

Managing Workplace Diversity:A Kenyan Pespective

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Abstract

Workplace diversity is a must have for all organizations in a country incase they want to have social, economic and political gains.Diversity is generally said to mean acknowledging, understanding, accepting, valuing and celebrating differences among people with respect to age, class, ethnicity, gender, physical and mental ability, race, sexual orientation, spiritual orientation and public assistance status (Esty, Griffin, and Schorr-Hirsh, 1995). By managing diversity, companies interact with different cultures and clients. It increases creativity, productivity, new attitudes, new language skills, global understanding, new processes, and new solutions to difficult problems. Greater agility, better market insight, stronger customer and community loyalty, innovation, and improved employee recruitment and retention. The businesses that fail to see the importance of diversity and inclusion might find themselves unable to attract and retain the kinds of customers, employees, and business partners that will be a requisite in the International Human Resource Management era that we are headed to in the future.

It is because of this reasons that this literature was put together in a comprehensive way so as to let all the human resources, management, public and government leaders read and understand the importance of managing diversity at workplace.

Key Words: managing workplace diversity, organizational development

1.0 Introduction

The human capital is one of the most important factors for any organization since it forms the engine that drives that organization. As the organization seeks to achieve its objectives, it requires people to manage or run the other factors of production.

It is important for any organization therefore to have in place the right persons with the correct professional, academic and social skills for the various functions that have to be fulfilled. For this to be attained, it is critical that the organization taps from a wide pool of 'source' not restricting itself to a particular group of people. This means that individuals are likely to be drawn from different 'sources'- geographical, social cultural and political. This means that an organization is likely to have people from different socio-cultural and political backgrounds-bearing the inevitable differences in ethnicity, religion, race, gender, size, personalities, physical abilities, age, and sexual orientation (global perspective). Since an organization hires individuals, it is important to note that these individuals are unique and may bear their own set of differentiating qualities from those mentioned. This means that the age old misconception that diversity only applies to ethnic differences is misplaced, although it forms the biggest part of diversity in places of multicultural pool of human capital such as the one in Kenya.

Companies need to focus on diversity and look for ways to become totally inclusive organizations because diversity has the potential of yielding greater productivity and competitive advantages (Strategic Human Resource Management, 1995). Diversity is an invaluable competitive asset that any organization cannot afford to ignore (Robinson, 2002). Managing and valuing diversity is a key component of effective people management, which can improve workplace productivity (Black Enterprise, 2001).

Globalization, migration, initiatives for social justice, and other developments have made the representation of diverse groups and relations among them an important issue for organizations in many nations and Kenya is no exception. Diversity management is a process intended to create and maintain a positive work environment where the similarities and differences of individuals are valued. The literature on diversity management has mostly emphasized on organization culture; its impact on diversity openness; human resource management practices; institutional environments and organizational contexts to diversity-related pressures, expectations, requirements and incentives; perceived practices and organizational outcomes related to managing employee diversity.

One of the most important management issues to emerge over the last thirty years has been the increasing diversity of the workforce, Jones and George (2011). Diversity raises important ethical and social responsibility issues. There are several reasons why diversity is such a pressing concern according to Jones and George (ibid.). There is a strong ethical imperative that diverse people receive equal opportunities and be treated fairly and justly. Unfair treatment is also illegal. Effectively managing diversity can improve organizational effectiveness. Diversity is an important organizational resource that can help an organization gain a competitive advantage. There is substantial evidence that diverse individuals continue to experience unfair treatment in the workplace as a result of biases, stereotypes and overt discrimination.

1.2 What is diversity?

The world's increasing globalization requires more interaction among people from diverse cultures, beliefs and backgrounds than ever before. The society no longer works nor lives in an island; people are now part of the worldwide economy with competition coming from all over the continents. It is because of this reason that profit making, governments and non-profit making organizations need to embrace diversity so as to become more innovative and open to change. Embracing, maximizing and capitalizing on workplace diversity has become an important asset for management today.

Diversity plainly means difference. Diversity has to do with recognizing that everyone is different in a variety of visible and non-visible ways (The Law Society of Scotland, 2013). Diversity has to do with recognizing individual as well as group differences. It is about creating a culture and practices that recognize, respect and value difference. Diversity calls for connecting this potential to create a productive environment in which the equally diverse needs of the customer or client can be met in a creative environment. It is about generating a workforce that feels valued and respected and has its potential fully utilized in order to meet organizational goals (The Law Society of Scotland, 2013). Diversity is not an initiative or a project but it is an ongoing core aim and a core process.

After knowing that diversity is a very essential factor in any organization, then every person should understand what it is. Diversity is generally said to mean acknowledging, understanding, accepting, valuing and celebrating differences among people with respect to age, class, ethnicity, gender, physical and mental ability, race, sexual orientation, spiritual orientation and public assistance status (Esty, Griffin and Schorr-Hirsh, 1995).

According to Dessler (2011) diversity refers to the variety or multiplicity of demographic features that characterize a company's workforce, particularly in terms of race, sex, culture, national origin, handicap, age and religion. According to Jones and George (2011), diversity is differences among people in age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, and capabilities/disabilities.

From all these definitions, it is clear that diversity at the workplace has to do with tolerance of the different unique aspects of individuals within an organization, exploiting their target inputs for the organization's and personal benefit in a positive way.

In the past, employers had been said to ignore certain differences such as background, personality and work style. However; individual and group diversity needs to be considered in order to ensure that everybody's needs and requirements are understood and responded to within the employment practices and service design and delivery. In the present, the organizations have responded to the issue of diversity through the development of flexibility in working practices and services, such as, an employer may allow an employee to work a flexible working pattern to accommodate for example breast feeding mothers take care of their babies as they work. These approaches are good because they recognize that in order to provide accessible services to the customers and to ensure an organization promotes inclusive working environment to its employees, organizations may need to respond differently to both individuals and to the groups needs.

According to Cole and Kelly (2011), two general approaches to defining workforce diversity seem to dominate: The first, the narrow view, defines workforce diversity only as a term related to equal employment opportunity. The narrow view typically adopts categories of race, colour, religion, sex and national origin. The second argues that workforce diversity is a broader concept that includes all the ways in which people can be different.

A broader definition makes use of additional categories such as teaching, education, sexual orientation and differences in values, abilities, organizational function, tenure and personality. Taking a broader view, diversity management initiatives attempt to maximize the potential of all employees in direct benefit to the organization. Consequently, the best employees are recruited, resulting in greater profits and job security.

In a nut shell we can say that managing diversity has to do with maximizing diversity's potential benefits for instance, greater cultural awareness and broader language skills while at the same time minimizing the potential barriers such as prejudices and bias that can undermine the company's performance (O'Leary and Weathington, 2006) cited in (Dessler, 2011).

