

**THE EFFECT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF GENDER DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT  
POLICY ON EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT IN SELECTED COUNTY GOVERNMENTS  
IN KENYA**

<sup>1\*</sup> **Ogega Ruth Mwango**  
[ogegaruth@yahoo.com](mailto:ogegaruth@yahoo.com)

<sup>2\*\*</sup> **Dr. James Muya, PhD**  
[muyajn@gmail.com](mailto:muyajn@gmail.com)

<sup>3\*\*\*</sup> **Dr. Yobes Benjamin  
Nyaboga, PhD**  
[yobesbenjamin@gmail.com](mailto:yobesbenjamin@gmail.com)

<sup>1,2,3</sup> School of Business and Economics, Kisii University, Kenya

**Abstract**

*This study sought to evaluate the effect of implementation of gender diversity management policy on employee commitment in selected county governments in Kenya. The study was guided by social exchange theory. A descriptive survey was used to explore the effect of implementation of gender diversity management policy. In Kenya, gender diversity management policy, that is the principle that not more than two-thirds of the members of elective or appointive bodies shall be of the same gender should be implemented both by the national and county level governments. It is upon this background that this study sought to evaluate the effect of implementation of gender diversity management policy on employee commitment in selected county governments in Kenya. The focus of the study was 32 county governments that had not complied with the County Government Act on new appointments in regard to implementation of diversity management policies as per the 2016 Nation Cohesion and Integration Commission survey report. A sample of 494 respondents drawn from a target population of 7492 comprising middle level management was obtained using simple random sampling techniques. Data was collected by use of questionnaires. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics which included the mean, standard deviation, frequencies and percentages. Simple regression analysis was used to test the relationship between the implementation of gender diversity management policy and employee commitment. The regression results indicated that the coefficient of implementation of gender diversity policy ( $\beta = 0.1049$ ) is not statistically significant ( $p = 0.0951 > 0.05$ ) in predicting employee commitment. The overall model ( $F(1,406) = 2.7989, P = 0.0951 > 0.05, R^2 = 0.0068$ ) is not statistically significant in explaining the relationship between implementation of gender diversity management policy and employee commitment in selected county governments in Kenya. The study recommended that county governments should seek to establish how to successfully implement gender policy.*

**Keywords:** *Implementation of gender policy, Employee Commitment, County Government, Diversity Management*

**I. INTRODUCTION**

**Background to the Study**

Gender discrimination is one of the important issues that have remained a subject of discussion both in public and private organizations. Increased demographic diversity in the workplace over the last decades has made

effective diversity management a critical organizational task (Olsen, Parsons, Martins & Lyana, 2016). Effective implementation of gender diversity policy is one aspect of global diversity management. Research findings have demonstrated that perceived gender discrimination has an effect on employees' self-esteem, power and prestige, organizational commitment, organizational conflict, less creativity, better communication and the intention to leave (Foley, Ngo, Loi & Zheng, 2015; Olsen *et al.* 2016). Increase in gender diversity has forced many countries and organizations to develop gender diversity management policies (Luanglatha, Ali & Mohannak, 2019). For example, in Australia, the government and other relevant regulatory agencies have regulated women representation in leadership positions by introducing Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 that requires all organizations with more than one hundred employees to give an annual report on their gender equality initiatives (Klettner, Clarke & Boerssma, 2016). It is expected that effective implementation of gender policy should lead to an increase in employee commitment and have a direct effect on the performance of the individual employee and the organization as a whole.

### **Employee Commitment**

Organizational commitment is the degree of employee identification with a particular organization and its goals and the desire to maintain membership (Atmojo, 2015). This attitude to remain committed to the organization is formed at the beginning when individuals first join the organization. The first impression that employees form about the organization in terms of how they are received determines their willingness to stay or leave. Meyer and Allen (1991) have elaborately explained that employee commitment has three dimensions; affective, continuance and normative commitment. When an employee displays an attitude of affective attachment to the organization, it is interpreted as affective commitment. Employees with such commitment have a desire to both identify and involve themselves in the organization without being coerced. In addition, the employees will maintain membership with the organization willingly.

Meyer and Allen (1991) further explain that employees who have a continuance commitment are those who are aware of the costs incurred if they were to leave the organization. Continuance commitment is anchored on the amount of investments individuals have made and a perceived lack of alternative jobs if they were to leave the organization. For example, an employee who has invested a lot of time and energy to learn new skills that cannot be transferred easily to other organizations will stay with the organization with an anticipation that the investment will pay off. Therefore, the fewer the alternative job opportunities that employees believe are available, the stronger is the desire to continue working for the current employer. This study argues that sometimes employees may choose to continue with the organization, not because they have learned a skill that cannot be transferable, but because of the increased lack of employment opportunities. The employee may remain, but their commitment level will be hindering performance.

Employees with normative commitment will stay because they feel it is the most ethical or moral thing to do which compels them to remain. In this case, an employee feels an obligation to remain with the organization regardless of the amount of satisfaction that they derive from their workplace. Meyer and Allen (1991) finally have argued that employees with normative commitment reflect the desire to continue with employment as a sense of responsibility and the moral thing to do. They further argue that normative component of organizational commitment is sometimes influenced by the individual's experiences, both before joining the organization (for example if the person is familiar with the organization or relatives have worked in the same organization) and following organizational socialization that one receives upon entry into the organization. However, the consequences of commitment cannot be underestimated for they can affect organizational performance. These consequences include; job performance, perceived job alternatives, intention to search for

better opportunities, intention to leave, poor attendance, lateness, and turnover (Meyer, 2015). This study intended to test the relationship between diversity management and commitment of employees in terms of affective, continuance and normative commitment.

