

WORKPLACE DIVERSITY AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN AN ORGANISATION. A CASE STUDY OF RUKUNGIRI TOWN COUNCIL, RUKUNGIRI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This research report study aimed to investigate the “impact of workplace diversity on employee performance in an organisation. a case study of Rukungiri town council, Rukungiri district”. Questionnaires were used to collect data under a case study research design. Qualitative and quantitative means were used to analyze the data. The objectives of the study used were; To establish the effect of internal work place diversity dimension on performance of public organizations in Rukungiri town council, to examine the effect of educational background on employee performance in Rukungiri town council, to establish the relationship between customer satisfaction and employee performance in Rukungiri town council. The study sampled 38 respondents because it is large enough compared to the study population, the respondents were selected using simple purposive sampling method, it was important because it gave the researcher freedom to select certain respondents with in-depth knowledge regarding the issue under investigation. In their response as to whether internal work place diversity like age, gender increased employee satisfaction and fosters better positive attitudes and behaviours, 53% of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement, 26% to agreed, 9% remained undecided, while 5% disagreed and 9% strongly disagreed. This was an indication that most employees in the public sectors were in agreement that age and gender increased employee satisfaction and fosters positive attitude and behaviours. There is also need for an extensive training to be carried out among the managers not only in the human resource department but across the ministries. This is because the management has a significant role that they need to play in incorporating diversity management.

Key words: workplace diversity, employees, performance and organisations

Background of the study

Globally, the globalization of business and the changing demographics of labor markets around the world have driven much interest in the areas of diversity and diversity management (DM) among management scholars and practitioners (Faridah et al., 2023). As an important part of promoting justice and fairness in

the workplace, work place diversity has therefore emerged as a core strategic value that many organizations believe they have obligation to pursue (Isaac et al., 2023). According to (W. Paul & Kazaara, 2023), failure to manage diversity in terms of race, gender, level of education, profession, and ethnic affiliation, religious affiliation

often leads to differences in promotions, pay, training, turnover, mutual acceptance, job satisfaction and other forms of inequality (Alex & Kazaara, 2023). Work place diversity in organizations is concerned with the different abilities each employee brings into the organization. Successful organizations have been shown

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to be ready to use vast resources just to ensure they have managed diversity at their workplaces. In the last 50 years, diversity has been approached as legality in countries like the US, where organizations were prohibited by law to discriminate any person on any basis (Kazaara & Kazaara, 2023). However, in the recent years, organizations have realized that work place diversity is not just a legal issue, but a concept that must be embraced in any organization for it to run successfully (Moses et al., 2022).

According to (Ntirandekura & Christopher, 2022), diversity management has been characterized as a component of human resource management and the policies and programs that make up the diversity management function vary significantly between organizations, involving training programs, family-friendly policies, mentoring opportunities, and advocacy groups (Rashid et al., 2023). Therefore, it's for this reason that this research seeks to

establish the influence of work place diversity management on employees' performance (Christopher, Moses, Muhindo, & Muhammad, 2022). In Rukungiri, Workplace diversity has grown by leaps and bounds in recent decades because of the definite growth in globalization (Ramadhan et al., 2023). Inevitably places of work have come to represent and mirror the same cosmopolitan mix of the people who work in Rukungiri town council. The interesting mix of employees in terms of race, nationality, gender, languages, religion, cultural backgrounds and languages has gained prominence in recent times (Winny et al., 2023). Employers are very cognizant of this fact and have therefore ensured that their policies and practices take into consideration the cultural diversity at their work places. It is for this reason therefore that deliberate moves have been made to accommodate staff from all walks of life and to try and forge a truly unique new workplace culture (Ninsiima et al., 2023).

