

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, IT & MANAGEMENT

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# CONTENTS

<b>Sr. No.</b>	<b>TITLE &amp; NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
1.	<b>PERFORMANCE OF KHADI AND VILLAGE INDUSTRIES COMMISSION (KVIC) IN INDIA</b> <i>SK.GHOUSE, K. RAJAIAH &amp; P.R SIVASANKAR</i>	1
2.	<b>COST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN INDIA: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY</b> <i>DR. SAMBHAVNA GUPTA, DR. R. K. SHARMA &amp; DR. M.S.S. RAJU</i>	6
3.	<b>IMPLICATIONS OF INFLATION ON INVESTMENT DECISIONS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY</b> <i>DR. SANJIV MITTAL, RITESH GUPTA &amp; DR. SUNIL GUPTA</i>	10
4.	<b>STUDY OF THE EDUCATIONAL LEVEL AND IT'S INFLUENCE ON MALL SHOPPING BEHAVIOUR</b> <i>DR. ANIL CHANDHOK &amp; DR. BHAVET</i>	14
5.	<b>THE NETWORK CONFIGURATION OF AN OBJECT RELATIONAL DATABASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM: A REVIEW</b> <i>DEEPSHIKHA</i>	17
6.	<b>ISLAMIC BANKING: AWARENESS AND PERCEPTIONS (A STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SOUTH INDIA, INDIA)</b> <i>DR. A. MOHAMED SALI &amp; DR. K. SALEEM KHAN</i>	19
7.	<b>A STUDY ON COMPETENCY MAPPING OF THE EXECUTIVES AND ITS IMPLICATION ON THEIR PERFORMANCE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MNC, CHENNAI, INDIA</b> <i>DR. VIMALA VENUGOPAL &amp; RIZALDY RAPSING</i>	24
8.	<b>QUALITY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN HIGHER EDUCATION</b> <i>SHEETAL DUBEY</i>	28
9.	<b>A STUDY ON IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES ON BRAND AWARENESS IN DAIRY INDUSTRY</b> <i>P SUJATHA</i>	30
10.	<b>AMERICAN AND CHINESE CULTURES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY</b> <i>ROBIN INDERPAL SINGH</i>	33
11.	<b>PERCEPTION OF THE POLICYHOLDERS TOWARDS SERVICE QUALITY OF THE LIFE INSURANCE CORPORATION OF INDIA IN BANGALORE DIVISION</b> <i>DR. SHOBHA. C</i>	37
12.	<b>INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS OF INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERS: A CASE STUDY</b> <i>CHIRAG PATHANIA &amp; NUPUR KUMAR</i>	43
13.	<b>AN INVESTIGATION INTO DEFICIENCIES IN STRATEGIES OF MANAGING EMPLOYEE DIVERSITY IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN KENYA: A SURVEY OF SELECTED HOTELS IN MOMBASA COUNTY</b> <i>VICTORIA TUMAINI &amp; KARIM OMIDO</i>	49
14.	<b>TPAS: A CURE FOR THE INDIAN HEALTH INSURANCE SECTOR</b> <i>MANJUSHREE S</i>	57
15.	<b>2011 CONTINENTAL ECONOMIC COMPARISON: AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION</b> <i>ABDURRAUF IDOWU BABALOLA</i>	62
	<b>REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK &amp; DISCLAIMER</b>	70

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# AN INVESTIGATION INTO DEFICIENCIES IN STRATEGIES OF MANAGING EMPLOYEE DIVERSITY IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN KENYA: A SURVEY OF SELECTED HOTELS IN MOMBASA COUNTY

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## ABSTRACT

*This study looks into the existing strategies of managing diversity in the Hotel Industry. Workforce diversity means the extent of heterogeneity of workforce demographics of visible characteristics like race, religion, gender, disability, age, education, skills and ethnic composition of the workforce. Organizations have revitalized the concept of diversity to specifically focus on the intangible aspects of the organization. Diversity in an organization's context is the extent to which a firm values and tolerates differences, recognizes, evaluates and rewards individual's different viewpoints, which in turn, contribute to a rich cognitive pool of ideas, experience and knowledge. Diversity in the hotel industry is by no means an exception. This study was conducted through a purposive sampling of 3-star rated hotels within Mombasa County. The study aimed at establishing the existing strategies and how effective they are adhered to besides establishing the challenges experienced by employees and management in the course of managing diversity. Data was collected using a questionnaire whose analysis was done using descriptive statistics of frequency distribution and percentages as well as inferential statistics involving correlation. It was found that employees are aware of diversity strategies. The study also showed that most of the respondents agreed being content with strategies of managing diversity.*