1.3 Steps to follow in managing workplace diversity

Having now known that diversity in the workplace involve bringing people together who have different backgrounds, religions and age groups into a cohesive and productive unit; advances in communication technology, such as the Internet and cellular phones, have made the marketplace even a more global concept. In order to survive, a company needs to be able to manage and utilize its diverse workplace effectively. Managing diversity in the workplace should be a part of the culture of the entire organization. This process of managing diversity is an on-going process that unleashes the various talents and capabilities which a diverse population bring to an organization, community or society, so as to create a wholesome, inclusive environment, that is "safe for differences," enables people to "reject rejection," celebrates diversity, and maximizes the full potential of all, in a cultural context where everyone benefits (Rosado, 2006).

By managing diversity at the workplace, organizations create an inclusive and harmonious environment which enhances good reputation of the organization with people seeking jobs hence able to attract the best workers in the market. The employees feel valued, rewarded and motivated while working in an organization that manage diversity. According to a research done worldwide three million employees indicated that diversity brings about satisfaction and organizational performance. It was also found out that creating an inclusive and harmonious environment was a key driver in employee engagement and commitment. Managing diversity creates greater employee engagement which at the end leads to reduced labor turnover. The following are steps on how to manage diversity in a workplace:-

Step I – Develop a recruitment strategy that stresses on the need for diversification. As an organization, develop policies and guidelines for staff conduct and ensure that each staff member has a copy. Include the channels and procedures for grievances and ensure confidentiality for everyone. Ensure that the rules and guidelines are fair and transparent and apply to all staff, including the management.

Step II - Train recruitment personnel. This will make them experts in diversification matters. Provide them with the skills to analyze the current workforce and fill skills gaps. Ensure that candidates are chosen solely because they are the best fits for the jobs, and for no other reason.

Step III - Model good behavior and enforce cultural sensitivity management training and appropriate conflict management training for management staff. An effective training program will first have management staff analyze their own diverse backgrounds and how they may have shaped prejudices that could affect the work place.

Step IV - Invest in cultural sensitivity training for all staff to facilitate better communication and promote tolerance. A good training program is one that staffs consider a positive experience and one that avoids using an accusatory tone. Teams are more successful when all members appreciate the value in diverse skills, education and experience.

Step V - Seek periodic feedback from staff and management in the form of a questionnaire or staff survey. Analyze and communicate the results to staff, identifying any progress made in staff satisfaction and highlight any diversity or conflict issues so that they can be addressed before they become unmanageable.

Step VI - Encourage open communication and teamwork across work functions. Horizontal communication is more relevant in business environments where social media networking platforms are causing hierarchical boundaries to disappear. Encourage employees to work together to solve problems and consider incentives and rewards for successful projects.

Step VII - Plan an annual event to break down formal barriers and improve staff morale. Retreats and informal gatherings can promote better interpersonal relationships and foster a culture of inclusiveness.

1.4 Effective Management of Diversity at Workplace

Cox (1993) states that managing diversity is the planning and the implementing of organizational systems and practices to manage people so that potential advantages of diversity are maximized while its potential disadvantage are minimized.

Diversity at the workplace is by default as the organization only needs the qualifications, skills and competencies of its workforce. It is therefore important for the organization to find amicable ways of dealing with issues that arise from it with a view of fixing, covering up or deferring the issues with as little hassle as possible. The effort therefore should be management driven from the very top all the way to the bottom, enforced in such a way that behaviour rather than attitudes is changed. This is called diversity management, and also involves the drawing of direct benefits from difference in people and their perspectives. The ultimate objective of managing these diversities is to create an organization whose culture recognizes respects and encourages individual differences.

Diversity is a set of conscious practices that involve understanding and appreciating interdependence of humanity, cultures, and the natural environment; practicing mutual respect for qualities and experiences that are different from our own; understanding that diversity includes not only ways of being but also ways of knowing; recognizing that personal, cultural, and institutionalized discrimination creates and sustains privileges for some while creating and sustaining disadvantages for others; and building alliances across differences so that we can work together to eradicate all forms of discrimination. Workplace diversity refers to the variety of differences between people in an organization. That sounds simple, but diversity encompasses race, gender, ethnic group, age, personality, cognitive style, tenure, organizational function, education, background, and more. Diversity involves not only how people perceive themselves but also how they perceive others. Those perceptions affect their interactions. For a wide assortment of employees to function effectively as an organization, human resource professionals need to deal effectively with issues such as communication, adaptability, and change.

Diversity management is a process intended to create and maintain a positive work environment where the similarities and differences of individuals are valued, so that all can reach their potential and maximize their contributions to an organization's strategic goals and objectives.

One of the tasks of managing workplace diversity is to recognize the differences among individuals and provide opportunities and means for individuals to contribute their talents to the organization. Demographics are a large component of diversity and are a contributor to increases in diversity. A way has to be worked out on how to manage older (generation X) workers and younger aged (generation Y) workers within the workforce.

There are several distinct characteristics apparent in the older aged workforce. Older aged workers are viewed as high contributors to the workforce, steadfast, and loyal to the company. According to Chordas (2007), not only are older workers generally viewed as dependable, loyal, and dedicated; they are also viewed as having a strong work ethic, solid performance record, and possessing years of working related experience. Issues pertaining to medical benefits, job security, and retirement must be addressed by organizations, to ensure that the future workforce of the organization includes both older and younger aged workers.

Gender is another contributing factor in diversity. The proportion of women entering the workforce has increased over the years. In managing gender in the workplace, applicable issues such as child/dependent care, differences in salaries, and available promotional opportunities must be addressed by organizations. One issue that is associated with women in the workplace is the glass ceiling. The glass ceiling refers to an invisible ceiling (barrier) that prevents women and minorities from obtaining promotions into higher level positions, including management (Buhler, 2002).

Increase in ethnicity has played a major role in workplace diversity management need. Individuals with physical and mental disabilities are entering the workforce. Organizations are becoming more educated on disabilities and are more accommodating to employees with disabilities. Today's employees possess higher levels of education. The educational criteria and job expectations of organizations has increased from previous years. Many organizations are seeking college educated and/or experienced workers. This is an aspect that also contributes to diversity within an organization.

Changing demographics, globalization, and legislation affect human resource management. In fact, legislation has been used as a vehicle to manage workplace diversity. Legislation has been the result of addressing issues regarding Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO). EEO protects individuals from unfair or inappropriate discrimination in the workplace. EEO regulations consist of monitoring workplace rules, policies, practices, and behaviours to warrant fairness and non-discrimination of individuals, which often results from categorization of individuals into groups. EEO groups are defined as individuals affected by past or continuing disadvantages or discrimination in employment practices. These groups include women, disabled individuals, and members of racial, ethnic, and ethno-religious minority groups.

The new constitution in Kenya provides a legal framework for combating discrimination; but beyond that, it also lays the groundwork for the positive discrimination of marginalized groups. Deriving from the constitution, a "National Cohesion and Integration Policy" was enunciated to deal with difficulties in enhancing national cohesion and integration. "The Constitution obliges the state to provide for the representation of minorities and marginalized groups in governance, and to provide access to employment and special opportunities in educational and economic fields. Effective implementation of constitutional provisions is expected to diffuse the grievances of marginalized groups" (Kenya, 2011).

