

# **WORKFORCE DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE AMONG NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN NAIROBI, KENYA**

**Brian Kipsang.**

Master's Student, School of Business, University of Nairobi, Kenya.

**Jeremiah Kagwe.**

Lecturer, School of Business, University of Nairobi, Kenya.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study had two objectives; to establish the workforce diversity management practices adopted by Centre for Health Solutions in Nairobi, Kenya and to analyze the relationship between workforce diversity management and employee performance at the Centre for Health Solutions in Nairobi, Kenya. The study adopted descriptive survey research design targeting 95 staff from Centre for Health Solutions in Nairobi. Stratified random sampling method was used to select 77 respondents as the sample size. Primary data was gathered through questionnaire and analyzed through means and standard

deviations as well as regression analysis and presented through tables. The study noted that education diversity ( $\beta=0.212$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) had the greatest positive and significant relationship with employee performance of CHS followed by age diversity ( $\beta=0.182$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), culture diversity ( $\beta=0.162$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and gender diversity ( $\beta=0.098$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). The study concludes that workforce diversity management is a significant predictor of employee performance at CHS.

**Keywords:** Workforce Diversity Management, Employee Performance.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Employee performance (EP) results to mutual gain and benefits both to the organization and the staff in the firm. At an organizational level, better employee performance helps in realization of the established goals. At individual employee level, better performance would mean more revenues that can result into promotion opportunities and more salaries contributing to personal well-being (Gupta & Aggarwal, 2021). Workforce diversity management (WDM) is regarded as an important enabler of better performance of employees in an organization. WDM allow employees to feel they are valued and feel proud of working in such a firm that has in place diversity programs (Mwangi, 2021).

The definition of WDM provided by Nyakoi (2020) is that it involves efforts made by the organization to develop and implement practices and policies that foster a supportive working culture so that people drawn from varied backgrounds can effectively coexist in achieving the goals of the organization. WDM is the alignment of the differences and similarities among staff in the organization in terms of sexual orientation, physical abilities and disabilities and cultural foundations. Muthoni (2017) opines that any organization striving to remain successful should effectively manage its diverse workforce. Muriuki (2021) shared that an organization practices WDM by differences among employees are recognized and appreciated. WDM was defined further by Muthoni (2017) as the planned and systematic commitment of the organization to

recruiting and retaining of staff from diverse areas. It is leveraging the similarities and differences among staff to achieve superior outcomes.

There are several measures of WDM in an organization. Some of these measures consider workforce diversity from the individual attributes that form identity dereferences with a given group. The other measures of WDM provide classification of the personal attributes depending on observable or non-observable they are (Gupta & Aggarwal, 2021). Some attributes of employees that are easily observable like age, race, and gender among others are placed in one category referred to as primary diversity. The other differences that are less observable like functional background and education are classified in another category called secondary diversity (Li, Oljaca, Firdousi & Akram, 2021). Thomas (1990) provided other measures of WDM covering Affirmative Action (AA) as well as equal employment opportunity (EEO) as well as deep level and surface level diversity. The present study adopted four measures of WDM: education, culture, gender and age diversity management.

Centre for Health Solutions in Nairobi, Kenya is an advocacy NGO that started operations in Kenya in 2010 with it is headquarters located in Nairobi. Being an NGO, the operations of CHS are regulated by the NGO Coordination Board (NCB). The greatest commitment of CHS is to bring about an improvement in health related outcomes in line with the global and national health care goals. The organization has a deep understanding of the local context and works in implementing evidence driven interventions and solutions to the arising and already existing health related needs in the country. Since inception, CHS has helped above 7,000,000 people in different parts of the country with Tuberculosis and HIV related services.

The organization continues to have a positive impact on lives with the main focus on delivering quality services to the clients. However, meeting this goal of quality services can be a challenge given the diverse settings and contexts that CHS operate in Kenya. The organization works with diverse partners including the government and donors as well as the local community to complement the efforts of delivery sustainable health related services. With these partners and the varied context, diversity management is so critical for the success of CHS and thus the motivation of the present study.