## KEYWORDS/ABBREVIATIONS USED

IBM	:	International Business Machine
HRM	:	Human Resource Manager
USA	:	United States of America
UK	:	United Kingdom
IT	:	Information Technology
WW II	:	World War Two

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Teicher and Spearitt (1996) demonstrate how diversity promoting initiatives that have traditionally sought and supported equal opportunities are being replaced with those advocating practices associated with the new diversity management. Organizations that learn to accommodate and manage diversity can accrue a variety of benefits. Cox (1991) argues that the successful management diversity can have positive impact on both tangible measures of organizational effectiveness, for example cost and resource acquisition and intangible dimensions such as creativity and problem solving capabilities. Workforce diversity is often measured by Blau's (1977) index of heterogeneity of selected workforce demographics (Richard 2000). These demographics make it clear that predicting social category processes are important determinants of co-operation and competition simply knowing that a person belongs to one's own demographic group is sufficient to trigger inn group categorization and co-operation (Oakes et al 1994). Robinson and Dechant (1997) have shown not only that making room for diversity is politically correct or ethically commendable, but that it is possible to build a compellingly rationale case for the effective accommodation of diversity at work. This leads to a more managerially focused set of ideas that are articulated in a variety of broadly similar ways such as learning to work with different people (Iles, 1995). Therefore, organizations need to put in place sound management of diversity strategies. Mombasa County is at the heart of hospitality industry; therefore it enjoys the existence of well-established network of different categories of hotels. It is in this background that five three star hotels have been purposively sampled in this survey.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This discusses both the theoretical and empirical reviews regarding issues of diversity at work place.

### 2.1 THEORETICAL REVIEW

According to social identity theory, it is predictable that people will exhibit a favourable bias toward others who are viewed as members of their in group and they will view themselves as being in conflict with out – group members (Turner and Haslam, 2001). Social identity theory is clear in predicting that social categories processes are important determinants of co-operation and competition simply knowing that a person belongs to one's own demographic group is sufficient to trigger inn group categorization and co-operation (Oakes et al 1994).

Heuristics theory involves stereotypes, prejudice and bias resulting from demands to process vast quantities of information essentially the categorization from attributes like the demographic characteristics (Falkenberg 1990), are often based on perceived stereotypes individuals manage their limited capacities for cognitive processes by deriving stereotypes as a heuristic or rule of thumb (Frisky and Taylor, 1991). Therefore stereotypes are often used to define group membership and to predict behaviour.

Park's theories of race relations illustrate the doctrine off obstacles and the criticism existing among generational groups. It touches on cycle of contact beyond race and gender; unleashing the power by one's total workforce by managing diversity.

### 2.2 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

De Cenzo and Robinson (2007) posit that many organizations today have workforce diversity programs. They tend to hire, promote, and retain minorities; and provide diversity training for employees. Some like Coca-cola, Motorola and Mars actually conduct cultural audits to ensure that diversity is pervasive in the organization. They continue to elucidate their position by asserting that to waste assets, and that is not bad business, it is the kind of thinking that today, in our competitive marketplace, will put a business out of business.

Equal opportunity is providing level playing field on which all can compete on equal terms (Torrington and Taylor, 2005). The equal opportunities approach seeks to influence behaviour through legislation so that discrimination is prevented. It has been characterized by a moral and ethical stance promoting the rights of all members of society (Jewson and Mason, 1986).

Culture is basically reviewed on the basis of nationality, but given the polyglot nature of many countries, Hofstede (1980) a Dutch social psychologist, noted that people from different cultures are different. It is on the basis of such differences, which build the rationale for investigating into the strategies of managing diversity. Cultural bias includes both prejudice and discrimination.