Following these prescriptions, a new law was introduced requiring that one third of elective bodies should be made up of marginalized groups. Article 81(b) foresees the formulation of an act to promote the representation of women, persons with disabilities, ethnic and other marginalized groups in the Parliament. Also the Kenyan public sector is undergoing a drastic transformation to present itself as an equal and fair employer in line with the constitutional requirements. Similarly the human resource management of the public service aims to address and eliminate imbalances (Tshikwatamwa, 2003). The Kenya Public Service Commission (PSC) is the body charged with hiring and promoting all civil servants or public officers. The 2010 Constitution defines "public office" as a position in the national government, county government or the public service. The PSC is therefore in charge of all public officers apart from teachers, uniformed forces and elected officials, and carries out its mandate in collaboration with the human resource managers in each of the 42 government ministries. According to the audit report of the civil service by the National Cohesion and Integration Commission, over 50% of Kenya's ethnic groups are only marginally represented; only 20 out of the listed 42 Kenyan communities are statistically visible, with some 23 having less than 1% presence in the civil service. This makes clear how some communities have obtained a privileged position whilst others have been excluded from development.

The Public Service Commission, in collaboration with HRMs, have come up with new guidelines and approaches to realizing the one third rule for women and ethnic groups, within which all the counties are given a set of seats of their own. Recruitment practices into top positions in the civil service now follow the marginalization and gender rule, so that the situation is improving step by step.

Human Resource Managers are key players in exercising positive action by recruiting individuals from historically disadvantaged groups, specifically women and certain marginalized ethnic groups, into the public service sector. The effective management of diversity is defined as ‘a holistic approach to creating a corporate environment that allows all kinds of people to reach their full potential in pursuit of corporate objectives’ (Thomas, 1991, in Lange, Boshoff and Vermeulen, 1996)

As described by Kandola and Fullerton (1998) cited in Armstrong (2006), the basic concept of managing diversity accepts that the workforce consists of a diverse population of people. The diversity consists of visible and non – visible differences which will include factors such as sex, age, background, race, disability, personality and workplace covers all kinds of difference that go beyond the traditional understanding of what equal opportunity is about.

They use the acronym MOSAIC to describe the characteristics of a diversity oriented organization. Mission and values that are strong and positive and where effective successful diversity management is a necessary long – term goal. Objective and fair processes exist within the organization and these are audited regularly to ensure that power does not sit within informal networks, and no one group of employees dominates at any level. Skilled workforces are aware of the effects of biases and prejudices on their decision – making, and managers who manage the diversity effectively while stressing excellence in individual and team performance. Active flexibility means that the diversity – oriented organization will display increasing flexibility, not only in its working patterns but also in its practices, policies and procedures. Individual focus – organizations must guard against averaging out group differences or similarities by creating segregated groups. Culture that empowers achieved through openness, engendering trust between all individuals through an absence of prejudice and discrimination.

Jones and George (2011) states that managers face many challenges in effectively managing diversity. Each kind of diversity presents managers with particular issues they need to appreciate. Research on how different groups are treated and the unconscious biases that might adversely affect them is critical. Studying this research helps managers become aware of the many subtle ways diverse employees come to be treated unfairly. In order to blend a diverse workforce into a close – knit and productive one, it requires a diversity management program that usually starts at the top and includes the following elements:

- i. Provide strong leadership – companies with exemplary reputations in managing diversity typically have CEOs who champion diversity’s benefits. For example, they take strong stands on advocating the need for and advantages of a diverse workforce. They also act as role models for exemplifying pro – diversity behaviours, such as by promoting employees even-handedly.
- ii. Assess the Situation - the diversity management program itself typically starts with the company assessing the current state of affairs with respect to diversity. In particular, how diverse are we; is there any diversity – related issues we need to address? According to Patricia (2004) cited in Dessler (2011), common tools here include equal employment hiring and retention metrics, employee attitude surveys, management and employee evaluations and focus groups.
- iii. Provide diversity training and education – if the assessment reveals issues to address, some change program is in order. This normally involves employee training and education – for instance, having employees discuss with expert trainers the values of diversity and types of behaviours and prejudices that may undermine it. Diversity training often aims at sensitizing all employees to the need to value differences and build self – esteem, and at generally creating a more smoothly functioning and hospitable environment for the firm’s diverse workforce. In creating diversity management programs, do not ignore the obvious. For example, training immigrants in their native languages can facilitate learning and ensure compliance with matters such as safety rules and harassment policies, and thus ease their entry into your workforce
- iv. Change culture and management systems – to reinforce the training, management should reinforce the works of the training with good deeds. For example, change the bonus plan to incentivize managers to improve their departments’ employee attitude survey scores. Supervisor resistance is a potential issue.

One study, in a large British retailer, found that usual diversity instructions like “recognize and respond to individual differences” conflicted with the supervisor’s inclinations to treat everyone even-handedly.

- v. Evaluate the diversity management program – For example, employee attitude surveys now and indicate any improvement in employees’ attitudes toward diversity?

A big part of managing diversity involves overcoming barriers to inclusion – bringing all employees “under the same tent” in a matter of speaking.

1.5 Tools of managing diversity

The key tool on how to manage diversity in a workplace is planning, implementation and conflict resolution skills. Good communication is one of the best ways to manage diversity in the workplace.

The employees should be encouraged to share concerns as they arise. Every employee should feel equally important to the company. The company should keep an open door policy. Management to be open with their employees so that they feel comfortable coming up with questions and concerns about issues, both non-work-related and work-related alike, such as diversity

Another vital requirement when dealing with diversity is promoting a ‘safe’ place for associates to communicate (Koonce, 2001). Social gatherings and business meetings, where every member must listen and have the chance to speak, are good ways to create dialogues. Managers should implement policies such as mentoring programs to provide associates access to information and opportunities. Also, associates should never be denied necessary, constructive, critical feedback for learning about mistakes and successes (Flagg, 2002).

Effective managers are aware that certain skills are necessary for creating a successful, diverse workforce. These are; managers must understand discrimination and its consequences and they must recognize their own cultural biases and prejudices (Koonce, 2001). Diversity is not about differences among groups, but rather about differences among individuals. Each individual is unique and does not represent or speak for a particular group. At the same time, managers must be willing to change the organization if necessary (Koonce, 2001). Organizations need to learn how to manage diversity in the workplace to be successful in the future (Flagg, 2002). According to Roosevelt (2001), managing diversity is a comprehensive process for creating a work environment that includes everyone. When creating a successful diverse workforce, an effective manager should focus on personal awareness. Both managers and associates need to be aware of their personal biases. Therefore, organizations need to develop, implement, and maintain ongoing training because a one-day session of training will not change people’s behaviors (Koonce, 2001). Managers must also understand that fairness is not necessarily equality.