## **Research Problem**

One of the greatest challenges for human resource managers in an organization is WDM. This is because WDM is a phenomenon that is so complicated. However, the role of WDM in shaping and improving the effectiveness in an organization cannot be overlooked (Mwangi, 2021). More recently, WDM practices have been greatly adopted with the aim of improving organizational related outcomes like quality. Theoretically, it is anticipated and predicted that any efforts to put in place and strengthen the diversity practices in an organization can yield superior outcomes in terms of employee performance (Muriuki, 2021).

CSH is one of the NGOs regulated by NCB in Kenya. The organization is headquartered in Nairobi and its main area of focus is on improving health related outcomes. HIV and TB are two key health challenges that CHS seek to prevent across the country. This is achieved through strategic partnership with diverse groups including the Ministry of Health and the local actors. CHS engage employees from different backgrounds both young and old drawn from different ethnic groups. Achieving quality health related outcomes by CHS given these dynamic require that WDM not to be an option but an urgently required practice at the place of work.

The existing studies from an international perspective include Khan, Sohail, Sufyan, Uddin and Basit (2019) who focused on Pakistan and sought to provide the nexus between workforce diversity and performance of staff. It was established that positive nexus exist between diversity (ethnicity, education, gender as well as age) and performance of staff. The study conducted in Zimbabwe by Makudza, Muchongwe and Dangaiso (2020) was an appraisal of workforce diversity on productivity of staff in an organization where a significant link was registered. The study done in China by Li, ZOljaca, Firdousi and Akram (2021) placed much focus on linking management of diversity within the organizations. It was shown the management of diversity and employee performance are positively and significantly connected with each other.

Locally in Kenya, Kathimba and Anyieni (2018) focused on the National Police Service within Nakuru Organisation to diversity at the place of work and performance. It was noted that practicing and promoting ethnic diversity lead to better performance of the organization. Muriuki (2021) did a study whose focus was on WDM and performance of humanitarian entities and significant interaction was noted. The study conducted by Wafula and Susan (2018) emphasized the role that workforce related diversity played as far as EP was concerned borrowing evidence from Jumuia Resorts. It was shown that while ethnic and gender diversity were positive predictors of EP, education as well as age diversity were negative.

However, the reviewed studies create gaps in that some were done in other countries like India away from Kenya. Other studies were conducted focusing on organizational performance and not specifically employee performance. This creates gaps that the present study filled by seeking for answers to the following research question; what is the effect of workforce diversity management on employee performance: using a case of Centre for Health Solutions in Nairobi, Kenya?

## **Research Objectives**

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. To establish the workforce diversity management practices adopted by Centre for Health Solutions in Nairobi, Kenya
- ii. To analyze the relationship between workforce diversity management and employee performance at the Centre for Health Solutions in Nairobi, Kenya

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Review**

The SET and the SCT will be used to underpin the study.

### **Social Exchange Theory**

The proponents of this theory include Homans (1961), Blau (1968), Emerson (1976) and Chadwick-Jones (1976). The theory places emphasis on the implications that social behavior have on punishment and reward. The theory argues that any form of behavior which is rewarded will undergo replication. Cook and Whitmeyer (1992) shared that the theory is guided by three propositions. In the first proposition, it is argued that behavior which results to positive outcomes will be repeated in future. Proposition number two is that behavior which has been rewarded in the past will be replicated. The third proposition notes that the value attached to the result of the action increase the probability of performing an action.

The main argument of this theory is that employees in an organization will maximize in undertaking actions that generate returns. The theory is premised on the fact that employees in an organization will place their own self-interest above everything when carrying out their duties. However, this is only possible when an organization provides conducive working environment with better rewards. Thus, based on this theory, organizations make a choice of implementing diversity management practices so as to enhance employee performance.

### **Social Categorization Theory**

The theory was formulated by Turner (1987) and it provides a suggestion that employees in an organization undergo classification of themselves informed by their social identities. Groups have high level of responsiveness to actions and information that is linked to their social identities. The theory further argues that there is a high level of cooperation and unity between groups sharing social identities (Van-Knippenberg, De-Dreu & Homan, 2004). Based on this theory, employees will only work well in teams if members have similar social identities. Categorization is simply the organization of people in groups guided by such attributes like status, race, age as well as gender among others. These classifications are deemed to be of social nature (social identities) if majority of the people star drawing related judgments of individuals on the basis of similar attributes (Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007).