### 2.3 CRITIQUE OF THE EXISTING LITERATURE

As can be observed from the literature review, Turner and Haslam, (2001) noted that people see those that have some aspects of similar semblance as emerging from one group. They however did not show cause how diversity strategies played a role in persons not having similar characteristics. Equally, while Falkenberg (1990) expressed opinion on diversity strategies and the existence of stereotypes, he failed to shed light on how diversity could be made sweeping given differences in prejudice among individuals.

Insofar as the empirical literature was concerned, De Cenzo and Robinson (2007) alluded to the realism of diversity strategy programs in the workforce. But they did not explicitly denote what and how attributes of diversity led to this. The purpose of this study was thus to investigate deficiencies in strategies of managing employee diversity in the hospitality industry in Kenya.

## 3. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings would help provoke HRMs to do more in ensuring diversity. The Human Resources Department in particular will aid adopt strategies that would work well for managing diversity. Service providers in hospitality sector will benefit by appreciating the values, customs different opinions and expectations of their customers. They will revive diversity strategies and make them part of their business profitability.

## 4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Globalization has made the world a global village hence making management of human diversity more dynamic. This internalization has made organizations to have workforce from different cultural backgrounds hence a need to have efficient strategies of managing diversity (Francis, 2012).

But managing these strategies has not been easy (Alfred, 2011). Similar scenarios have emerged with the revival of the East African Community that has opened doors to nationals from the region. This has brought people with different cultures, religion, and expectations into the melting pot of the firm. Consequently, strategies advocated to accommodate diversity has not been without hurdle (Onyango, 2012).

While much discussion has been devoted to organizational diversity, less attention has been given to issues associated with strategy deficiencies of managing diversity within organizations (Guire et.al., 2007). Managers globally are experiencing problems managing workers of different generations with different approaches to work. In Kenya for instance, women seem to continue being marginalized even with government legislation of gender equality (Mukhongo, 2013). There appears lack of information or research on adherence to the regulation hence the information gap. There was need therefore to investigate efficiency in strategies of managing diversity issues in the beach hotels in Mombasa County.

## 5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

### 5.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The broad objective of this study was to assess strategies used in managing diversity in the corporate setting.

### 5.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of this study were:

1. To identify the efficiency of the existing strategies of managing diversity in hotels.
2. To determine the challenges that institutions face in managing diversity.
3. To identify the best practices applied in managing diversity at hotels in Mombasa County.

## 6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The research methodology adopted guided the conduct and procedure of this study. It covered inter alia the research design, target population, data collection method and data analysis and presentation.

### 6.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The exploratory descriptive survey was used in the study. This design involved studying issues of diversity and inefficiencies in the strategy of managing diversity. This research design targeted employers and employees. They were able to respond to the items in the questionnaires in their places of work and had an opportunity to give the views on the different strategies of managing diversity as applied in their organization.

### 6.3 TARGET POPULATION

The target population of the study comprised five three-star rated beach hotels, both private and public within Mombasa County. The following sufficed:-

TABLE 6.1: TARGET POPULATION

Name of Hotel	No of Employees Available	No. of Managers Available	Total
Mombasa Beach	130	9	139
Bahari Beach	119	7	126
Reef Hotel	100	6	106
Indiana Beach	110	6	116
Voyager Beach	260	7	267
Total	719	35	754

SOURCE: Kenya Union of Domestic Hotels, Educational Institutions, Hospitals and Allied Workers (2014)

### 6.4 SAMPLE SIZE

The sample was purposively selected to include seven hundred and nineteen workers and thirty five managers. The sample size was then be compelled to ten percent of each category to give seventy two workers and five managers.

TABLE 6.2: SAMPLE SIZE

Name of Hotel	Population of employees	Ratio	Sample Employees (n)	Population of Managers	Ratio	Sample Managers (n)
Mombasa Beach	130	0.10	13	9	0.10	1
Bahari Beach	119	0.10	12	7	0.10	1
Reef Hotel	100	0.10	10	6	0.10	1
Indiana Beach	110	0.10	11	6	0.10	1
Voyager Beach	260	0.10	26	7	0.10	1
Total	719	0.10	72	35	0.10	5

