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Original Article

Workforce Diversity and Organizational Performance

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Abstract: Managing diversity in the workplace should be the concern of every public university. For survival, an organization should utilize its diversity to create an advantage and benefits. It should be part of the culture of the entire organization. It is imperative that in spite of every effort made at different sectors of society, demographic disparities continue to grow. The study sought to determine the impact of workforce diversity on the efficiency of organizations at public colleges and universities in Western Kenya. It adopted an explanatory research design. A sample of 390 from the University Staff on a scale of 8-15 was used. Random and proportionate sampling techniques were used to select 328 respondents. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedules. Data analysis used descriptive and inferential statistics. There was a positive significant relationship between work force diversity and organizational performance (r=0.665, p=0.000) and accounts for 44.3% of the variability in organization performance. It concluded that workforce diversity influences organizational performance. It recommended that Public Universities should develop a clear framework for enhancing diversity among their staff.

Keywords: Workforce Diversity, Organizational performance, Public universities, Western region of Kenya.

I. INTRODUCTION

A) Background of the Study

Workforce diversity describes the differences and similarities found in the staff of an organization (Griffin & Moorhead, 2014). Nwinami (2014) defines it as uniqueness in terms of personality, age, education, gender, ethnicity/race, religion, marital status, income, work experience and all those views which suppose and sustain an organization's core values. This study reviewed workforce diversity in terms of gender, age and education. Gender defines a person's orientation in terms of male or female (McDowell, 2018). The value for either of the genders of male or female have shown complementary value to the organization. Thus, organizations that have embraced gender diversity among their staff force have shown signs of good results as a consequence. Gender diversity has the potential to influence the performance of certain staff, simply because of their physical and psychological diversities between men and women. However, the current work environment has evolved and may not be significantly influenced by gender differences due to their complementary nature (Sekulic, Spasic, Mirkov, Cavar & Sattler, 2013). This study also examined the organizational performance of the Public Universities within the Western region of Kenya as a dependent variable. This variable was measured using university ranking, graduation rates, growth in student enrolment and customer satisfaction.

A study by Dessler (2017) on diversity describes staff diversity in terms of staff ages, sexes and academic qualifications as well as ethnicity. In another study by Jones and George (2017), employee diversity is defined as variance among persons based on their religion, sex, socioeconomic capacity and abilities. Asian countries such as Japan and Korea emphasize diversity as a competitive resource, as it is in other countries globally. They are known as homogenous, with an emphasis on ethnic background, and highly dominated by males in every aspect of life. Because of homogeneity, their emphasis is rooted in gender issues. In Korea, a survey by the National Statistical Office (2003) shows that women's participation in the economy had reached 48.9% in 2003. A study conducted in Japan government indicated the rate of staff diversity in government ministries like health and labour in the year 2004 was 48.4% (Mogashi & Chag 2009).

In Egypt, staff diversity has been growing admirable (Kochan, 2018). Currently, you will easily find professionals with the capacity to speak diverse languages, including French, English, German and Arabic, with the utmost competencies and academic qualifications (Kochan, 2018). The situation in Nigeria is not different, as most workplaces in Nigeria are seen to be diverse (Dahlin, Weingart& Hinds, 2015). The concept of service delivery revolves around providing quality services that users actually need to meet their unique needs (Dahlin, Weingart& Hinds, 2015). Organizations make choices about which services they will deliver. Jonsen, Maznevski and Schneider (2018) conducted a study on workforce diversity and organizational performance in South Africa. The study states that firms use employee diversity policies for a number of reasons. The most important of these are ethical, regulatory, and economic. In certain circumstances, corporations implement

diversity initiatives for a number of these reasons. Their research, however, concentrated mainly on the economic reasons for implementing employee diversity policies, as it is primarily concerned with comprehending the expenses and advantages that comprise the business case. Notwithstanding this, it is important to remember that firms may choose to embrace staff diversity due to many reasons of which economics is only one (Erasmus, 2016).

A study was conducted by Fernandez (2013) on employee diversity and performance among firms in Uganda. The study showed that diversity among staff positively influences staff job performance. A successful diversity management strategy takes into account cultural differences, thoughts, abilities, and capacities, all with the purpose of improving individual and organizational performance. According to Hayles and Mendez (2016), staff diversity correlates with overall organizational effectiveness. Compelling management of performance can help associations achieve their goals while also increasing representative commitment.