Problem Statement

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Work place diversity is considered one of the main challenges for human resource management in modern organizations (Ntirandekura et al., 2022). Work place diversity is a complex phenomenon to manage in an organization. The management of work place diversity as a tool to increase organizational effectiveness cannot be underscored, especially with current changes sweeping across the globe. (Brighton et al., 2023) indicates some of the consequences of ignoring diversity in an organization is unhealthy tensions between individuals of different culture or race, loss of productivity as a result in increased conflict and inability to retain talented employees. He further adds that good management alone does not

necessarily ensure good diversity management (Christopher, Moses, Muhindo, & Nturanabo, 2022). Several managers in organization have always thought being good managers or bosses sets the example of creating friendliness in the office (Francis et al., 2023). As a result, poor diversity management has been tolerated in the office, without the management knowing the core problem and consequently, no solution has been formulated. However, a number of research studies have been conducted in Uganda's public sector on work diversity management in relation to organizational performance. However, none of these has focused on the effect of work place diversity on employee performance (Moses, 2022) addressed the issue of work

place diversity practices. The two studies were conducted in the banking industry (private sector). None of the above studies focused on work place diversity in the public institutions (Richard, 2022). Therefore, this study seeks to establish the work place diversity and employee performance in Rukungiri district. Diversity will increase significantly in the coming years, and successful organizations recognize the need for immediate action and are ready and willing to spend resources on managing diversity in the workplace now (Emmanuel et al., 2023). It is in this context that the study will be conducted to examine the work place diversity dimension Rukungiri town council.

Specific Objectives

1. To establish the effect of internal work place diversity dimension on performance of public organizations in Rukungiri town council.
2. To examine the effect of educational background on employee performance in Rukungiri town council.
3. To establish the relationship between customer satisfaction and employee performance in Rukungiri town council.

Methodology

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Research design

The study adopted descriptive research design. This design was chosen to help describe employee performance in relation to workplace diversity by considering the case study at Rukungiri Town Council. Robson (2002) points out that descriptive study portrays an accurate profile of persons, events or situation. The descriptive design helped to obtain information concerning the current state at Rukungiri Town Council while describing, “what existed” with respect to different conditions or variables. The independent variables that guided the research design were educational background, gender diversity, marital status and age diversity on employees’ performance. The study determined the workplace diversity and employee performance in Rukungiri Town council, Rukungiri district. Based on an association between the variables, a valid conclusion was derived to show a cause and effect.

Target Population

Population refers to the entire group of people, events, or things that the researcher wishes to investigate (Sekaran, 2003). The target population for this research was Rukungiri town council and the respondents were employees/staff from all the departments. The respondents at Rukungiri Town council were made up of 6 senior and management staff, making up 15% of the staff, 8 supervisory management staff which was 21% of the staff and 24 general staff, about 63% of all the staff. Since the population was small, a census study was adopted and the entire population of staff was considered for the study. According to (Cooper & Schindler, 2007) a census is feasible when the population is small and necessary when the elements are quite different from each other. Therefore, a census study was deemed appropriate for study since the sampling frame was small; thus, all the 38 managerial, supervisory and general staff at Rukungiri Town Council were considered for the study.

Table 1: Sample size of the respondents

Category	Sampling frame	Percentage
Senior and middle management	6	15%
Supervisory management	8	21%
General staff	24	63%
Total	38	100%

Source; Primary data, 2022

Data collection method

Data collection refers to the methodology and the instruments that the researcher will use during the data collection process (Kothari, 2004). Data collection methods are an integral part of research design which involves selection of both primary and secondary data collections methods. The study used questionnaire survey (Self-administered questionnaire), interview method (interview guide/schedule). Questionnaires were used to collect data from general staff while interviews were used to collect data from senior and middle management and supervisory management.

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Data collection instruments

Questionnaire: A questionnaire is a set of questions used to gather information in a survey. It has a technique designed for collecting primary data by eliciting written responses from the subject and was by self-administered questionnaires. Therefore, administering of questionnaire was a method while questionnaires were instruments to be employed. The method of survey using questionnaire was deemed appropriate since part of the questionnaire provided respondents a choice of picking their answers from a given set of alternatives while the other part of the questionnaire allowed them to qualify their responses (Amin, 2005). Questionnaires were advantageous since they can sample many people all at once. Self-administered questionnaires were advantageous because it answered anonymously; this means that sensitive and personal questions were more likely to be answered.