## 6.5 DATA COLLECTION

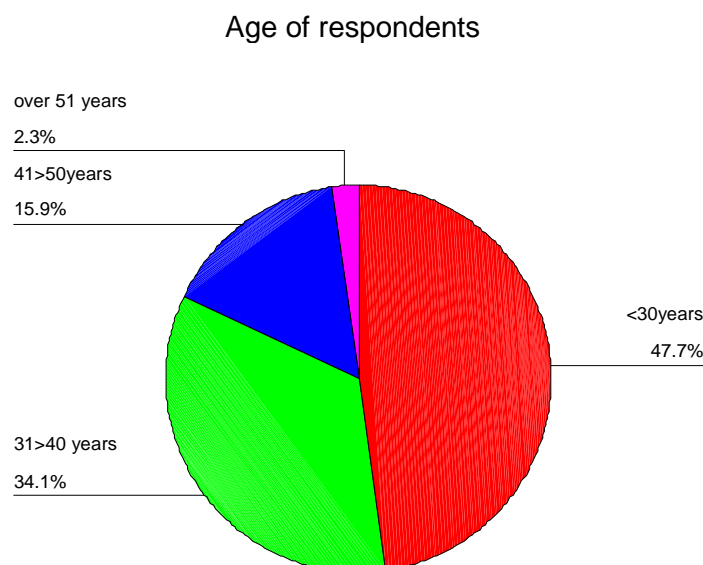
Data was collected from each of the respondent from the purposively selected hotels by use of two questionnaires; one for managers and another one for employees. Each of the Questionnaires had both close ended and open questions on existing strategies of managing diversity.

## 7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 7.1 GENDER

The gender of the respondents was 66% males and 34% females. Out of these, almost half of the respondents fell in the category of 30 years and below.

FIG. 7.1: AGE DISTRIBUTION



### 7.2 GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS

FIG. 7.2: DISTRIBUTION OF MALE ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS BY AGE

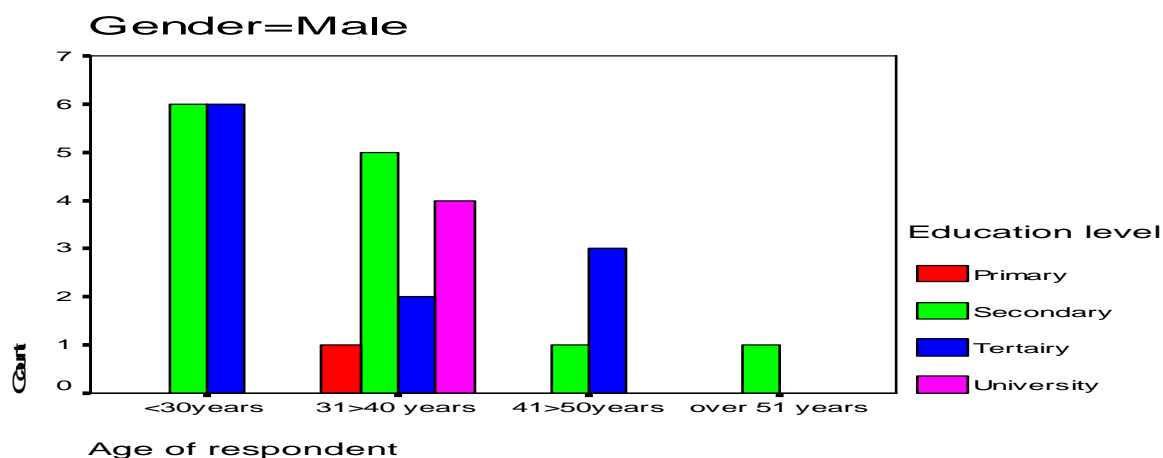
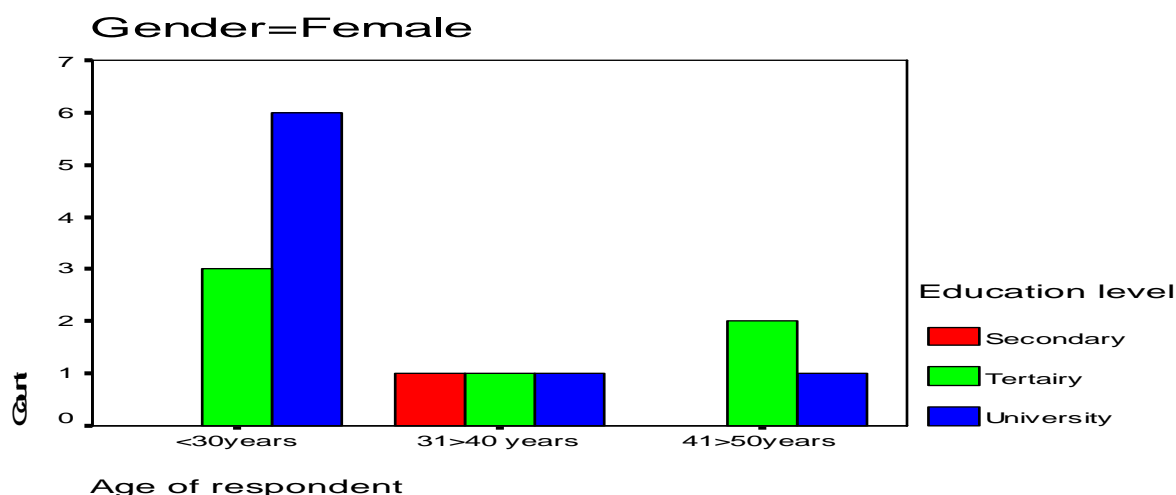