According to Machendwa (2017), a study in Tanzania found that diversity among an organization's workforce may affect service delivery by impacting team performance. Staff are hoped to interactively relate with other employees of diverse origins. Since organizations have become multicultural, it is necessary for workers to become multicultural and embrace their cultural differences in order to ensure that the work environment is conducive and can enable them to provide quality services to their clients (Machendwa, 2017).

A study done by Mwatumwa (2016) on employee diversity and work performance in Mombasa established that as the world becomes a global market, employee diversity is an exceptional need that will continue to evolve. The study used an explanatory research design with a sample of 456 respondents using questionnaires and interview schedules as data collection tools. The staff force in Mombasa was found to be streamlined, though there was evidence of poor performance.

A study conducted by Gacheri (2018) found that employee diversity influenced staff performance at differing levels in all cadres of staff in Equity Bank. However, the fact that most Kenyan firms do not have written codes insisting on diversity is a worrying trend. It puts a question on the capacity and competence of Kenya's human resources (Gacheri, 2018). It's even more worrying to note that the firms with written clearly written policies on employee diversity rarely implement them since the situation on the ground is not reflective of the written regulations. This could be a reason for poor staff performance. The staff force in the Kenyan county governments has changed greatly in the way they look, think and act. Their values have changed and their experiences are different in many ways. Furthermore, diversity has significantly affected the way county government staff talk, relate and even share (Gacheri, 2018). Every aspect of today's staff force has changed, and staff are keen to ensure that they go with the current changes. A report by KPMG reveals that diversity in terms of age, gender, education and ethnicity has not been embraced by many countries (KPMG, 2018).

B) Statement of the Problem

Organizational performance is an important concept in every organization; it determines whether the business will continue surviving or otherwise. Effective performance is attained by ensuring that factors such as time and timelessness, completeness, courtesy, consistency, accessibility, convenience, accuracy, and responsiveness are continuously sustained. This will ensure Customer satisfaction, lower costs of delivery, and enhance the organization's image and reputation (Whitaker, 2016). Kenyan universities are finding it hard to manage workforce diversity as they align themselves with the fast-changing global requirements and people demands. However, the global situation depicts a contrary picture as most of the Universities are ranked among the bottom performing Universities in the world even with the several diversity and equality initiatives witnessed among universities. A recent study by Transparency International (2019) showed that 53.1% of students are dissatisfied with the performance of public universities in Kenya. With such a high rate of dissatisfaction, it's agreeable to conclude that currently the students are not amused with the current performance. More than 25% of universities surveyed by Lawler et al. (2011) reported no significant development-oriented practices in their organizations (Lawler, 2011). In Kenya, in this era of globalization work force diversity is important for the Universities to enable them to respond quickly to any changes in the macro-environment. With the implementation of public sector reforms and performance contracting, the government hopes to create an efficient, varied, and motivated workforce to serve the people. Therefore, this current study aims to bridge the gap through examining the effects of employee diversity on organizational performance among Public Universities in Western Kenya.

C) Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to establish the influence of workforce diversity on organizational performance among Public Universities in Western Kenya.

D) Research Hypotheses

H₀1: Workforce diversity has no significant influence on organizational performance among Public Universities in Western Kenya

E) Scope of the Study

This study evaluated the influence of workforce diversity on organizational performance among Public Universities in the current Lake region economic block formerly known as the Western Region of Kenya. This study also examined the organizational performance of Public Universities within the Western region of Kenya as a dependent variable. This variable was measured using University ranking, Graduation rates, Growth in student enrolment and Customer satisfaction. The study used both descriptive survey and correlational investigation designs. Data was analyzed using SPSS. The study targeted respondents drawn from the departments of human resources staff of scales 8-11 and 12-15 among Public Universities in Western Kenya. The scales of 8-11 consisted of staff of medium and technical cadres who were essential in technical implementation, whereas staff of scales of 12-15 were of administrative and management cadre who were key in policy formulation and implementation.

The focus of this study was the Public Universities in Western Kenya with head offices in former provinces of Nyanza and Western, namely Rongo University, Kisii University, Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, university of kabianga Kibabii University, Maseno University and Jaramogi Odinga Oginga University of Science and Technology. Data was collected and analyzed. The targeted population was relative to the size of the Public University and the number of campuses operating under it.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews the theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

A) Theoretical Review

The theory of social categorization guided the study. This theory was propounded by Turner (1987). He asserts that there are different social groups among people, and every social group has its orientation. Every social group has its unique identity and characteristics and every person has a social group they belong to (Hogg & Terry, 2000). According to Knippenberg, Kleef, &Dreu (2007) this theory stratifies the community into cases where undesirable traits are associated with an opposite group and group members will only want to be associated with traits that they value. The theory puts emphasis on 3 components of social cognition: group process and self, as pointed out by the author. The work by Turner (1987) outlines the issue of identities and categorizing personalities through social identity. It reviews how social aspects of culture and ethnicity are related to social categorization. It asserts further that people are highly stratified based on their gender, age, socioeconomic abilities and race. This theory anchored the variable of diversity in the study, and its limitations shall form the basis for the current study.