1.6 Types of workplace diversity

Workplace diversity is a people issue, focused on the differences and similarities that people bring to an organization. It is usually defined broadly to include dimensions beyond those specified legally in equal opportunity and affirmative action non-discrimination statutes. Diversity is often interpreted to include dimensions which influence the identities and perspectives that people bring, such as profession, education, parental status and geographic location. As a concept, diversity is considered to be inclusive of everyone. In many ways, diversity initiatives complement non-discrimination compliance programs by creating the workplace environment and organizational culture for making differences in work. Diversity is about learning from others who are not the same, it is about dignity and respect for all and about creating workplace environments and practices that encourage learning from others and capture the advantages of diverse perspectives. Demography is the most basic type of workplace diversity which encompasses age, gender and ethnicity. Demographic diversity can also include professional degrees, work history and veteran and disability status.

Life experience is another type of workplace diversity. For example, a military veteran or a retired athlete will have unique ideas and perspectives due to their respective experiences, as will a homemaker, a single parent and a political refugee.

Informational diversity refers to differences in educational background and individual knowledge base. For example, an individual with an MBA or PhD will have a different base of knowledge and understanding than a high school graduate who became a self-made millionaire.

Workplace diversity also encompasses more fundamental differences of values and objectives. Individuals often have very different fundamental beliefs and goals about the importance, purpose and function of work, as well as the relationship between the individual employee and the larger organization.

Some types of workplace diversity can also contribute to conflict in negative ways, such as the interpersonal conflict that may arise between individuals of diverse demographic backgrounds. Other differences, though, can foster creative debate and innovative action, such as individual differences in experience and information base.

There are many types of workplace diversity as listed below:-

- i. Age
- ii. Gender
- iii. Race and ethnicity
- iv. Religion
- v. Education
- vi. Physical appearance
- vii. Physical ability/disability
- viii. Culture/socio-cultural differences
- ix. Problem-solving ability
- x. Critical thinking ability
- xi. Team building ability
- xii. Income
- xiii. Music enjoyed
- xiv. Type of books read
- xv. TV shows enjoyed
- xvi. Experiences when being raised
- xvii. Language
- xviii. Capability for empathy
- xix. Ability to be kind
- xx. Ability to motivate people
- xxi. Ability to work with others
- xxii. Job description
- xxiii. Listening ability
- xxiv. Conflict resolution ability
- xxv. Level of self-awareness

The diversity mentioned above can be utilized positively and in the process brings about motivation and collaboration in an organization. Some of the aforementioned types of diversity are discussed below:-

Age – at all times, there are at least three or four generations at work in any given organization. That is, people who have delayed retirement and stay in the workforce longer and therefore are old enough to be seen as the grandparents i.e. those aged between 60-80years, parents i.e. between 35-50 and children i.e. between 24-34 all these people bring different experiences, worldviews and strengths to the modern workplace.

Religion – People of all faiths and of no organized religious faith at all clock in workday mornings. Kenya's population is predominantly Christian- accounting for about 80% (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2011). This means that Christians form the bulk of the workforce. However, there is a significant number of Muslims, and Hindus and people that practice African traditional religions as well as other religions. Freedom of worship is a constitutional right, thus this form of diversity is not violated in most work places. However, in organizations where workers are predominantly from one religion, there are tendencies to ignore the minorities' religious requirements such as their days of worship therefore a challenge. This may especially be so for faith-based companies of a certain ideology or workers who wish to live consistently with their beliefs in organizations that are expressly non-religious.

For example, someone may want to not participate in a compulsory company event that has religious overtones. In another case, a worker who has exhausted all personal days may want to take a day off for a holiday that is central to his religion but not recognized by the company.

Race – color had always been an issue in many organizations especially in the U.S and South Africa. The following are the major race that has been discriminated; blacks, Asians, Native Americans, Jews, Indians, Latinos etc.

Socio- cultural diversity - Kenya is made up of different ethnic groups- official number initially set at 42 although the actual number is higher factoring in minority groups initially not recognized. Ethnicity forms the major basis of diversification in most Kenyan organizations, especially within State Corporation and indigenous companies. The political landscape often is the culprit of ethnic divisions in such organizations, where hiring is on the basis of one's ethnicity. Key casing point was during the coalition government (after 2007 elections and the chaos that followed). The 'sharing' trickled down to state corporations, a situation that further hampered their effectiveness since competence was greatly compromised.

Many private firms have also manifested this kind of diversity, although a good number - especially the multi nationals and those that have adopted professionalism as a value hire purely on merit.

Disability- businesses accommodate physical disabilities whenever possible, bringing another level of diversity to the workplace. Some disabilities are obvious, such as someone in a wheelchair, while others, such as chronic fibromyalgia, are not as noticeable. The Kenyan government and human Right Activists encourages the hiring of people with physical, mental or emotional disabilities through the constitution and by making funding available to companies to employ these workers. Even the so-called invisible disabilities, such as depression, dyslexia and fibromyalgia, require workplaces to provide reasonable accommodations. These accommodations help workers adequately perform their duties without lowering performance expectations or standards.

Gender - Affirmative action has consistently been used as a tool to address the imbalance between males and females at the work place, with political aids and legal frameworks being reinforced to bring parity. The general picture is that there are more men than women at the work place, especially in positions of significance: Based on the Preparatory Phase for 1999 Population and Housing Census, Kenya had more women than men i.e. 14,481,018 female and 14,205,589 male. This is a difference of 275,429 (Government of Kenya, 2004) and as such women ought to get the lion's share of the job opportunities available (Wambui, Boit and Magero (2011). The constitution for example has established a 1/3 rule where it requires that at least that portion of the workforce be of the opposite gender. Implementation of the same still faces challenges especially where less women emerge to challenge men for positions traditionally viewed as their domain, and vice versa. The discrimination can sometimes lead to conflict, but they can also spark new ideas that a homogenous group might never come up with.

Education and Life Experience- An employee's level of education and life experiences help to define who she is, how she sees the world and how she relates to co-workers. Someone with an MBA or PhD degree might have difficulty finding something in common with a high school graduate. Also, a former house wife might have different opinions and ideas from a woman whose main focus has been to climb the corporate ladder.

Income levels add another form of diversity, with the haves and the have nots viewing issues from different perspectives.

Organizational Restructuring - There have been significant changes to organizations as a result of downsizing and outsourcing, which has greatly affected human resource management. Work practices have changed due to the impact of globalization and technology and there is a trend toward longer working hours (Losyk, 1996). Generally speaking, reorganizations usually result in fewer people doing more.

1.7 Importance of workplace diversity to an Organization

One key mandate of the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) in Kenya is to ensure ethnic diversity in public employment. For example, section 7 of the National Cohesion and Integration Act, 2008 states in part; "all public establishments shall seek to represent the diversity of the people of Kenya in the employment of staff. No public establishment shall have more than one third of its staff from the same ethnic community"

(NCIC, 2012). Diversity in workplace promotes understanding and appreciation of socio-cultural differences leading to unity.