FIG. 7.3: DISTRIBUTION OF FEMALE ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS BY AGE



Apparently, the only group that had had a university education is that between 31 and 40 years. It is the same group that had respondents who only reached primary level of education. A negligible number of the females had university education and none was of primary level of education.

TABLE 7.1: INFERENTIALS FOR THE VARIABLES OF AGE, GENDER, EDUCATION LEVEL AND JOB CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS

	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic
Age of respondent	1.73	0.85
Gender of the respondent	1.34	0.48
Education Level of respondent	2.93	0.79
Respondent's Job Category	3.16	1.02

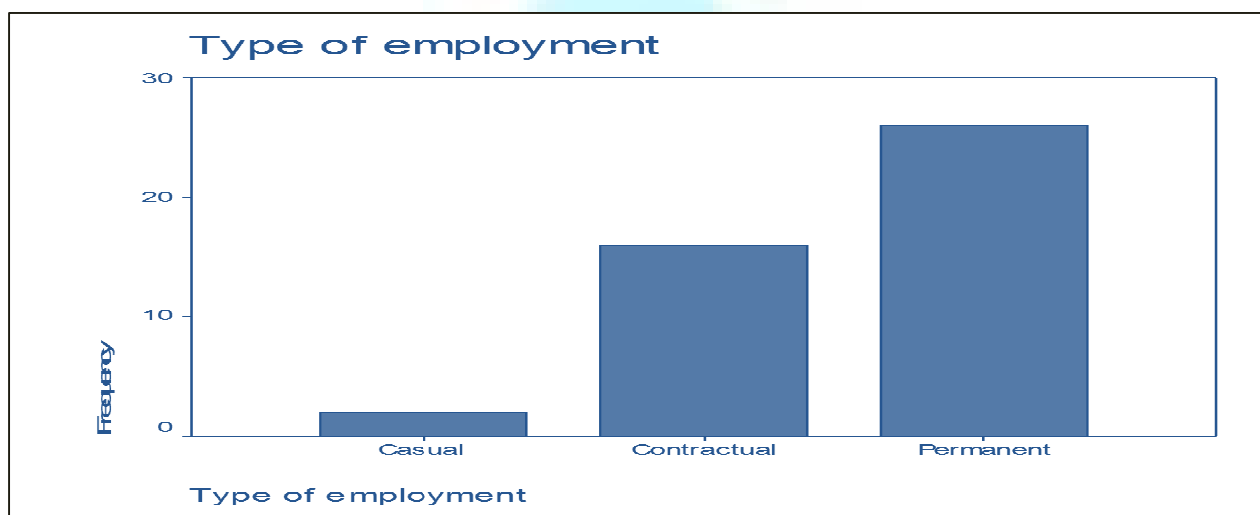
Most respondents are of a mean age of between 31 and 40 years. The gender of respondents was predominantly female with a mean of 1.34. As for the education level, the mean of 2.93 indicates that most of the respondents had reached tertiary level of education. Most respondents also came from among the middle level management with a mean of 3.16.