One way of ensuring employee commitment is by managing people's differences through well-developed and implemented diversity management policies. Diversity management practices within an organization are an indication of an organization's commitment to support employees from all backgrounds (Downey, Werff, Thomas & Plaut, 2015). When employees perceive a positive diversity management climate, they will respond through their job performance and other behaviors such as commitment to the organization or turnover intentions. Employee commitment is therefore an important outcome for organizations in response to diversity management.

Research has shown that although commitment is used to measure employees' general performance, the cause of employee commitment and performance is not exactly known (Ramdhani, Ramdhani & Ainissyifa, 2017). Some studies such as those by Ashikali & Groeneveld (2015), Sabharwal (2014) Barak, Findler & Wind (2016), and Downey, Werff, Thomas & Plaut (2015) have also argued that employee commitment is an outcome of successful implementation of diversity management policies. Many of these studies have however only focused on direct relationships of diversity management and employee commitment with results indicating failure in obtaining a diverse workforce (Choi & Rainey, 2014; Guillaume, Dawson, Otaye-Ebede, Woods & West, 2017). Other researchers (for instance Atmojo, 2015) have also shown that diversity management is affected by several other factors such as organizational leadership.

### **Gender Diversity Management Policy in Kenya**

This study has a focus on implementation of gender diversity policy and programs and how it affects employee commitment in selected county governments in Kenya. This includes focusing on the legal and voluntary gender diversity management policies aimed at the inclusion and advancement of both gender in the workplace. This policies and programs were created through the Constitution of Kenya (2010) with a view of promoting gender representation.

Kenya is one of the countries in Eastern Africa and its independence was attained on December 12, 1963. It was colonized by the British Government. The role of the Kenyan women in governance is first recognized by the founding president of the republic of Kenya, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta in his book Facing Mount Kenya. The book records that Kenyan women played a great role in *Mau Mau* movement by hiding the men from the British army, giving them food and even fighting alongside the men. The Lancaster Conference where Kenyan team negotiated their freedom was attended by five men and one woman. The first Kenyan constitution discriminated women in favor of personal laws. The first constitution Section 82(4) prohibited discrimination with the exception of non-citizens and in respect of adoption, marriage, divorce, burial and devolution of property on death or matters of personal law.

The new Constitution that was promulgated in 2010 was perceived to have ended the struggle of women in regard to discrimination. The women rights were recognized and passed into law such as right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law, right to equal treatment including right to equal opportunities in political, economic, cultural and social spheres (The Kenyan Constitution, 2010). In the new constitution the state is expected to take legislative and other measures which includes affirmative action programs and policies designed to redress any disadvantage suffered by individuals or groups because of past discrimination. The constitution further provides that; *in addition to the measures contemplated in in clause (6), the State shall*

*take legislative and other measures to implement the principle that not more than two-thirds of the members of elective or appointive bodies shall be of the same gender.*

The new constitution further provided for decentralization of power and this created 47 county Governments. Devolution of government brought great changes in leadership which created more room for women to be in leadership positions. The constitution opened more opportunities for women in leadership, equality in employment, equality in access to education and both the public and private sectors are expected to comply with the inclusion principles and gender.

Kenya is a signatory to various international and sub-regional instruments such as ; the universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Beijing Declaration and plat form for Action; the African Union Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Fights on Women in Africa; and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa ( Malia-Louisa, 2018). The 2010, constitution of Kenya is expected to domesticate the commitments it has signed into in order to safeguard human rights as provided for in articles 27 (8),...not more than two-thirds of members of elective or appointive bodies shall be of the same gender. ). Kenya, as a member of the international community, is required to ratify treaties and conventions that call for inclusion of all members of society in all sectors including public service appointments. To date this provision has not been implemented as reported by the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (2016).

Klarbach, Egger, Ukur and Vienna (2013) observe that since independence, the government of Kenya has been faced with management of diversity-related problems, which were brought about by the ‘divide and rule’ strategy employed by the colonizers. These authors further explain that although the constitution for independence had highlighted the importance of safeguarding the rights of minorities, subsequent constitutions only mentioned those rights in general without giving legislations on how they were to be implemented.

The Kenyan public service, whether at the county or national level is mandated through the constitution to have in place a public service that is inclusive and representative of the people’s diversity. This is intended to ensure efficient and effective service delivery (Kenya Constitution, 2010; County Government Act. Article 174 of the constitution mandates the county governments to protect and promote the interests and rights of minorities and marginalized communities. This gives county governments the responsibility to ensure that appointment of staff reflects the face of Kenya without any discrimination.