The key premise of this theory is that people will always seek to establish and identify themselves with a certain group. For a group to have high level of cohesiveness there is need for some affinity among the group members. This theory is critical in identification of processes that allow groups in an organization to achieve cohesiveness (Shah & Dirks, 2003). Organizations are full of employees drawn from different backgrounds and they will ultimately

identify themselves as having some belonging in a group in the organization. Thus, in order to enhance the synergy and cohesiveness of the team members in an organization, the HR managers have a great task of managing the existing diversities at the place of work.

### **Workforce Diversity Management and Employee Performance**

While focusing on the higher education sector of Pakistan, Khan, Sohail, Sufyan, Uddin and Basit (2019) conducted an analysis of workforce diversity and performance of employees. The variables explored by the inquiry include education, gender as well as age and their implication on performance of the employees. A direct and significant nexus was registered between diversity of employees in terms of their education, gender as well as age and their performance. Makudza, Muchongwe and Dangaiso (2020) placed emphasis on Zimbabwe to explore workforce diversity and productivity of employees. The inquiry was conducted in the context of the civil service of Zimbabwe and primary (gender and age) as well as secondary (political affiliations and education) were explored. It was noted that workforce diversity is a significant predictor of productivity of staff in an organization.

A study conducted in India by Kundu and Mor (2017) was an appraisal of workforce diversity and performance of the organization looking at the technology related entities. It was observed that irrespective of their diversity backgrounds, staff had high recognition of diversity and the need to manage it. Gupta and Aggarwal (2021) conducted conceptual inquiry on workforce diversity and its implication on performance of staff. Literature reviewed documented that firms are under pressure to put in place strategies aimed at improving the output of the staff and the level of efficiency. One of such strategies that were identified by this was the need to recruit staff from diverse backgrounds.

Within the context of Chinese firms, Li, Oljaca, Firdousi and Akram (2021) did an analysis of how firm have managed diversity and its contribution towards performance of staff. The firms covered in the study were technology related structural equation modeling (SEM) supported the analysis. It was observed that WDM and performance of the staff are positively linked with each other. A similar study in China by Li, W. Wang, Haque, Shafique and Nawaz (2020) focused on hotels to explore WDM and performance. It emerged that WDM and performance of staff on their job duties are linked with each other. Dongol (2022) did a study focusing on workforce diversity and its nexus with performance of staff within Nepal context among commercial banks. The response rate recorded in this study 79.2% and the outcome was that ethnicity, education, age and gender significantly predicted performance of the employees.

With a focus on National Police Service in Nakuru Organization, Kathimba and Anyieni (2018) analyzed the contribution of workforce diversity on performance. The variables of interest covered in this inquiry included education, ethnicity, gender and age of the staff. The outcomes pointed out that the aspects of workforce diversity covered in the study were significant

predictors of performance of the employees. Muriuki (2021) covered the humanitarian organizations and explored the implication of WDM on performance at an organizational level. The variables of interest explored in this study include cultural, professional as well as demographic diversity. A significant nexus was registered between the aspects of WDM covered in this study and organizational performance. Fadhili, Kiflemariam and Mwanzia (2021) did an assessment of WDM and performance of staff on their jobs with specific reference to Maua Methodist Hospital. The variables covered primary (ethnicity, gender and age) as well as secondary diversity (religion, marital status and education) and organizational diversity measures (job tenure, affiliation to unions and working experience). It was shown that while secondary diversity dimension and EP were negatively linked, the role played by the primary diversity was not clear.