TABLE 7.2: YEARS OF SERVICE IN CURRENT HOTEL

Years of service in current hotel	Total
Mean number of working years	5.43
Median	3.00
Std. Deviation	4.66

The table reveals the mean number of years served as 5.43. This mean had a particularly high deviation of 4.66 years, perhaps due to the fact that 66% of respondents had worked for 5 years and below yet a few had clocked huge periods of service with the highest doing 21 years.

TABLE 7.4: TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT



From the study, the type of employment agreement that the respondents fall under are Casuals 5%, those on Contract 36% and those on Permanent employment 59%. This is a positive connotation since the hotel industry has been assumed to have more staff who are not permanent given the seasonal nature of operations.

### 7.3 DIVERSITY AND PERFORMANCE

TABLE 7.3: DIVERSITY AND RECRUITMENT

Diversity and recruitment statements	Mean	Std. Dev.
Top management support minority recruitment	3.57	1.02
Current job description and selection processes reflect minority's needs	3.39	1.28
Minority employees are present on selection committees	3.05	1.45
The hotel policies aimed at attracting minority employees	3.34	1.41
Presence of minority employees in HR department	3.25	1.26
Special consideration for minority employees	3.20	1.53

From the results, it is evident that the senior managers to a large extent are in agreement with all assertions of the presence and support of diversity practices in their organizations. 'Top management support minority recruitment' and 'Current job description and selection processes reflect minority's needs' with both cases cumulatively pegged at 75%.

TABLE 7.4: DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Diversity management strategies statements	mean	Std. Dev.
Equal opportunities	3.27	1.23
Recruitment practices	3.16	1.26
Racial / Ethnic balance	3.05	1.33
Promotion practices	2.98	1.19
Cultural diversity	2.84	1.18
Gender balance	3.32	1.33
Age balance	3.36	1.16

The respondents seem to have a positive view as regards 'Equal opportunities', 'Recruitment practices', 'Gender balance' as well as 'Age balance'. The same cannot be said of 'Promotion practices'. Opinion on 'management strategies', 'Racial/ Ethnic balance' and 'Cultural diversity' were not significant as to affect performance in relation to diversity.

TABLE 7.5: MANAGERIAL STRATEGIES

Managerial challenges		High	Moderate	Low
Challenges impacting on Managerial function due to workforce diversity	Rate of absenteeism	25%	50%	25%
	Level of conflicts	0	75%	25%
	Increase in Training costs	25%	25%	50%

The results indicate that 'Rate of absenteeism' does not pose a major challenge to those at the managerial level in managing their workforce just as the case with 'Level of conflicts'. However, it seems that those at the management level do not see a significant impact towards their work as the 'Increase in Training costs' of the workforce is rather low. This phenomenon could be as a result of the organizations not focusing on training their staff on matters related to diversity at the workplace.

## 8. FINDINGS

### 8.1 SUMMARY

In the growing globalization and changing legislation, hotel industry needs to be proactive in the strategies of managing diversity. Hotels studied seemed to be within the legislative requirement of thirty percent female adherence in recruitment though some departments like Accounts had no single female employee in the five hotels studied.

Respondents seemed to agree with the diversity strategies namely 'minority representation' in which respondents who 'Agreed' with the statements were all above the majority, while those who 'Disagreed' were in the minority, which translated to a ratio of four to one in favour of those who supported the view.

From the data analyzed the results indicated that a majority of the respondents are Christians with those professing Islam and African Traditional religion comprising of negligible numbers. This perhaps requires further investigation since the area within which the study was carried out is predominantly occupied by Muslims.

## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is need for diversity awareness and training in diversity management issues which are lacking in the hotel organizations.
- Existing gains need to be consolidated and reinforced through affirmative action so as to fortify the concept and practice of diversity management preferably through articulating and putting in place diversity management policies inter alia to maintain staff and advocate for loyalty to their employers.
- Both senior management and subordinate staff at various levels in hierarchy need to undergo team building exercises every once in a while to curtail any simmering tensions that could emanate from misgivings, misunderstanding and stereotypical tendencies arising out of hotchpotch misapprehension and misconception.