Diversity management is key to growth in today's fiercely competitive global marketplace. Organizations that seek global market relevancy must embrace diversity in how they think, act and innovate.

Diversity can no longer just be about making the numbers, but rather how an organization treats its people authentically down to the roots of its business model. In today's new workplace, diversity management is a time-sensitive business imperative.

A diverse workplace is essential to both creativity and productivity, but this fact is often overlooked by employers and hiring managers. The question these managers should ask themselves is diversity important in workplace? How does it help foster a healthy, inclusive environment ripe with new perspectives and ideas?

Diversity is especially crucial in today's global marketplace, as companies interact with different cultures and clients.

The payoffs touch every area of the business by potentially resulting in increased creativity, increased productivity, new attitudes, new language skills, global understanding, new processes, and new solutions to difficult problems. Greater agility, better market insight, stronger customer and community loyalty, innovation, and improved employee recruitment and retention. The businesses that fail to see the importance of diversity and inclusion might find themselves unable to attract and retain the kinds of customers, employees, and business partners that will be a requisite in the International Human Resource Management era that we are headed to in the future.

Diversity is beneficial to both associates and employers. Although associates are interdependent in the workplace, respecting individual differences can increase productivity. Diversity in the workplace can reduce lawsuits and increase marketing opportunities, recruitment, creativity, and business image (Esty, et al., 1995). In an era when flexibility and creativity are keys to competitiveness, diversity is critical for an organization's success. Also, the consequences (loss of time and money) should not be overlooked.

Diversity in the workplace is essential to how a business runs. Workplace diversity can provide tremendous benefits in terms of improved morale, outside-the-box thinking, greater teamwork, an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect. Diversity reinforces cultural values within the organization, it enhances the company's reputation, attracts and retains high talented people, increase innovation and creativity among employees as well as increase the employees' motivation and efficiency. Heterogeneity or diversity promotes creativity and heterogeneous groups have been shown to produce better solutions to problems and a higher level of critical analysis.

Workplace diversity is also said to fosters mutual respect among employees. Although an idyllic atmosphere may be difficult to achieve, employees nevertheless recognize the many strengths and talents that diversity brings to the workplace and they gain respect for their colleagues' performance.

When there is diversity, conflict inevitably occurs in the work environment. However, employees who acknowledge others' differences often find similarities, particularly when there are common goals - production and quality. Respect for co-workers either reduces the likelihood of conflict or facilitates an easier road to conflict resolution. Workplace diversity preserves the quality of employees' relationships with their co-workers and their supervisors.

Diversity in the workplace is important for employees because it manifests itself in building a great reputation for the company, leading to increased profitability and opportunities for workers. Workplace diversity is important within the organization as well as outside. Business reputations flourish when companies demonstrate their commitment to diversity through aggressive outreach and recruiting efforts. An organization known for its ethics, fair employment practices and appreciation for diverse talent is better able to attract a wider pool of qualified applicants. Other advantages include loyalty from customers who choose to do business only with companies whose business practices are socially responsible.

The importance of workplace diversity cannot be overstated when it comes to an organization's ability to reach markets in foreign countries. The appeal of global markets creates two kinds of opportunities for employees: opportunities for promotion and employee development.

A global marketplace opens doors for employees with diverse language skills and multicultural understanding to build global profit centers. Employees interested in learning multinational business strategy and who are available for possible expatriate assignments may also find new and challenging career opportunities.

A diverse workplace offers more than exposure to employees from different cultures and backgrounds. Employees learn from co-workers whose work styles vary and whose attitudes about work vary from their own. This is particularly true for employees within multigenerational work environments. Traditional-generation workers learn new technology and processes from workers who belong to the digital generation.

Likewise, traditional generations' employees learn from exposure to the assertive, go-getter work ethic typical of many Baby Boomers that are joining the organization.

Diversity and Inclusion brings in diverse different talents together working towards a common goal using different sets of skills that ignites their loyalty and increases their retention and productivity.

With so many different and diverse minds coming together many more solutions will arise as every individual brings in their way of thinking, operating and solving problems and decision making. Feeling included and appreciated increases loyalty and feeling of belonging. Language skills pool is increased and propels organization forward either to compete in the International global world or to increase its diverse customer base.

Diversity helps to build synergy in teams and enhances communication skills that brings in new attitudes and processes that profit the whole team. By applying the proper diversity and inclusion management strategies does not only save money on litigation expenses generated by discrimination lawsuits but is the right thing to do for the business.

Diversity increases market share and create a satisfied diverse customer base by relating to people from different backgrounds. Embracing diversity can also affects the base line revenues of any organization and can be the make or break of any business. Ignoring the effects or the existence of diversity in this global new market will only keep organizations back loosing on all the productivity and most important profitability of any business and its core of existence.

Redman and Wilkinson (2006) also affirmed that effective diversity management contributes to:

- i. Best use of human resource
- ii. Flexible workforce to aid re – structuring
- iii. Workforce representative of the local community
- iv. Improved corporate image with potential employees and customers
- v. Attracting ethical investors
- vi. Managers can integrate equality into corporate objectives
- vii. New business ideas from a diverse workforce

1.8 Workplace diversity and labor relations

While most companies acknowledge the importance of making diversity a business consideration, diversity is often not a top business priority. Many human resource executives revert to the argument that “it is the right thing to do” and trust that management will back their suggestions to promote a diversity-friendly work environment, then wonder why nothing happens or why well-intended initiatives fail. The presentation of a solid business case increases the likelihood of obtaining the leadership commitment and resources needed to successfully implement diversity initiatives (Robinson and Dechant, 2013).

A labor relation is the process of dealing with employees who are represented by the union.

It is the policy in the ministry of labour and equal employment relations. In many countries to provide equal employment opportunities to applicants and employees without regard to race, colour, religion, sex, age, national origin, political belief, veteran status and physical/mental disabilities is paramount.

The ministry provides the following benefits due to labor relations:-

- i. Provide an income contributions for workers to offset the loss of job because of injury
- ii. Provide an income contribution for workers to offset the loss of a job because of layoffs
- iii. Determine the appropriate bargaining unit for public employees
- iv. Determine wages for public works and constructions projects
- v. Promote safe working environments
- vi. Enforce citizens in the areas of housing, employment and public accommodations
- vii. Investigate allegations of worker's compensation fraud and noncompliance.

1.9 Workplace diversity in Kenya

From a historical point of view workplace diversity can be conveniently analyzed in two major phases: pre-independence Kenya and post-independence Kenya. In Pre-independence phase there were minimal commercial or public workplaces of significant scale for our study purposes. Neither is there adequate literature covering this.

However, a few notable examples are worth mentioning. Among first modern workplaces was construction of Kenya Uganda railway (KUR) in 1896-1901 by the Imperior British East Africa Company (IBEA). The bulk of the labour used for construction was provided by "coolies" recruited in British India. Due to scarcity of skills in Kenya, Indian coolies were imported to work on the railway line owing to their experience.