Wafula and Susan (2018) looked at workforce diversity and performance of staff with emphasis on Jumuia Resorts. The variables that were utilized in this study include education, ethnicity, age as well as gender. It was shown that while ethnicity and gender dimensions had direct nexus with EP, education and age aspects had negative interplay. Muthoni (2017) analyzed WDM and EP with a focus on the National Biosafety Authority, Kenya. The aspects of diversity covered in this study include education, marital status, gender as well as age. It was shown that education; marital status, gender as well as age are positive and significant predictors of how employees performed in their entities. Mwangi (2021) appraised how WDM and EP were linked with each other. The variables covered diversity policy, diversity training and work teams as well as AA. The study noted existence of a significant link between the variables covered. Nyakoi (2020) did an assessment of WDM and its implication on performance of employees with emphasis on Pharmacy and Poisons Board, Kenya. The specific aspects of diversity that were covered in this study include education, ethnicity as well as gender. All the studied variables were found to have significant interaction with employee performance.

### **Research Methodology**

The study adopted descriptive survey research design to meet the objectives. Yin (2017) argues that descriptive designs are established to provide answers with regard to how, when and why on a given issue. This design was adopted to help in describing the workforce diversity management practices and employee performance at CHS. The total population of employees at CHS stands at 95 and this formed the population of the study. This population is divided into three categories depending on the level of their seniority as summarized in Table 1.

*Table 1: Population of the Study*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Population</b>
Senior management	10
Middle management	18
Lower level management	67
Total	95

A representative sample of 77 respondents was selected using simple random sampling. The study collected primary data using a questionnaire. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics that included: frequencies, percentages and means.

## Data Analysis

From the 95 questionnaires distributed to staff of CHS, 69 of them were dully filled and returned giving a response rate of 72.6%. This response was adequate and consistent with the assertion of Yin (2017) who opined that an above 70% response is good for presentation of the results. On gender, male respondents were the majority (79.4%) although female respondents (20.6%) were also included in the study. In terms of age, it emerged that while a vast majority of the respondents (47.1%) were 31-39 years, others (7.4%) were less than 30 years. On the basis of education, it emerged that while 41.2% of the respondents had bachelor's degree, 5.9% had masters. The study established that although 39.7% of the respondents had worked in their organizations for 5-10 years, 26.5% had worked for less than 5 years. This means that in general, respondents who participated in the study had worked in their organization for a significant period of time that probably allowed them to gain relevant insights as sought by the study.

## Workforce Diversity Management Practices Adopted by Centre for Health Solutions

The study sought to establish the workforce diversity management practices adopted by Centre for Health Solutions and the results are as presented in the subsequent sections.

## Workforce Diversity Management Practices Applied by Centre for Health Solutions

A number of workforce diversity management practices were identified and respondents were asked to indicate their organization had adopted them. The findings were determined and summarized as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 1: Workforce Diversity Management Practices Applied by Centre for Health Solutions

	Frequency	Percent
Appreciation of religious diversity among staff	58	85.3
Appreciation of cultural diversity among staff	54	79.4
Appreciation of educational background of staff	54	79.4
Appreciation of gender diversity among staff	53	77.9
Appreciation of age diversity among staff	50	73.5

Source: Field Data (2022)

The findings in Table 4.2 show that the CHS appreciated religious diversity (85.3%), educational background (79.4%), cultural diversity (79.4%), gender diversity (77.9%) as well as age diversity (73.5%) among staff. This implies that religious, education, cultural, gender and age diversity were the highly embraced workforce diversity practices at CHS. The subsequent sections focus on analyzing each of these diversity practices in detail.

## Education Diversity

Table 3 is the breakdown of the descriptive statistics on education diversity.

*Table 2: Education Diversity*

<b>Statement on education Diversity</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev</b>
The organization has a provision for paid study leaves for the employees.	4.19	.833
Recruitment in this organization is pegged on the education qualification of applicants.	4.11	.985
Applicants with diverse qualifications are considered for the same opportunity.	4.05	.826
The organization hires well-qualified professionals in each department.	3.98	.905
The differences in educational level do not cause any performance challenges within the organization.	3.88	.820
There are opportunities for advancing in education for the low skilled employees within the Organization.	3.82	1.208
The workers feel appreciated and confident about the level of education without intimidation from the colleagues with different levels of education.	3.66	.784
The leadership of the organization has a diverse educational background with ranks depending on the attainment levels.	3.52	.921
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.90</b>	<b>0.910</b>