## 10. CONCLUSION

There are numerous benefits that emerge when diversity is exhibited in firms and institutions. These do not preclude benefits to humanity apart from the organisations themselves. Unity needs to be cultured in the face of diversity for performance and productivity to increase to expectations. This is a certain affair but that requires time, effort and patience.

## 11. LIMITATIONS

The following limitations were faced during the study.

1. While the number of respondents was adequate, generalizability is limited to only respondents in three star rated hotels within Mombasa County.
2. The study excluded other stakeholders in different parts of the country.

## 12. SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

More research needs to be carried out on reasons hindering the implementation of diversity policies.

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE TO EMPLOYEES

## A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Please tick or fill in the most appropriate responses.

1. Age of respondent:  
☐ <30 years      ☐ 31>40 years      ☐ 41>50 years      ☐ over 51 years
2. Gender:  
☐ Male      ☐ Female
3. Education level:  
☐ Primary      ☐ Secondary      ☐ Tertiary      ☐ University
4. Job Category:  
☐ Senior Manager      ☐ Middle Level Manager      ☐ Supervisor      ☐ Staff
5. Department:  
☐ Front Office      ☐ Marketing      ☐ Human Resource      ☐ Maintenance      ☐ Food and Beverage      ☐ Housekeeping      ☐ Accounts  
 Other, please specify .....
6. Years of service in this Hotel .....
7. Type of employment:  
☐ Part Time      ☐ Contractual      ☐ Permanent
8. Religion: .....
9. Nationality:  
☐ Kenyan      ☐ Other
10. Origin of your county:  
☐ Mombasa      ☐ Other County (Please specify) .....

Please circle one number on a scale of 1-5 that best approximate the extent to which you agree with each statement regarding your organization.

Strongly Disagree Moderately Disagree Neutral Moderately Agree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

## B: MINORITY REPRESENTATION

Minorities are proportionately represented among this organization's senior management	1	2	3	4	5
Minorities are proportionately represented in this organization's managerial positions	1	2	3	4	5
Minorities are proportionately represented in this organization's non –managerial positions	1	2	3	4	5

Please specify any other minority representation

Please circle one number on a scale of 1-5 that best approximate the extent to which you agree with each statement regarding your organization.

Strongly Disagree Moderately Disagree Neutral Moderately Agree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

## C: DIVERSITY PRACTICES

I believe this organization has a diverse workforce	1	2	3	4	5
My team / unit is composed of diverse employees	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that my organization encourages diversity in my workplace	1	2	3	4	5
I feel included in my organization	1	2	3	4	5

Please specify any other existing diversity practices

Please circle one number on a scale of 1-5 that best approximate the extent to which you agree with each statement regarding your organization.

Strongly Disagree Moderately Disagree Neutral Moderately Agree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

## D: DIVERSITY AND RECRUITMENT

Top management supports minority recruitment	1	2	3	4	5
Current job description and selection processes reflect minority's needs	1	2	3	4	5
Minority employees are present on selection committee	1	2	3	4	5
The hotel has policies aimed at attracting minority employees	1	2	3	4	5
Presence of minority employees in HRM department	1	2	3	4	5
Special consideration for minority employees	1	2	3	4	5

Please highlight any other existing aspects of recruitment

Please circle one number on a scale of 1-5 that best approximate the extent to which you agree with each statement regarding your organization.

## E: Diversity Management Strategies

To what extent are each of the strategies used to manage workforce diversity at your hotel?

1= Never; 2= Rarely; 3= Neutral; 4= Frequently; 5= Always

Equal opportunities for all	1	2	3	4	5
Recruitment practices	1	2	3	4	5
Racial / Ethnic Balance	1	2	3	4	5
Promotion practices	1	2	3	4	5
Cultural diversity	1	2	3	4	5
Gender balance	1	2	3	4	5
Age balance	1	2	3	4	5

Please identify any other preferred strategies of managing diversity

Please circle one number on a scale of 1-5 that best approximate the extent to which you agree with each statement regarding your organization.