When the final count was done 31,983 Indian workers had come to East Africa to work on the railway. Once the white highlands were opened up the colonial government introduced the hut tax and the kipande system as a strategy to force male Africans to work in the plantations. Supervisory jobs were done by Europeans, clerical work by Asians and manual low cadre jobs by Africans. In the post-independence Kenya there was expanded diversity at workplaces with Africans taking over some clerical and administration responsibilities. With more education and training, the Africanization policy brought about more mainstreaming of Kenyans in workplaces thus breaking the dominance of Europeans. Male dominance in job places has slowly but steadily given way to affirmative action policies to mainstream gender in workplaces, especially during the third president's era. Religious diversity has been observed in workplaces with Muslims, Hindus and Christians faithful accommodated. Recently a survey was undertaken by NCIC on general representation of communities in Public Universities wherethe total number of employees working in the six public universities and the thirteen constituent colleges that responded to the study was 14,996. The result is tabulated below:-

Table 1: Ethnic Composition of Employees in Higher Education in Kenya

Community	Number	Percentages	Population ratio %
Kikuyu	4133	27.6	17.7
Luhya	2544	17.0	14.2
Kalenjin	2133	14.2	13.3
Luo	2086	13.9	10.8
Kisii	1253	8.4	5.6
Kamba	644	4.3	4.4
Meru	644	4.3	4.4
Mijikenda	329	2.2	5.2
Taita	196	1.3	0.7
Embu	154	1.0	0.9
Others	87	0.6	-
Teso	60	0.4	0.9
Maasai	57	0.4	2.2
Somali	55	0.4	6.4
Borana	29	0.2	0.4
Mbeere	25	0.2	0.4
Turkana	23	0.2	0.7
Kuria	22	0.2	0.7
Suba	20	0.1	0.4
Other Africans	18	0.1	-
Asian	18	0.1	0.1
Samburu	17	0.1	0.6
Arab	14	0.1	0.1
Swahili	22	0.2	0.3
Nubi	4	0.03	-
Taveta	4	0.03	0.1
European	6	0.04	0.01
Americans	2	0.01	-
Total	14996	100	100

Source: NCIC (2012)

The survey found out that there is higher representation of the following communities in percentages of employment in the universities and constituent colleges than the total population ratio:- Kikuyu, Luhya, Kalenjin, Luo, Kisii, Kamba as per the 2009 population census. Other communities are poorly represented namely Mijikenda, Maasai, Teso, Somali to mention but a few.

Since the onset of colonization, and the subsequent Independence from Britain, negative ethnicity in Kenya has been a challenge in all aspects of life. This problem became even more profound at places of work after the ignominious post-election violence that followed flawed General Elections in 2007.

Although diversity in Kenya is most expressed through ethnicity, the experts broaden the definition of human variance to include nationality, race, cultural differences, age, social status, levels of education, gender, religion and personal morality.

According to Mr Robert Mugira, a director at the Institute of Human Resource Management-Kenya; managers should increase their sensitivity on diversity to tame it in the workplace. To achieve this, supervisors should listen and understand workers emotions and beliefs (Ithula, 2010). It is said that in Kenya ethnicity reveals itself in stereotypes. Some will dismiss others as soon as the latter's name is mentioned betraying his/her ethnicity (Ithula, 2010)

"Managers must understand different cultures and ask employees from various communities, what their views and beliefs are. Most workers will be willing to share experiences with managers who appreciate this diversity. Other employees might be suspicious and decide not to share anything with their supervisors. However, all of them will spread the word around that the manager is sensitive to ethnicity, boosting his or her reputation, and that of the organization," - Mugira.

1.10 Theoretical Perspective on Diversity at Workplace

Balogun (2000) argues that diversity management relates not only to the measures adopted to construct or reconstruct government structures, policies, and programmes in the society's image, but also to the actions taken by policy makers and senior career officials in managing the attendant conflict. Contemporary organization theory does not provide a framework that adequately captures the transactions taking place within this dynamic situation. Besides the works highlighting 'multiple loyalties' and cultures as an issue in the management of international organizations (Guetzkow, 1955; Jordan, 1971; Martin, 1992; and McLaren, 1997), there are few empirical studies tracing the relationship between diversity and organizational impact in Sub-Saharan Africa. At the very least, there is a need for an analytic framework incorporating the following diversity parameters and variables:-

- a. *Scope and pattern of diversity* (population characteristics, diversity patterns and disaggregation, inter-group feelings and relations, conflict threshold and tolerance level; conflict resolution mechanisms).
- b. *Perception of diversity* (whether diversity is perceived by key actors as a "threat" or a "strength"; policies indicating whether diversity is "fully accepted and/or celebrated", "viewed as a *fait accompli*", "simply tolerated", "banned/frowned upon" or handled with "benign neglect"; types of diversity accepted, barely tolerated and outlawed).
- c. *Policy and institutional measures in support of, or at variance with, diversity* (legal instruments relating to equal opportunities, quotas, set-asides, open, competitive bidding, as well as mutual reinforcement or internal inconsistency of the documents).
- d. *The impact of (a) – (c) on inter-personal and group relations* (survey of individual and group perceptions of policies, the fairness and transparency of rules application processes, and management styles, otherwise termed "moodwatch" or "diversity barometer").
- e. *The consequences of (a) – (d) for the prevailing "management culture" and for productivity growth and overall development* (this tracks the impact of diversitymanagement processes on the "management culture" and on productivitygains/losses); and
- f. *Remedial measures* (diversity training and counselling, legislative actions and/or amendments, establishment of open and transparent decision mechanisms, inauguration of "cultural exchange" forum).

1.10.1 Strategic Choice Theory

Strategic-choice theorists argue that top executives make decisions that influence organizational outcomes and performance (Child, 1972; Dean & Sharfman, 1996; Hambrick and Mason, 1984; Hrebiniak & Joyce, 1985).

The strategic-choice perspective is rooted in action theory, where organizational structures and responses are fashioned after the people in power (Astley and Van de Ven, 1983). This perspective focuses attention on the power holders to explain organizational processes. Effective strategic choice requires the exercise of power and that organizational actors possess the discretion to act in their own free will. Thus, CEOs are assumed to have substantial leeway in shaping their organizations (Finkelstein & Hambrick, 1996). The voluntary adoption of diversity management practices is an example of strategic managerial choice. For example, although institutional factors may pressure organizations to implement EEOs and Association of African Planning Schools AAPs, organizational decision-makers exercise discretion as to whether and how to manage diversity (Mighty, 1996).

Miles and Snow (1978) identified three characteristics of the strategic choice perspective. They concluded that this perspective views managerial or strategic choice as the primary link between the organization and the environment; focuses on management's ability to create, learn about, and manage the organization's environment; and encompasses the multiple ways that organizations respond to environmental conditions. In summary, advocates of strategic choice reject the notion of environmental circumstances in determining organizational adaptation, and emphasize the role of leaders in determining how organizations respond to institutional pressures (Bourgeois, 1984).