Table 3 indicate that on overall, respondents agreed on the statements under education diversity (M=3.90). This means that CHS did practice education diversity as one of the workforce diversity practices. Through this, the organization was able to provide for paid study leaves for staff (M=4.19) and recruit staff based on education qualifications (M=4.11) as well as consideration of applicants with diverse qualifications for similar opportunities (M=4.05). Respondents agreed that well-qualified professionals in each department were hired (M=3.98), the differences in educational level did not cause any performance challenges within the organization (M=3.88) and that there were opportunities for advancing in education for the low skilled employees within the organization (M=3.82). Respondents further agreed that the workers felt appreciated and confident about the level of education without intimidation from the colleagues with different levels of education (M=3.66) and that the leadership of the organization had a diverse educational background with ranks depending on the attainment levels (M=3.52).

## Culture Diversity

The findings of descriptive statistics on cultural diversity were determined and presented as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Culture Diversity

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev
The work environment creates a chance for practicing our cultural background artifacts and beliefs.	4.21	1.216
The organization hires people from all cultural backgrounds	4.11	0.879
All applicants for positions in the organization are accorded fair job opportunities.	4.09	0.836
Organization Government has employees who use difference language during communication, which does not demean any particular employee.	4.01	1.178
The organization is sensitive on values of the employees.	3.84	1.217
There are equal opportunities for advancement in culture irrespective of the background and origin of an employee.	3.83	0.796
The organization has hired persons from different cultural backgrounds	3.59	1.123
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.92</b>	<b>1.022</b>

Table 4 indicate that respondents agreed that culture diversity was embraced as one of the workforce diversity practices in their organization (M=3.92). Respondents agreed that the work environment created a chance for practicing cultural background artifacts and beliefs (M=4.21), the organization hired people from all cultural backgrounds (M=4.11) and all applicants for positions in the organization were accorded fair job opportunities (M=4.09). Respondents were in agreement that there were employees who used different languages during communication, which did not demean any particular employee (M=4.01), the organization was sensitive on values of the employees (M=3.84), there were equal opportunities for advancement in culture irrespective of the background and origin of an employee (M=3.83) and that the organization had hired persons from different cultural backgrounds (M=3.59).

### Gender Diversity

Table 5 is a breakdown of the results on gender diversity at CHS.

Table 3: Gender Diversity

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev
The organization has been promoting gender equity by ensuring inclusion of women in the employment.	4.44	1.226
All employees in this organization are treated the same way irrespective of the gender	4.16	1.180
Women have a chance and opportunities to express their views in the decision making process just like men do.	4.09	0.893
The organization has not experienced some discrimination among employee on the basis of gender.	4.09	1.168
The organization trainings are designed to accommodate both gender	4.00	0.846
Career development opportunities are offered to all employees regardless of their gender.	3.85	1.055
Human resource policies in the organization cover the different unique needs of both gender	3.78	1.091
<b>Average</b>	<b>4.06</b>	<b>1.066</b>

The findings in Table 5 provide an indication that gender diversity was among the highly rated constructs by respondents (M=4.06). This means that of all the workforce diversity practices, CHS had greatly embraced gender diversity. Respondents were in strong agreement that the organization had been promoting gender equity by ensuring inclusion of women in the employment (M=4.44), all employees organization were treated the same way irrespective of the gender (M=4.16) and that women had a chance and opportunities to express their views in the decision making process just like men did (M= 4.09). espondents agreed that the organization had not experienced some discrimination among employee on the basis of gender. (M=4.09), the organization trainings were designed to accommodate both gender (M=4.00), career development opportunities were offered to all employees regardless of their gender (M=3.85) and that human resource policies in the organization covered the different unique needs of both gender (M=3.78).

### **Age Diversity**

The findings on age diversity were determined and summarized as indicated in Table 6.