## APPENDIX II: QUESTIONNAIRE TO MANAGERS

## A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Please tick or fill in the most appropriate responses.

11. Age of respondent:  
☐ <30 years      ☐ 31>40 years      ☐ 41>50 years      ☐ over 51 years
12. Gender:  
☐ Male      ☐ Female

13. Education level:

Primary Secondary Tertiary University

14. Job Category:

Senior Manager Middle Level Manager Supervisor Staff

15. Department:

Front Office Marketing Human Resource Maintenance Food and Beverage Housekeeping Accounts

Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

16. Years of service in this Hotel: \_\_\_\_\_

17. Type of employment:

Part Time Contractual Permanent

18. Religion: \_\_\_\_\_

19. Nationality:

Kenyan Other

20. Origin of your county:

Mombasa Other County (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle one number on a scale of 1-5 that best approximate the extent to which you agree with each statement regarding your organization.

Strongly Disagree Moderately Disagree Neutral Moderately Agree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

**B: MINORITY REPRESENTATION**

Minorities are proportionately represented among this organization's senior management	1	2	3	4	5
Minorities are proportionately represented in this organization's managerial positions	1	2	3	4	5
Minorities are proportionately represented in this organization's non –managerial positions	1	2	3	4	5

Please specify any other minority representation

Please circle one number on a scale of 1-5 that best approximate the extent to which you agree with each statement regarding your organization.

Strongly Disagree Moderately Disagree Neutral Moderately Agree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

**C: DIVERSITY PRACTICES**

I believe this organization has a diverse workforce	1	2	3	4	5
My team / unit is composed of diverse employees	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that my organization encourages diversity in my workplace	1	2	3	4	5
I feel included in my organization	1	2	3	4	5

Please specify any other existing diversity practices

Please circle one number on a scale of 1-5 that best approximate the extent to which you agree with each statement regarding your organization.

Strongly Disagree Moderately Disagree Neutral Moderately Agree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

**D: DIVERSITY AND RECRUITMENT**

Top management supports minority recruitment	1	2	3	4	5
Current job description and selection processes reflect minority's needs	1	2	3	4	5
Minority employees are present on selection committee	1	2	3	4	5
The hotel has policies aimed at attracting minority employees	1	2	3	4	5
Presence of minority employees in HRM department	1	2	3	4	5
Special consideration for minority employees	1	2	3	4	5

Please highlight any other existing aspects of recruitment

Please circle one number on a scale of 1-5 that best approximate the extent to which you agree with each statement regarding your organization.

Strongly Disagree Moderately Disagree Neutral Moderately Agree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

**E: DIVERSITY AND PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL**

Appraisal ratings are focused on the individuals' performance, not personality	1	2	3	4	5
Are you using similar appraisal tools for all	1	2	3	4	5
The background of the appraiser does not influence the performance ratings of the appraisee	1	2	3	4	5
Diverse employees are included on appraisal panels	1	2	3	4	5

Please specify any other preferred way of ensuring fairness.

Please circle one number on a scale of 1-5 that best approximate the extent to which you agree with each statement regarding your organization.

**F: Diversity Management Strategies**

To what extent are each of the strategies used to manage workforce diversity at your hotel?

1= Never; 2 =Rarely; 3 = Neutral; 4= Frequently; 5= Always

Equal opportunities for all	1	2	3	4	5
Recruitment practices	1	2	3	4	5
Racial / Ethnic Balance	1	2	3	4	5
Promotion practices	1	2	3	4	5
Cultural diversity	1	2	3	4	5
Gender balance	1	2	3	4	5
Age balance	1	2	3	4	5

Please identify any other preferred strategies of managing diversity

Please circle one number on a scale of 1-5 that best approximate the extent to which you agree with each statement regarding your organization.

Strongly Disagree Moderately Disagree Neutral Moderately Agree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

**G: Challenges facing your organization from workforce diversity**

5= low;

3= moderate;

1= high;

Adaption by minorities to the organization's culture	1	3	5
Degree of communication	1	3	5
Cross –cultural interaction	1	3	5
Complying with equal opportunity legislation	1	3	5

H: Challenges impacting on managerial function due to workforce diversity

1= high;

3= moderate;

5= low;

Rate of absenteeism	1	3	5
Level of conflicts	1	3	5
Increase in training costs	1	3	5

Please highlight any other challenges



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