Despite of the legal policy requirement being in place requiring that employees should not be discriminated on the basis of gender research has shown for example that in Norwagia, the Norwegian quota for board members has had little impact on the female chief executive officers (Klettner *et al.* 2016), and this raises the question of the effectiveness of the gender policy and what effect this can have on employee commitment.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Successful implementation of gender policy is one of the factors that can affect the commitment level of the employees and their productive level. Workforce diversity management is a global concern that has forced most countries to develop various diversity management policies in order to reduce employee discrimination. Gender discrimination is a problem that has been fought since independence through the first constitution and the current new constitution that was promulgated in 2010. Despite the fact that the constitution has provided for the protection and inclusion of both gender in economic opportunities research has shown that the problem is far from being over. Globally, Klettner *et al.* (2016) reports that Norwegian quota for board members has had little impact on the number of women on boards raising the question of success of implementation of

gender policy. In Kenya, parliament has more than twice failed to pass a bill on the two-third gender rule and this is notwithstanding the fact that the president has tried to intervene (Muoki, 2019).

The NCIC (2016) report on gender diversity policy for the public service shows that although the country has ratified many international human rights laws and enacted various domestic laws that promote the rights of women, Kenyan women still face many difficulties, which have perpetuated their lower standing in society. The constitutional requirement of two-thirds (2/3) gender principle has not been obtained (NCIC, 2013 & 2016). Women in Kenya still face structural and systemic discrimination that prevent them from enjoying their rights. Kenyan women remain disadvantaged economically, socially and politically and disparity in employment between women and men still exists despite some improvement being noticed in the recent past (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2017). Additionally, women who have made great strides in academic advancement still face some challenges. For example, studies show that these women's professional requirement clashes with societal expectations of female roles and home management responsibilities. Additionally, some of the women who have made it to top management positions have broken homes, men fear them and they face constant conflicts (Obura Wamahiu, Kariuki, Bunyi, Chege, Njoka & Ruto, 2011).

It is upon this background that this study sought to establish how implementation of gender policy has affected employees' commitment in terms of their gender in the selected county governments.

### **Objective of the Study**

To determine the relationship between implementation of gender diversity management policy and employee commitment in selected county governments in Kenya.

### **Research hypothesis**

The objective of the study was analyzed through the following null hypothesis

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between implementation of gender diversity management policy and employee commitment in selected county governments in Kenya.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Review**

#### **The Social Exchange Theory**

Social exchange theory is among the most influential conceptual paradigms for understanding workplace behavior. The theory was developed by Blau (1964) and it involves a series of interactions that generate obligations which are interdependent and contingent on the actions of another person. These interactions have the potential of generating high-quality relationships depending on the prevailing conditions. Social exchange theory explains the reciprocal relationships between the organization's employees and the employer. The exchange involves a series of sequential transactions between several parties whereby resources are reciprocated by one party repaying the good or bad actions of another (Cropanzano, Anthony, Daniels & Hall, 2016). The transactions or relationships evolve over time into trusting, loyal, and mutual commitments and the parties involved are expected to abide by the rules of exchange. These rules form a normative definition of the situation that is adopted by the participants in the exchange relationship. According to Cropanzano *et al.*, the quality of this relationship depends upon the actor and the target. Where the relationship involves economic exchanges less trust is required and more active monitoring. However, social exchange is open-ended and

involves greater trust and flexibility. In this social exchange relationship, if the employees perceive the organization as supportive, they feel an obligation to return this support in the form of positive attitudes and behaviors that enhance performance. These positive attitudes result in reduced absenteeism and turnover and enhance employee commitment.

Organizational leaders and employees have specific roles to play in this relationship. Individuals are first induced to join and be retained in the organization; once they join, they are expected to perform certain roles, and finally they are expected to be innovative beyond their basic roles. However, employees will not only expect economic rewards, but also social rewards such as organizational justice. Similarly, Birtch, Chiang and Van Esch (2016) argue that when employees fulfill their job demands, they expect to be rewarded, but when the organization fails to reward them, the employees will interpret it as broken contract and this will negatively affect employee commitment. This theory will be useful in understanding the relationships between implementation of diversity management, organizational leadership and employee commitment. Social exchange theory has been used previously by (Birtch *et al.*, 2016; Colquitt, Baer, Long & Galvorsen-Ganepola, 2014).

### **Empirical Literature Review**

#### **Implementation of Gender Diversity Policy and Employee Commitment**

Imam and Shah (2013) study was conducted in three cities in Punjab; Dera Ghazi Khan, Multan and Okara with the aim of investigating the impact of gender bias on organizational commitment in terms of Glass ceiling in the corporate sector. The study argues that present legal framework has not controlled local glass ceiling practices effectively. Using a representative sample 100 respondents, the descriptive statistical test results indicated a strong positive relationship between gender organizational commitment and gender and Glass ceiling. Mapping the same findings on County governments for the current study helped to highlight the extent to which gender policy has been implemented and how it is affecting organizational commitment of the employees.

Berry and Bell (2012) did a study to highlight inequalities created and sustained through gendered, raced, and classed organizational processes and practices among US home health workers. This was done with the aim of showing how US labor laws and court decisions create and support disadvantages for workers who are economically disadvantaged. The study argues that past research on gender has mainly focused on the experiences of women and major barriers such as the glass ceiling and walls, discrimination in the work place, sexual violations, sex segregation, and wage discrimination. The descriptive test results indicate that several types of inequalities still exist in organizations such as stereotyping and discrimination of some job applicants while favoring others. The study further reveals that despite an elaborate diversity policy being in place, women in the US are still discriminated. There is insufficient information on how these inequalities affect employee commitment for female employees and what organizations or policy makers can do.