*Table 4: Age Diversity*

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev</b>
Employees in each department are well distributed across different age sets.	4.31	0.675
Promotions in the organization are awarded to employees of all ages	4.21	0.907
Our organization does not discriminate against the age of applicants.	4.09	0.893
Older employees are given more preference in the organization compared to young ones.	4.00	0.881
The opinions of all employees from all ages are considered in decision making.	3.57	0.798
Age diversity is promoted in organization.	3.51	0.763
Training opportunities are equally shared among employees of all ages.	3.47	1.058
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.88</b>	<b>0.853</b>

The findings in Table 6 are that respondents agreed that age diversity was one of the workforce diversity practice in their organization (M=3.88). The study established that employees in each department were well distributed across different age sets (M=4.31), promotions in the organization were awarded to employees of all ages (M=4.21), the organization did not discriminate against the age of applicants (M=4.09) and that older employees were given more preference in the organization compared to young ones (M=4.00). The study noted that opinions of all employees from all ages were considered in decision making (M=3.57) and that Age diversity was promoted in organization. (M=3.51).

## Workforce Diversity Management and Employee Performance

The study was set out to establish the relationship between workforce diversity management and employee performance at the Centre for Health Solutions in Nairobi, Kenya. This objective was realized through regression analysis with results of the model summary shown in Table 7.

Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.776	.601	.576	1.44163

### Source: Field Data (2022)

The findings in Table 7 show that 60.1% change in employee performance at CHS is explained by changes in workforce diversity management practices. This means that there are still additional factors that have an effect on employee performance that should be central in future studies. The findings of the beta coefficients and significance were established and summed up as shown in Table 8.

Table 6: Coefficients and Significance

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	28.625	2.091		13.692	.000
Education Diversity	.212	.046	.401	4.582	.000
Culture Diversity	.162	.032	.443	5.073	.000
Gender Diversity	.098	.033	.255	2.982	.004
Age Diversity	.182	.057	.018	3.193	.034

From Table 8, the study noted that education diversity ( $\beta=0.212$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) had the greatest positive and significant relationship with employee performance of CHS followed by age diversity ( $\beta=0.182$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), culture diversity ( $\beta=0.162$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and gender diversity ( $\beta=0.098$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). It then follows that workforce diversity management is a significant predictor of employee performance at CHS.

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Summary

This study had two objectives; to establish the workforce diversity management practices adopted by Centre for Health Solutions in Nairobi, Kenya and to analyze the relationship between workforce diversity management and employee performance at the Centre for Health Solutions in Nairobi, Kenya. On the first objective, the study established that it emerged that CHS appreciated religious diversity, educational background, cultural diversity, gender diversity as well as age diversity among staff. When these workforce diversity practices were ranked, it emerged from respondents that the most widely adopted practice was gender diversity followed by culture diversity, education diversity and age diversity.

In regard to the second objective, regression analysis played an instrumental role in realization of this objective. From the findings of the model summary, it emerged that a significant proportional variation in employee performance at CHS is explained by variation in workforce diversity management. More specifically, it emerged from the results that education diversity had the greatest positive and significant relationship with employee performance of CHS followed by age diversity, culture diversity and gender diversity.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the findings, it is evident that the Non-Governmental Organizations in Nairobi, Kenya have realized the value of practicing workforce diversity management. With this in mind, these organizations have greatly adopted different workforce diversity management practices. When ranked, it was observed that the most widely adopted workforce diversity practice was gender diversity followed by culture diversity, education diversity and age diversity.

The study concludes that the adoption of workforce diversity management has contributed to an enhancement in employee performance of the Non-Governmental Organizations. In particular, education diversity has the greatest positive and significant relationship with employee performance of CHS followed by age diversity, culture diversity and gender diversity. Thus, workforce diversity management is a key driver and predictor of employee performance among the NGOs in Nairobi Kenya.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the results, the study recommends that the human resource managers working in NGOs in Nairobi should review the existing workforce diversity practices to ensure they are well aligned with the strategic goals. The human resource managers of these organizations should continue to leverage education, age, culture and gender diversity aspects among employees so as to enhance their performance at the place of work. The policy makers working in NGOs in Nairobi should formulate relevant policies to guide the workforce diversity management that are in place.

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