Interview Guide: This was used to collect primary data from senior and middle management and supervisory management. It involved the use of a semi-structured interview schedule/guide as an instrument while interviewing was a method. The method of interview using interview guide was deemed appropriate since the mentioned categories of respondents had vital information yet may fail to get enough time to fill in questionnaires (Sekaran, 2003).

Data analysis

This study produced both quantitative and qualitative data. Once the questionnaires were received, they were coded and edited for completeness and consistency. Quantitative data was analyzed by employing descriptive statistics and inferential analysis using statistical package for social science (SPSS) (Nelson et al., 2022). This technique gave simple summaries about the sample data and presents quantitative descriptions in a manageable form, Gupta (2004). Together with simple graphics analysis, descriptive statistics form the basis of virtually every quantitative analysis to data, Kothari (2004). The data was presented using frequency distribution tables, bar charts and pie charts for easier understanding.

RESULTS

Table 1: Effect of internal work place diversity dimension on performance

Statement	F	SA	F	A	F	NS	F	D	F	SD
Increases employee satisfaction and fosters better positive attitudes and behaviours.	20	53%	10	26%	3	9%	2	5%	3	9%
Creates better decision making through combining diverse groups and thinkers.	18	47%	12	32%	6	16%	2	5%		
Creates richer flow of ideas thus	25	66%	10	26%	3	5%			1	3%

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has a potential to increase creativity and innovation which can improve organizational financial performance.										
Leads to poor communication and reduced teamwork thus creating conflicts leading to people quitting their jobs which affects the performance of the organisation.	10	26%	20	53%	4	11%	2	5%	2	5%

Source; Primary data, 2022

In their response as to whether internal work place diversity like age, gender increased employee satisfaction and fosters better positive attitudes and behaviours, 53% of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement, 26% to agreed, 9% remained undecided, while 5% disagreed and 9% strongly disagree (Polycarp et al., 2023). This is an indication that most employees in the public sectors are in agreement that age and gender increased employee satisfaction and fosters positive attitude and behaviours (Brighton et al., 2023).

On better decision making, 47% strongly agreed that internal work place diversity helps in decision making, 32% to agreed, while 16 % were undecided and 5% disagreed. This shows that as employees work with people of different age and gender, they feel more confident in decision making through combining diverse groups and thinkers (Isaac et al., 2023). This may be due to the fact that internal workplace diversity among the employees promotes collaboration and team work which is good for improving employee performance.

In terms of richer flow of ideas, 66% of the respondents strongly agreed, 26% agreed, 5% were undecided while 3% disagreed that internal workplace diversity creates richer flow of idea thus has a potential to increase creativity and innovation which can improve organizational financial performance. This implies that richer flow of ideas has been enabled with the age and gender as indicators of internal work place diversity (K. Paul et al., 2023).

26% strongly agreed that internal workplace diversity leads to poor communication and reduced teamwork, 53% agreed, 11% were indecisive and 5% disagreed that age and gender creates conflicts leading to people quitting their jobs which affects the performance of the organisation.

To establish the relationship between customer satisfaction and employee performance in Rukungiri town council.

Table 2: Satisfied customers form the foundation of any successful business

Satisfied customers form the foundation of any successful business	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	16	42%
Agree	8	21%

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Not sure	3	8%
Disagree	5	13%
Strongly disagree	6	15%
Total	38	100

Source; Primary data, 2022

According to the table 2 above majority of the respondents that is 16 (42%) strongly agreed that satisfied customers form the foundation of any successful business thus employee performance, 15% strongly disagreed, 21% agreed, 13% disagree then 8% were not sure thus this shows that a total of 63% respondents agreed that satisfied customers form the foundation of any successful business (Ansebo & Gaywala, 2022).