Memon and Satpathy (2017) did a study that sought to identify variables impacting organizational commitment of female employees in the information technology-business process management in India. Gender bias was one of the variables that were considered for its effect on organizational commitment, especially among female employees. The study used a representative sample of 250 respondents. Descriptive statistical test results indicated a close correlation between organizational commitment and gender bias. Additional findings indicated that a healthy relationship between the supervisor and female employees whereby their presence was acknowledged and contribution appreciated enhances employee commitment towards the organization.

Khedr (2017) explored the gendered beliefs about the glass ceiling using a new measure, known as the 'career pathway surveys', in an under researched country, Egypt. The researcher tested four beliefs about diversity; denial, resilience, acceptance and resignation. In this study, data was collected from 438 employees in Egypt and factor analysis was used to test for validity of the research instrument. Descriptive statistical tests revealed that female respondents showed resignation belief and that male respondents viewed their female counter parts as resilient. Chi-square tests showed differences in beliefs with different age groups, education level, and marital status, number of children, job contracts, job tenure and managerial levels. In addition, the study revealed more intensive glass ceiling barriers in male-dominated organizations. The study can be replicated in other parts of Africa by incorporating additional factors such as organizational leadership and how it affects the commitment level of female employees.

A study by Xie and Zhu (2016) examined the promotion of women managers at an enterprise level in China. The level of women participation among total managerial positions and the available opportunities for promoting women into managerial positions was analyzed. A total of 296 female managers undertaking masters programs was targeted for the study. The study sought to investigate the level of female participation among total managerial positions, the criteria used to promote women into managerial positions, satisfaction of women managers towards promotion opportunities and career development and enterprise policies on women leadership. Descriptive tests indicated positive improvement in promotion of female managers and majority of female managers indicated that they were satisfied with the promotion of women. Most respondents, for example, indicated that they were confident about their capability to be leaders and were equally satisfied with the promotion of women managers in their organization. The findings further showed that promotion of women depended on their capabilities and other achievements. This revelation was contrary to the general believe that social relationship is the most important factor in promotion of women. However, the study shows that the 'glass ceiling' phenomenon still exists because most highly-educated women managers believed it would be difficult to be promoted even further. This study did not however consider many other factors that affect female managers such as their commitment to the organization, effect of overall diversity legislation regarding equal employment opportunities on women in general, or the experiences and expectations of women in the workplace. This creates a gap that can be considered for further research from another context.

Powell and Butterfield (2015) carried out a study to explore the current status of women in management and the explanations offered for this status. Their study was based on a rare empirical field study of the 'glass ceiling' phenomenon that the authors had conducted about 20 years prior. The authors reviewed key arguments on glass ceiling, unexpected results from previous studies, and implication for organizations, which they argued, had largely been ignored. They further reviewed what had happened and what has been learned about the glass ceiling over the last 20 years. Descriptive statistical test results revealed that nothing about the studies and findings on glass ceiling had changed for the last 20 years. The only noted change was that researchers have tried to give more explanations for the existence of the glass ceiling. The study recommended further research on how the glass ceiling can be shattered so as to enhance organizational effectiveness. It specifically recommended that organizations, human resources directors, and internal decision makers adopt practices that can help reduce biasness while making decisions about promotions for top management. In addition, the researchers recommended that society should encourage organizations to adopt ways for shattering glass ceiling that has continuously to disadvantaged women. Taking this line of argument, a study that can consider the role of leaders in gender diversity management as an approach to shatter the ceiling could be appropriate.

Konya, Matic and Pavlovic (2016) conducted a study that sought to evaluate the influence of employee demographics, job characteristics and characteristics of organizations on employee commitment in Central European transitional and post-transitional context. Their argument was that the behavior of individuals in an organization is an important aspect that should be understood. Employee commitment is an indicator of successful organizational behavior. A total of 1400 respondents were targeted and the response rate was 61%. Findings from the descriptive analysis revealed that; gender has no relationship with organizational commitment; two, organizational characteristics, and mostly demographic characteristics, have minimum influence on organizational commitment, and lastly, job characteristics have strong influence on organizational commitment in Central European Organizations. According to the findings from this study, employees that had served for a longer period and had higher educational qualifications, and older employees reported higher levels of commitment to the values of the organization. This was based on the experience that comes with years of service, age and education, which make employees have a better understanding of the organization as well as adopt its values and goals. Employees in management positions had a higher commitment level compared to those in non-management level. Higher position is associated with greater benefits to the employees, which lead to high commitment. This context serves well in analyzing employees who had long work experience and those that had worked for shorter periods. The Kenyan experience with the county governments is unique in that the counties are barely five years old and the context is quite different from the European case. It will be interesting to establish what actually happens within the different demographic groups.

Groeneveld's (2011) explored the differences in turnover and turnover intentions by gender and ethnicity of the native Dutch employees in the Netherlands to establish the effects of diversity management on turnover intention. The descriptive statistical test indicated that women's turnover intention is commonly associated with intrinsic factors while men are affected by extrinsic factors. On the other hand, ethnic minority men were affected by factors such as management of the organization and leadership of the supervisors. Further findings indicated that diversity management had a modest negative effect of diversity management and intention to leave and that commitment levels of employees determine their desire to either stay or leave the organization. Since there are three components of commitment, the study by Groeneveld's can be expanded by assessing implementation of diversity policies and employee commitment.