B) Conceptual Frame Work

A theoretical structure is a diagrammatic description of the relationships between the variables being studied (Kothari, 2004). The study's independent variable was workforce diversity. Organizational performance was the dependent variable of the study and was measured by university ranking, graduation rates, growth in student enrolment and customer satisfaction.

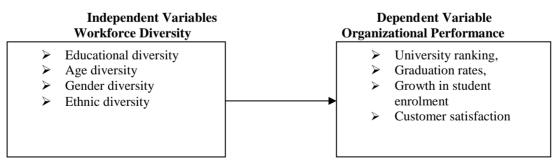


Figure. 1: Conceptual framework for study variables

Source: Researchers own conceptualization.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey and correlation designs were employed in the study. The study targeted 390 respondents, drawn from the University academic and administrative staff of scales 8-11 and 12-15 among Public Universities in Western Kenya. Random and proportionate sampling techniques were used to select and apportion 328 respondents, respectively. The interview questions and schedules served as gathering information tools. The interpretation and analysis of data were based on statistics

that were both descriptive and inferential. Descriptive statistics made use of frequencies and percentages, whereas inference statistics used correlation and coefficients of regression. Data was analyzed using SPSS Software version 22 and presented using APA tables. Qualitative data was examined topically in accordance with the study goals.

IV. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

A) Descriptive Statistics on Work Force Diversity and Organizational Performance

The first goal was to assess the impact of workforce diversity on organizational performance. The statements were anchored on a five-point Likert-type scale. Respondents were required to state their level of agreement with seven statements, where 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= not sure, 4= agree, and 5= strongly agree. The results for factor analysis and descriptive statistics are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The initiative of Working of Organizational I citorinance									
Description	SD	D	U	A	SA	Total			
1. our university has employed staff of varied		21.9%(28.1%	25.0%	20.3%	100.0%			
educational levels	(15)	68)	(88)	(78)	(63)	(312)			
2. our university has given equal opportunity for	0.0%	0.0%	4.7%	39.1%	56.3%	100.0%			
both men and women for employment	(0)	(0)	(15)	(123)	(176)	(312)			
3. We hire staff based on competencies and not	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%	26.6%	71.9%	100.0%			
ethnicity	(0)	(0)	(5)	(83)	(224)	(312)			
4. The university does not discriminate against	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	23.4%	76.6%	100.0%			
age while employing staff	(0)	(0)	(0)	(73)	(239)	(312)			
5. Staff in our university differ in skillset	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	54.8%	45.2%	100.0%			
3. Start in our amversity affer in skinset	(0)	(0)	(0)	(171)	(141)	(312)			
6. We have minimal staff conflicts due to	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%	45.3%	53.1%	100.0%			
diversity in our department	(0)	(0)	(5)	(141)	(166)	(312)			
7. Workforce diversity enhances the	0.0%	1.6%	1.6%	21.9%	75.0%	100.0%			
performance of the university	(0)	(5)	(5)	(68)	(234)	(312)			

Table 1: The Influence of Workforce Diversity on Organizational Performance

Source: Field Data, 2021

Respondents were asked to state their observations on whether their university has employed staff of varied educational levels. As tabulated in 1, the employees observed as follows: 4.7% (15) strongly disagreed, 21.9% (68) disagreed, 28.1% (88) were undecided, 25.0% (78) agreed, and 20.3% (63) strongly agreed. Therefore, the majority, 45.3% (141) of the employees, generally agreed that their university had employed a staff of varied educational levels.

The study also sought to investigate whether their university has given equal opportunity for both men and women for employment. It was realized, as seen in Table 4.3, that 0.0% (0) strongly disagreed, 0.0% (0) disagreed, 4.7% (15) were undecided, 39.1% (122) agreed, and 56.3% (176) strongly agreed. As indicated by the high percentage of 95.4% (298), the majority of employees agreed that their university has given equal opportunity for both men and women for employment.

The third item under this theme was to establish whether they hire staff based on competencies and not ethnicity. It was established, as seen in Table 4.3, that 0.0% (0) strongly disagreed, 0.0% (0) disagreed, 1.6% (5) were undecided, 26.6% (83) agreed, and 71.9% (224) strongly agreed. As indicated by the high percentage of 98.5% (307), the majority of employees agreed that they hire staff based on competencies and not ethnicity.