1.10.2 Leadership Behaviour and Decision-Making theory

Strategic-leadership theory seeks to understand the impact of individuals or top executive teams on firms. Early theorists (Cyert and March, 1963; March and Simon, 1958) have recognized that perceptual and evaluational processes of managers play a role in strategic decisions. They argue that complex decisions are largely the result of behavioural factors, and that bounded rationality, multiple and conflicting goals, and ill-defined options are derived from the decision-makers' beliefs and values. As a result, managers do not follow a totally rational model in decision-making and instead rely on cognitive models to make strategic decisions (Hambrick and Mason, 1984).

This theory has spurred numerous empirical studies on the association between managerial characteristics and firm outcomes. For example, Miller, Kets de Vries, and Toulouse (1982) built on psychological theories to investigate the relationship between Chief Executive Officer personality and his or her strategic decision-making behaviour. To date, research on workplace diversity has not yet been linked to leadership theory or strategic management. If CEOs' characteristics are associated with systematic variations in organizational strategy and performance, then a similar link to diversity management should also exist.

The upper-echelon theory proposed that an organization is a reflection of its top executives, and that CEOs' characteristics can be used to predict organizational outcomes (Hambrick and Mason, 1984). These characteristics include age, functional tracks, other career experiences, education, socioeconomic roots, financial position, and group characteristics. Demographic variables offer several distinct advantages. First, demographic variables are readily observable, unobtrusive, and convenient to measure (Harrison, Price and Bell, 1998; Milliken & Martins, 1996; Wiersema and Bantel, 1992). As such, they possess the advantages of objectivity, parsimony, comprehensibility, logical coherence, predictive power, and testability (Wiersema and Bantel, 1992). Second, the efficacy of the demographic approach has been demonstrated in numerous research studies of the relationship between managerial characteristics and organizational outcomes (Wiersema and Bantel, 1992). Pfeffer (1983) argued that "demography is an important causal variable that affects a number of intervening variables and processes and, through them, a number of outcomes." Third, some background demographic variables offer several distinct advantages. First, demographic variables are readily observable, unobtrusive, and convenient to measure (Harrison, Price and Bell, 1998; Milliken and Martins, 1996; Wiersema and Bantel, 1992). As such, they possess the advantages of objectivity, parsimony, comprehensibility, logical coherence, predictive power, and testability (Wiersema and Bantel, 1992). Second, the efficacy of the demographic approach has been demonstrated in numerous research studies of the relationship between managerial characteristics and organizational outcomes (Wiersema and Bantel, 1992). Pfeffer (1983) argued that "demography is an important causal variable that affects a number of intervening variables and processes and, through them, a number of outcomes".

1.11 Challenges of workplace diversity and possible solutions

Workplace diversity exists when companies hire employees from various backgrounds and experiences. Many companies see workplace diversity as an investment toward building a better business. Although workplace diversity provides many benefits, it also poses many challenges to employees and managers.

To reap the benefits of workplace diversity, employees and managers must understand the challenges and know how to effectively deal with them. Diversity and inclusion affect not only the businesses' people and operations internally but also their customers, suppliers, and other external stakeholders.

1. Population

There are challenges to managing a diverse work population. Managing diversity is more than simply acknowledging differences in people. It involves recognizing the value of differences, combating discrimination, and promoting inclusiveness. Managers may also be challenged with losses in personnel and work productivity due to prejudice and discrimination and complaints and legal actions against the organization (Devoe, 1999).

2. Communication

Communication barriers lead to problems in a company attempting to create a diverse workplace. When companies hire employees of other cultures whose first language is not English or Kiswahili, employees and managers may experience difficulties communicating with one another. This can lead to misunderstandings and a decrease in productivity. For example, if a manager gives instructions about completing a certain task to an employee who fails to fully comprehend the instructions, the employee may make mistakes if he tries to complete the task without receiving clarity.

Solution: sometimes it helps for organizations to hire bilingual employees who can mediate and reduce language and communication barriers.

3. Globalization

The changing faces in terms of language, culture, and religion of both customers and workers will represent a challenge in an organization diverse management and even more diverse mix.

4. Opposition to Change

Although workplace diversity benefits an organization as a whole, some employees and managers may not react positively to changes made. Employees who oppose workforce diversity usually reject new ideas and make work environments more difficult. If the company does not handle opposition properly, workplace diversity initiatives may not provide the intended benefits to the company.

Solution: To deal with opposition, companies should explain the reasons for diversity and what benefits changes in diversity bring to management and employees. Alleviating fears some people possess about workplace diversity may reduce much of the opposition.

5. Negative attitude

Negative attitudes and behaviors can be barriers to organizational diversity because they can harm working relationships and damage morale and work productivity (Esty, et al., 1995). Negative attitudes and behaviors in the workplace include prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination, which should never be used by management for hiring, retention, and termination practices. This could lead to costly litigation.

6. Implementation

Although on paper workplace diversity may seem like a good idea, many companies experience challenges when attempting to implement changes. Employers must develop strategies for implementation, analyze results and make necessary changes if results do not meet the established goals. The implementation process may present challenges to everyone involved, and frustrations may arise because implementation is not as smooth as expected.

Solution: To help with implementation, employers may decide to hire experienced professionals who specialize in workplace diversity. Experienced professionals understand the challenges and know how to handle them.

7. *Managing Diversity as a challenge*

Once workplace diversity is implemented, companies must effectively manage the changes in policies. This presents a challenge for many organizations. Challenges in managing workplace diversity can stem from several reasons, such as taking the wrong approach to solving diversity issues. For example, a company may adopt affirmative action policies in an attempt to solve diversity problems.

Affirmative action is about giving opportunity to previously disadvantaged workers. Hiring based solely on race may not solve diversity issues. Managers face challenges when new employees from diverse backgrounds interact with long-standing employees.

Solution: Many companies offer training programs to managers to help them effectively manage their newly diverse departments.

Diversity research emphasizes that creating a harmonious diverse workforce is not easy. A University of Florida report, "Diversity in the Workplace: Benefits, Challenges, and the Required Managerial Tools," notes that there are no sure-fire strategies for managing healthy workplace diversity. The report's authors suggest that managers organize ongoing diversity training because one-time workshops do not change people's behaviors. Managers can create a better environment for diverse employees by facilitating social gatherings and business meetings where every employee has a chance to listen and speak.

8. *Generational gaps*

The new trend the trend of people living longer and retiring later resulted in four distinct generations working side by side: conservatives, baby boomers, Generation X and Generation Y or Millennials, each with its own mind-set, work habits, technology attitudes, and customs presents a challenge to diverse management.