Summary of the findings

Employees at Rukungiri town council were educated with the highest qualification being at Masters Level and the lowest at certificate level. Majority of staff possessed degrees, diplomas and certificates with only 2% having the certificate. About 72% of employees had the perception that the level of education of an individual had a direct influence on their work output. They would further indicate that education was an important aspect in developing an individual's skill set that would make them better at the workplace in terms of productivity (W. Paul & Kazaara, 2023). A cumulative 92% of staff indicated that productivity of employees was enhanced by the level of education of an individual. A representation of 8% employees did not feel convinced that more educated employees would perform their jobs better than them. This could be attributed to them believing that experience also contributed more towards productivity than just education. On the other hand, when asked whether less educated employees had productivity equal to those of their more educated counterparts (Victoria et al., 2023), 77% did not believe that their lesser educated colleagues could match their productivity. More educated employees believed that their work experience complemented with their higher level of education gave them a better competitive edge with regards to productivity (Brighton et al., 2023).

About 72% of employees had the perception that trainings offered at the workplace improved their ability to achieve their goals, targets and thereby improving their productivity. This was a result of gaining additional skills that were job related, enabling them perform their duties more effectively. 8% of employees however did not believe that training at the workplace would bring an effect if the skills being trained were not being applied at the current position held by the employee, or department they were working at the time (Lydia et al., 2023).

Better employee performance can be achieved when employees are allocated tasks or duties, they have most knowledge or experience in. At Rukungiri town council however, only 45% of employees believe that jobs are assigned according to employee skills, training or education. 32% did not think that allocation of tasks was based on individual's skills or training. This is an indication that other factors were considered when majority of employees were allocated roles within the organization (Emily et al., 2023).

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Only 36% of employees believed that skills attained in college did influence the quality of work at the workplace. 42% did not believe that skills attained in college enhanced their performance. Most of the employees did not necessarily have the skills directly related to the jobs they were holding or tasks they were working on. Therefore, the skills attained in college would be irrelevant in their current positions, and would not enhance performance (Christopher, Moses, Muhindo, & Komunda, 2022).

On overall, 82% of staff had the perception that education did play an important role in influencing performance. The reported effect of education on performance varied from a small extent to a very great extent in different employees (Alex & Kazaara, 2023).

On internal work place diversity dimension on performance of public organizations

Rukungiri town council was found to be an organization keen on gender equality. The number of women was at 47% with that of men slightly higher at 53%. Positions in the organizations are also equally shared among all genders. While a male holds the executive and senior position, there are also women holding the managerial positions as well (Oliver et al., 2023). At the entry level, gender equality has also been practiced with 49% of staff being female employees. In general, majority of employees had the perception that observing gender diversity at the workplace had an impact on their performance. They stated that this influence existed at different levels ranging from a small extent, a moderate extent, great extent and to a very great extent. Overall perception of gender diversity indicated that 92% of staff believed that gender diversity played an important role in influencing the performance of employees at Rukungiri town council (Ronet et al., 2023).

Conclusions

On better decision making, 47% strongly agreed that internal work place diversity helps in decision making, 32% to agreed, while 16 % were undecided and 5% disagreed. This shows that as employees work with people of different age and gender, they feel more confident in decision making through combining diverse groups and thinkers (Crystal, 2014). This may be due to the fact that internal workplace diversity among the employees promotes collaboration and team work which is good for improving employee performance.

Recommendations

As it has been observed from the findings and conclusions, workforce diversity management has a positive influence on the performance of employees. However, the influence is not being experienced by all the employees. As such, there is need for more awareness to be created in the government ministries on the workforce diversity management and the role that it plays in improving the performance of employees. Creating the awareness may to some extent improve the participation of all the employees in embracing diversity among the employees and thus being able to experience its goodness in their day-to-day work.

There is also need for an extensive training to be carried out among the managers not only in the human resource department but across the ministries. This is because the management has a significant role that they need to play in

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incorporating diversity management. The training can be provided through workshops or seminars that can be organized in different areas or within the ministries.

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