Morley (2013) examined how gender is constituted in the academy with an aim of showing how gender and power interact with leadership in higher education in the United Kingdom. The study evaluated women's leadership aspirations and why they are absent, why they are not recognized, and lack of meritocracy. Descriptive statistical test revealed that; first, despite the fact that legislation and policy on gender diversity have led to an increase in student enrolment in undergraduate degrees, women representation in leadership and decision-making positions was still low. The study further revealed that women were entering adjunct or insignificant positions (such as part-time), and that those who join the organization are hardly promoted to the most senior positions because of discrimination. This leaves most women bundled or heaped together in lower positions where they undertake unpopular roles. Morley further established that when women are excluded from senior positions, it is an implication that they are not fully represented in decision-making forums such as committees, boards, recruitment panels and the executive. According to Morley, Sweden is one of the countries that had appointed 43% of female Vice Chancellors. However, though this percentage looks encouraging, the rest of the women were over represented in lower levels. Some of the excuses given for excluding women from senior positions included; such positions are seen as very demanding such that they require total commitment from leaders who can be present throughout; that such demands may not be possible for women leaders because of family demands on them. Ignoring the voice of women in decision-making

forums means that issues specific to women are left out. The study creates a gap of questioning the commitment by women to the organization, especially in places where they are not considered for promotion just like is the case with their male counter parts.

Rishani, Mallah, Houssami and Ismail (2015) investigated factors that prevent women in Lebanon from attaining equality with men in senior positions and why men and women viewed these barriers differently. The study's descriptive test results showed that women are more likely to be discriminated against and underrepresented in top management positions. Such discrimination was attributed to organizational cultural barriers. Generally, women, compared to men, were more likely to believe that women face more barriers while climbing the career ladder. However, men blamed the organization for women's underrepresentation than the surrounding culture. Contrary to the expectations, the results indicated that women believed that men are more competent in occupying top management positions in Lebanon. One major limitation of these findings however was that Lebanon is a small country and results may not be generalized. This therefore calls for replication of the study to other countries for better understanding of gender diversity management perspectives and how it can affect employee commitment.

Kim, Lee and Kim (2015) conducted a study to examine gender differences in response to the presence of diversity management and its effect on organizational commitment in a highly male-dominated culture in the US. The study sought to investigate the effect of diversity management on employees' attitudes and behaviour and the gender differences in their perception of diversity management and organizational commitment in a highly male-dominated society. The study was based on a review of literature and statistical analysis including *t*-tests and regressions to test hypotheses. Descriptive test results indicated that female employees viewed diversity management more favorably compared to their male counterparts. However, the results indicated that there was no difference in organizational commitment between male and female employees in regard to diversity management. The study findings further revealed a positive relationship between diversity management and organizational commitment. This study however was interested with the direct relationship between diversity management and employee commitment. It did not address other factors such as the role of leaders in diversity management which is an important factor that could affect implementation of diversity policies.

Imam and Shah (2013) conducted a study to map the environment of glass ceiling practices and to highlight female employees' harassment, discrimination and carrier deterrence practices in the local industry in Punjab, India. The study used descriptive statistical techniques to analyze data and results revealed contrary to findings from other studies that there is a strong positive relationship between organizational commitment and gender discrimination. Notably, organizational commitment did not decrease with the increasing gender discrimination and glass ceiling practices. Since respondents to the study were drawn from small developing cities of Punjab, India, other studies can be conducted in bigger organizations that employ a large number of employees to support the findings by Imam and Shar. In addition, there is need to establish why women remained committed to the organization even when discrimination was evident.

Obura *et al.* (2011) have made a similar claim about discrimination of women. Their study investigated gender equity in education planning and management in Kenya. The descriptive statistical tests reveal that there is a conflict between the professional requirement for women with societal expectations of female roles and home management responsibilities. Further revelations show that women have the servant role both in the work place and at home. In addition, the study shows that women who have managed to climb to the top management positions (most of them) face challenges such as having broken homes; their men think or feel that they have

'grown horns' or they are dominating them,' and are viewed as being stubborn. These women face constant conflicts at home. Some men feel uncomfortable and fear when their wives spend a lot of time in the company of men in the work place. These challenges and misconceptions have subjected women into feeling that they are discriminated against by everyone. In addition, results indicate that constraints from the society and organizational structure have affected the advancement of women in the ministry of education resulting in negative effects on female behaviour and attitude. This is considered as one of the major challenges to implementation diversity policy. The study can be replicated in other organizations to evaluate the challenges the female employees are facing. Too, gender is about male and female and the concentration is only on women it will be interesting to know what male employees are going through in the hands of their female supervisors.

The World Economic Forum (2015) report reveals that human resource is the most important factor that determines a country's competitiveness and performance of an organization. The report further indicates that when only a half of the available country's talent pool is developed and used, a county's or an organization's competitiveness and efficiency is affected negatively. Women are considered as the one-half of a country's population that deserves equal access to employment and power to make decisions. According to the WEF report, as a way of managing diversity, most countries have established employment quotas for women on boards. This is meant to preserve a certain number of positions for women. A similar argument on setting quotas for women is presented by Durbin (2012). Durbin argues that although countries have established quotas to help increase the number of women in the workplace, research has shown that this can only be used as a temporary measure and that it has not benefitted organizations and the targeted groups.