9. *Different human characteristics*

Our differing human characteristics influence the way we think, act, interact, and make choices. This is critical as it determines each individual's behaviour at the workplace. This has a bearing on such matters as organizational politics and potential conflicts within the workplace. Hence the differences in individuals pose a whole complex situation that requires careful, rational mechanisms to effectively manage them. Often, these differences interfere with our ability to support, trust, and respect each other, and thus to effectively function together. This means that team work is compromised, thus disjointed fulfillment of obligation by each individual. The result is a malfunctioning team that undermines the efficiency of the organization.

Diversity bias

Diversity bias especially on the part of management and more often than not, the HR department has been observed. This bias usually follows one or a combination of the following assumptions:

- a. ***Assumptions of Superiority-*** This is evident when an individual believes they are better than the other, and will therefore go to all lengths to assert this assumption even in cases where it may not necessarily be true. As a result, the 'lesser' employee is overworked, underused or oppressed, negatively affecting their performance.
- b. ***Assumptions of Correctness-*** This is common in situations where individuals believe that only they and what they do and how they want things done is correct.

The result is a lot of duplication of effort, demoralized staff and stretched resources especially where they have to redo what has already been done satisfactorily by their juniors.

- c. ***Assumptions of Universality-*** This assumption is a deviation from both superiority and correctness. It applies where everyone believes that everybody is equal- that is, we are all the same. Despite its good intentions, it may suffer from exploitation by juniors and peers, leading to gross insubordination and disciplinary issues, hence negatively affecting the overall productivity of the organization in question.

Tribalism

In the Kenyan context, management of diversity is hindered by animosity, suspicion (especially on tribal lines) and differences in mindsets due to generational gaps hence conflicts. Jones et al (2011) states that diverse employees may face great barriers.

For example, the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission Report indicated that African – Americans have the hardest time being promoted and climbing the corporate ladder, that Asians are often stereotyped into technical jobs and that Hispanics are assumed to be less well educated than other minority groups.

Table 2: Strategies that Overcome Barriers to Inclusion

Inclusive Strategies	Barriers to Inclusion
At the Personal Level	
Become aware of prejudice and other barriers to valuing diversity Learn about other cultures and groups Serve as an example, walk the talk Participate in managing diversity	Stereotypes, prejudices Past experiences and influences Stereotyped expectations and perceptions Feelings that tend to separate, divide
At the Interpersonal Level	
Facilitate communication and interactions in ways that value diversity Encourage participation Share your perspective Facilitate unique contributions Resolve conflicts in ways that value diversity Accept responsibility for developing common ground	Cultural differences Group differences Myths Relationship patterns based on exclusion
At the Organizational Level	
All employees have access to networks and focus groups All employees take a proactive role in managing diversity and creating a more diverse workplace culture All employees are included in the inner circle that contributes to the bottom – line success of the company All employees give feedback to management All employees are encouraged to contribute to change	Individuals who get away with discriminating and excluding A culture that values or allows exclusion Work structures, policies, and practices that discriminate and exclude

Source: Managing Diversity by Norma Carr – Ruffino 2005

Table 3: Managerial Roles and the Effective Management of Diversity

Type of Role	Specific Role	Example
Interpersonal	Figurehead	Convey that the effective management of diversity is a valued goal and objective
	Leader	Serve as a role model and institute policies and procedures to ensure that diverse members are treated fairly
	Liaison	Enable diverse individuals to coordinate their efforts and cooperate with one another
Informational	Monitor	Evaluate the extent to which diverse employees are being treated fairly.
	Disseminator	Inform employees about diversity policies and initiatives and the intolerance of discrimination
	Spokesperson	Support diversity initiatives in the wider community and speak to diverse groups to interest them in career opportunities.
Decisional	Entrepreneur	Commit resources to develop new ways to effectively manage diversity and eliminate biases and discrimination
	Disturbance handler	Take quick action to correct inequalities and curtail discriminatory
	Resource allocator	Allocate resources to support and encourage the effective management of diversity
	Negotiator	Work with organizations (e.g suppliers) and groups (e.g, labour unions) to support and encourage the effective management of diversity

Source: Jones G. and George J. (2011, p.107)

In their interpersonal roles managers can convey that the effective management of diversity is a valued goal and objective (manager's figurehead role) can serve as role models and institute policies and procedures to ensure that diverse organizational members are treated fairly (leader role). Given the formal authority that managers have in organizations, they typically have more influence than rank – and – file employees. According to Valian (2000) cited in Jones and George (2011), when managers commit to supporting diversity, their authority and positions of power and status influence other members of an organization to make a similar commitment. He further explained that when managers commit to diversity, their commitment legitimizes the diversity management efforts of others.

There are two other factors that emphasize why managers are central to the effective management of diversity. The first factor is that women, African – Americans, Hispanics, and other minorities often start out at a slight disadvantage due to the ways in which they are perceived by others in organizations, particularly in work settings where they are a numerical minority. Birgini Valian, a psychologist at Hunter College who studies gender, indicates, "In most organizations women begin at a slight disadvantage." A woman does not walk into the room with the same status as an equivalent man, because she is less likely than a man to be viewed as a serious professional.

The second factor according to Cole and Kelly (1991) is that research suggests that slight differences in treatment can cumulate and result in major disparities over time. Even small differences – such as a very slight favourable bias toward men for promotions – can lead to major differences in the number of male and female managers over time. Managers have the obligation, from both an ethical and business perspective, to ensure that neither large nor small disparities in treatment and outcomes due to irrelevant distinctions such as race or ethnicity occur in organizations.

Kandola and Fullerton (1998) as cited in Armstrong (2011) quote the following 10 most successful initiatives adopted by organizations that are pursuing diversity policies:

- i. Introducing equal rights and benefits for part – time workers (compared with full – time workers)
- ii. Allowing flexibility in uniform / dress requirements
- iii. Allowing time off for caring for dependants beyond that required by law, eg extended maternity / paternity leave
- iv. Benefits provided for employees' partners are equally available to same – sex and different – sex partner
- v. Buying specialized equipment, eg Braille keyboards
- vi. Employing helpers/ signers for those who need them
- vii. Training trainers in equal opportunities
- viii. Eliminating age criteria from selection decisions
- ix. Providing assistance with child care
- x. Allowing staff to take career breaks.

1.12 Conclusion

A diverse workforce is a response to a changing world and marketplace. It is a process intended to create and maintain a positive work environment where the similarities and differences of individuals are valued, so that all can reach their potential and maximize their contributions to an organization's strategic goals and objectives.

Diverse work group brings high value, good reputation and high productivity to the organization. Respecting individual differences will benefit the workplace to enjoy a competitive edge and enhance motivation of employees. Diversity management benefits associates by creating a fair and safe environment where everyone has access to opportunities. Management tools in a diverse workforce should be used to educate everyone about diversity and its issues, including laws and regulations. Most workplaces are made up of diverse cultures, so organizations need to learn how to adapt to be successful. How organizations manage diversity from today forward will determine the long-term success or failure in the global marketplace.

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