance to workforce diversity and the need to manage it?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

7. How is discrimination based on each of the following viewed at Safaricom?

   i.   Sexual orientation …………………………

  ii.   Religious Belief………………………………….

 iii.   Age differences……………………………………………

 iv.   Gender………………………………………………………..

  v.   Education………………………………………………………

 vi.   Social background……………………………………………….

 vii.   Political affiliation……………………………………………….

8. What reasons would you give for Safaricom management deliberately target marginalized groups or religions in its employment practices?..

9. Does Safaricom management have a budgetary allocation for diversity management activities?..

10. Does Safaricom deliberately target marginalized groups or religions in its employment practices?...

11. Does Safaricom mount diversity awareness and appreciation training programs for its employees?...

12. Does Safaricom periodically evaluate how well it is doing in its diversity management?

…………………………………………………………………………………

END