According to Durbin (2012) the quotas are effective in offering a quick solution that forces organizations to comply with the law even though they do not bring about equal representation of ideas for the board position. This is because despite the higher number of women could be there but their potential remains unutilized. On the other hand, there are those who see the quotas as 'tokens'. Women who are appointed to boards through quotas for example, may feel that they were appointed to raise the numbers, and consequently can feel less credible and less empowered to make any meaningful contribution. Worse still, any contribution made by these women is done to please those who appointed them. The women who occupy top positions in the company feel that they will be perceived as part of the quota despite the fact that they have the qualifications to earn them the position. The report does not give sufficient information on how the women are committed to the organizations. This report does not give sufficient information on what organizations are doing to develop the women in order to prepare them for managerial roles. This forms a gap that can be investigated further.

In Kenya, the gender diversity principle states that, 'every public service institution shall implement the principle that not more than two-thirds (2/3) of its employees shall be of the same gender at all levels' (Kenyan Constitution, 2010). Public organizations are mandated with ensuring that gender issues are mainstreamed at the workplace by implementing affirmative action diversity policies. Similarly, Vision 2030, the social pillar for gender, youth and vulnerable groups provides for gender equity (Kenya, Vision 2030). One of the key aims of the government is to increase women participation in all economic, social and political decision-making processes. This line of planning has given much publicity to gender issues of diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

The Kenyan constitution has also provided legislation on management of diversity with an objective of having inclusivity of all people. However, though this ought to be the case, the diversity objective is still far from being achieved. A report on the Kenyan Republic by Bendtsen and Filos (2014) concerning women, peace, and security and employment profile, for example, reveals that women in Kenya are still marginalized. This

marginalization has been blamed on laws, customs, and practices that are discriminatory, or lack of opportunities for education and employment, inability to access information and justice among other things. For instance, the report reveals that in the 2013 general elections out of the 22 cabinet members 6 (28.8%) were women, a figure that is below the two-third gender principle.

Federation of Women Lawyers -FIDA (2013) made a similar report on women concerning the 2013 election results. The report shows that 68% (19%) of the national assembly were women and 81 % men. The senate was composed of 18 (21%) women, and there was no single elected female governor. Statistics on women representation in the government since 1992 to 2014 reveal the following; 1992-1997 (7 women), 1997-2002 (9 women), 2002-2007(18 women), 2007-2012 (22 women), and 2013-2014 (68 women), out of which only 16 were elected the rest were nominations (Bendtsen & Filos, 2014). This situation has improved in the 2017 general election and the country has three elected governors. There is need to however, establish how this negligible number of female legislators is making any meaningful contribution in the midst of large numbers of male counter parts.

A report on women and men in Kenya, facts and figures (Kenya Bureau of Statistics, 2017) shows that women in Kenya are underrepresented in decision- making positions. That more men are represented in all decision-making forums, that is within the legislative, administrative and judicial services, which are the key areas where decisions which are made affect everyone. Though this position has improved in the last general election of 2017 whereby a total of three women governors, three women senators and twenty-three women members of parliament were voted in, there is much that needs to be done to increase women participation in leadership roles. It should be appreciated that political representation is a reflection of the other sectors. These figures indicate some improvement in the increase in the number of female representatives, but the concern according to Heinecken (2009) is that the numbers may not be sufficient to make significant impact in their overall contribution.

### **III. METHODS AND MATERIALS**

#### **Research Design**

The study adopted an explanatory survey research design. This design is appropriate in providing quantitative or numeric descriptions of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population (Creswell, 2014). It was also useful in describing and explaining events as they are in terms of employees' perception of diversity management. The study used questionnaires to collect primary data where generalization from a sample to a population was made. The questionnaires were administered through drop and pick method.

#### **Study Area**

The study was conducted in Kenya which is one of the countries in East African countries. Geographically Kenya is located within 1°00' N latitude and 38°00'E longitude. It borders Tanzania to the south, Uganda to the west, Somalia to the East and Ethiopia to the North. The county governments were established through the constitution in 2010 and came into effect after the 2013 general elections (The Kenya Constitution, 2010). Social cohesion is considered as one of the major pillars that will secure Kenya's growth into a middle income economy and it is the main driver of an efficient and effective public service.

### Target Population

The study was conducted in 32 counties in Kenya that have contravened the County Government Act on new appointments regarding implementation of diversity management policies. An audit report on county government ethnic and diversity compliance with new appointments shows that 32 counties have contravened the County Government Act in implementation of diversity management policies (NCIC, 2016) as shown in table 1 below . Target respondents were drawn from middle-level management, grades F-L who are working at the county head-quarters through purposive sampling technique. The choice of this cadre of employees was appropriate given their ability to read and interpret the questionnaires. Furthermore, these employees are the implementers of various policies and generators of various reports, including reports on implementation of diversity policies in their capacity as heads of departments and sections.

**Table 1: Showing Counties that have contravened the County Government Act in New Appointments**

S/no	County	Total population	% contravened	S/no.	County	Total population	% contravened
1	Kirinyaga	2602	97.8	18	Homa Bay	3676	91.1
2	Elgeyo Marakwet	1850	97.6	19	Kitui	2165	90.8
3	Kisii	3606	97.5	20	West Pokot	909	89.6
4	Tharaka Nithi	1671	95.6	21	Vihiga	1336	88.8
5	Kericho	2550	95.3	22	Nyeri	3055	88
6	Murang'a	2683	95.2	23	Mandera	1685	86.1
7	Uashin Gishu	2599	94.4	24	Kisumu	3423	82.3
8	Turkana	995	93.4	25	Wajir	1179	81.6
9	Nyandrua	1528	93	26	Kakamega	3486	81.2
10	Machakos	3736	92.9	27	Kwale	1424	80
11	Nandi	1129	92.8	28	Bungoma	5561	78.8
12	Siaya	1666	92.7	29	Baringo	4055	78.4
13	Meru	2840	92.6	30	Kilifi	2111	77
14	Samburu	1229	92.4	31	Kajiado	1545	75
15	Makueni	1681	91.6	32	Kiambu	2120	74.4
Total employees						<b>76108</b>	

Source: NCIC (2016) County Audit Report

### Sample Size

The study targeted a population of 7492 (obtained from county Human Resource Records, 2018) employees from three counties, Kisii, Kisumu and Kajiado from which a sample size of 494 from middle level management was obtained. Data was collected from primary sources by use of questionnaires. The predictor variable (gender diversity management policy) was measured by ten (10) questionnaire items that were adapted from Kyalo (2015). A standardized cronbach alpha was examined for the seven items giving an alpha of .805. Employee commitment was measured using three sub constructs of affective, continuance and normative commitments by six (6) questionnaire items each. The items were adapted from (Meyer & Allen, 1991) with

a standard cronbach of .802. Both descriptive (frequencies and percentages) and inferential statistics of the correlations and regressions were used for data analysis.

**Table 2: Shows the Sampled Counties, total number of employees in grade F-L and their respective sample size**

S/no	County	Total number of employees	Sample size
1	Kisumu	2048	135
2	Kisii	3370	222
3	Kajiado	2074	137
<b>Total</b>		<b>7492</b>	<b>494</b>

Source: Respective county human resource records (2018)

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

##### Descriptive Statistics for Implementation of Gender Policy

This section describes how implementation of gender diversity management policy affects employee commitment in county governments of Kenya by first analyzing the descriptive statistic to determine the response rate of the respondents. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which implementation of gender diversity policy affect employee commitment in county governments on a five point Likert scale (where: 1- Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3- Neutral, 4-Agree and 5-Strongly Agree). The results are displayed in table 3.

**Table 3: Showing Implementation of gender Diversity and Employee Commitment, number of Respondents and Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Ge01: Employees have not been discriminated by the employer while hiring and in the recruitment process on gender basis	408	3.71	1.066
Ge02: The organization does a good job of attracting and hiring both male and female	408	3.71	1.001
Ge03: Male employees are given fair treatment than female employees	408	2.11	1.176
Ge04: Female employees are given fair treatment than male employees	408	2.22	1.091
Ge05: Opportunities for growth and advancement exist for female employees than for male in our organization	408	2.14	.968
Ge06: Opportunities for growth and advancement exist for male employees than for female employees in our organization	408	2.63	1.290
Ge07: There are career development programs that favor only male employees in our Organization	408	2.29	1.141
Ge08: There are career development programs that favor only female employees within our organization	408	2.28	1.053
Ge09: Only male employees are involved in the organization’s decision making.	408	1.92	1.092

Ge10: Only female employees are involved in the organization's decision making.	408	1.93	1.023
Valid N (listwise)	408		
<b>Mean</b>			<b>2.494</b>

**Source: Research Data, 2019**

Table 4 shows the total number of respondents, mean and standard deviation for each of the ten items of gender policy. The highest mean was recorded for Ge01: Employees have not been discriminated by the employer while hiring and in the recruitment process on gender basis (3.71) and Ge02: The organization does a good job of attracting and hiring both male and female (3.71). The lowest mean was recorded for Ge10: Only female employees are involved in the organization's decision making (1.93) and Ge09: Only male employees are involved in the organization's decision making (1.92). All the eight items used to measure gender policy were within one standard deviation. The grand mean for gender policy is 2.494. The average number of respondents indicated that gender diversity policy has been effective in addressing gender issues (2.494). This suggested that the respondents generally agreed that county governments have shown some effort in implementing gender policy.

**Inferential Statistics for Implementation of Gender Policy**

Results for regression analysis on the relationship between implementation of gender diversity management policy and employee commitment in selected county governments in Kenya are as shown in table 4.

**Table 1: Showing the Effect of Implementation of Gender Diversity Management Policy on Employee Commitment in County Governments in Kenya**

Outcome Variable							
Employee Commitment							
Model Summary							
	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	P
Model	0.0827	0.0068	0.9219	2.7989	1.000	406.000	0.0951
	Coeff	Se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	
Constant	2.1067	0.1500	14.0461	0.0000	1.8118	2.4015	
Gender_Policy	0.1049	0.0627	1.6730	0.0951	-0.0184	0.2282	

**Source: Research Data, 2019**

According to regression results in table 4, the coefficient of implementation of gender diversity policy ( $\beta = 0.1049$ ) is not statistically significant ( $p = 0.0951 > 0.05$ ) in predicting employee commitment. The decision therefore is that we fail to reject the null hypothesis at  $\alpha = .05$  and conclude that there was no statistically significant relationship between implementation of gender diversity policy and employee commitment in selected county governments in Kenya.

The overall model [ $F(1,406) = 2.7989, P = 0.0951 > 0.05, R^2 = 0.0068$ ] is not statistically significant in explaining the relationship between gender diversity policy and employee commitment. The findings are in agreement with Konya *et al.* (2016) whose study findings showed that gender does not have any influence on

organizational commitment. Kherd (2017) results also indicated that female employees in Egypt had shown signs of resignation towards diversity management. These findings were however contrary to those by Mousa (2018) who had established a positive relationship between inclusive diversity climate and affective, continuance, and normative employee commitment. The study also contradicts Memon and Satpathy (2017) whose study results showed a close correlation between organizational commitment and gender bias. The NCIC (2016) diversity report indicates a gender balance gap in the county's but the results show no relationship between this gap and employee commitment. The difference could be attributed to the synergetic effect of implementing diversity management policies jointly as opposed to implementing each policy on its own. The study also suggests that different context will yield different results.

## V. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Summary of Findings

This study sought to establish the effect of implementation of gender diversity management policy on employee commitment in selected counties in Kenya. The specific objective of this study was to determine the relationship between implementation of gender diversity management policy and employee commitment in selected county governments in Kenya. Simple regression analysis was used to test the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): there is no significant relationship between implementation of gender diversity management policy and employee commitment in selected county governments in Kenya).

Implementation of gender policy had ten items. All the items were framed positively to imply that there is no problem in regard to gender related employment issues (for example: The organization does a good job of attracting and hiring both male and female; Male employees are given fair treatment than female employees). The grand mean of the responses was 2.494 which implied that majority of the employees disagreed with the statements that employees were discriminated on the basis of their gender. Results indicated that the coefficient of implementation of gender diversity policy ( $\beta = 0.1049$ ) is not statistically significant ( $p = 0.0951 > 0.05$ ) in predicting employee commitment. Regression analysis for hypothesis ( $H_0$ ), on gender policy showed that implementation of gender diversity management was not statistically significant in predicting employee commitment and therefore the decision was to accept the alternative hypothesis. The overall model [ $F(1,406) = 2.7989, P = 0.0951 > 0.05, R^2 = 0.0068$ ] shows that implementation of gender policy is not statistically significant in explaining the relationship between gender diversity policy and employee commitment.

### Conclusion

In testing the relationship between implementation of gender diversity policy and employee commitment, the study findings revealed that there was no significant relationship between implementation of gender diversity policy and employee commitment. The findings supported the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between implementation of gender policy and employee commitment in selected county governments in Kenya. These findings are contrary to the reviewed literature which indicated that management of gender diversity both at the global and regional level was still far from being successful (Memon & Satpathy, 2017; Khedr, 2017; Xie & Zhu, 2016). The NCIC (2016) report showed that gender policy had not been successfully implemented but the respondents indicated a contrary opinion a suggestion that most employees having worked for less than five years (57.6 %) may not be conversant with diversity management policy issues.

## Recommendations

This study had sought to evaluate the effect of implementation of gender diversity management policy on employee commitment in selected county governments in Kenya. The study has demonstrated that most studies mostly highlight the problems of gender by showing that the gender gap continues to exist. However, this study has shown that though the gender gap continues to exist, implementation of gender policy is not significant in explaining the level of employee commitment. Research findings from this study contribute to knowledge in the areas of implementation of gender diversity management policy and employee commitment (Kherdr, 2016; Xie & Zhu, 2016). Since the findings have not supported the NCIC (2016) report on implementation of diversity management policies, these findings suggest that organizational leaders should develop diversity management training programs to sensitize the people on the important diversity policy. From a managerial perspective, the study findings would be beneficial to corporate practice in various ways. In testing the relationship between implementation of diversity management policies (gender, ethnicity, disability and diversity training) and organizational commitment, for example, the study contributes to empirical evidence in that, implementation of diversity management policies has a positive and significant effect on employee commitment to the organization, an important reminder for leaders to establish the extent to which policies have or have not been implemented and their overall effectiveness. There is little research in this area and therefore this is a very rich source of knowledge in implementation of diversity management policies, its effect on employee commitment and how organizational leadership role mediates this relationship.

Secondly, the study contributes to the existing literature in several ways. For example, it adds information to the study of implementation of diversity management policies within the operational dimension of employee commitment. Previous studies such as Ashikal and Groeneveld (2015); Keskes (2014); Atmojo (2013) and Jin *et al.*, (2017) have also established that employee commitment is achieved through effective diversity management policies and a supportive organizational leadership. Further the study has a contribution to existing literature by showing that organizational leadership role in terms of support for implementation of diversity management policies has full mediation on the relationship between implementation of diversity management policies and organizational commitment. These findings reveal that having sound diversity management policies in place without the involvement of organizational leaders will hinder effective implementation of diversity management policies. Leaders play a key role in implementation of legal and voluntary diversity policies.

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