The fourth item under this theme was to establish whether the university does not discriminate against age while employing staff. It was found that, as seen in Table 4.3, 0.0% (0) strongly disagreed, 0.0% (0) disagreed, 0.0% (0) was undecided, 23.4% (73) agreed, and 76.6% (239) strongly agreed. In general, it was evident that 100.0% (312) of employees agreed that the university does not discriminate against age while employing staff.

The study sought to establish whether staff in their university differ in skillset. The employees' responses were as follows: 0.0 (0) strongly disagreed, 0.0% (0) disagreed, 0.0% (0) was undecided, 54.8% (171) agreed, and 45.2% (141) strongly agreed. Therefore, all employees 100% (312) generally agreed that staff in our university differ in skillset.

In establishing whether they have minimal staff conflicts due to diversity in their department, 0.0% (0) strongly disagreed, 0.0% (0) disagreed, 1.6% (5) were undecided, 45.3% (141) agreed, 53.1% (166) strongly agreed. The majority of

employees agreed, as seen from the high percentage of 98.4% (307) that they have minimal staff conflicts due to diversity in our department.

The seventh item under this theme was to determine how workforce diversity enhances the performance of the university. It was established that 0.0% (0) strongly disagreed, 1.6% (5) disagreed, 1.6% (5) were undecided, 21.9% (68) agreed, and 75.0% (234) strongly agreed. As indicated by the high percentage of 96.9% (302), the majority of employees agreed that workforce diversity enhances the performance of the university. However, 1.6% (5) disagreed.

B) Regression Analysis for Testing the Study Hypothesis

Regression analysis was used to find out the effect between the study variables, and the results are as in Table 2.

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Table 2: Workforce Diversity	and Performance of Public	Universities regression results

			-	Model Si	ummary ^b						
Model	R	R Square	Adjus	sted R are	Std. Error of the Estim			nate	Durk	Durbin-Watsor	
1	.665 ^a	.443		41		.343	371			1.646	
a. Predic	ctors: (Constant) w	orkforce diver	sity								
b. Deper	ndent Variable: Org	ganization per	formance								
				ANC)VA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares		Df	Mean S	Mean Square				Sig.	
	Regression	29	.078	1			29.078	246.14	1	.000 ^b	
1	Residual	36	.622	310		.118					
	Total	65	.700	311							
a. Deper	ndent Variable: Org	ganization per	formance								
b. Predic	ctors: (Constant) w	orkforce diver	sity								
				Coeffi	cients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized		t	Sig.			
					Coefficients						
		В	Std.		Beta						
			Error								
1 ((Constant)	1.495	.12	.8			11.709	.000			
1 W	Vorkforce diversity	.539	.03	4	·	.665	15.689	.000			
a. Deper	ndent Variable: Org	ganization per	formance								

Source: Field Data (2021)

The study results in Table 42 indicate that the computed Durbin - Watson value was 1.646, depicting that there was no autocorrelation between the study variables as suggested by Hoe (2008) and Blackwell (2005) that a value 1-3 shows an absence of autocorrelation. The model was thus fit for analysis. The results on the model summary show an R-Square of 0.443, indicating that workforce diversity accounts for 44.3% of the variability in organizational performance. The results also show that there is a positive effect of workforce diversity on organizational performance (r=0.665).

Table results on ANOVA depict that F=246.141, p=.000, which is less the p-value of 0.05. The results show that the whole regression model was important when assessing the model's applicability for measuring the research variables. This means that there is a satisfactory goodness of fit between workforce diversity and public university performance. This justifies the use of a regression model to either accept or reject the research hypothesis.

The study results show a regression coefficient that indicates to what extent workforce diversity predicts organizational performance among Public Universities in Western Kenya. Based on the results, the equation for the linear regression model can be written as Y=1.495+0.539X1+e. Where Y represents organizational performance, X1 represents workforce diversity, and e represents error term. A beta value means that every 0.539 units of use of workforce diversity contributes to a corresponding 1 unit in public university performance. The results also show that workforce diversity is statistically significant (p=0.000) in explaining organizational performance among Public Universities in Western Kenya.

The study used a regression coefficient to test the first research hypothesis, "Ho1: There is no significant influence of workforce diversity on organizational performance among Public Universities in Western Kenya". The null hypothesis of the study was therefore rejected at a 95% confidence level since the beta value t-statistics were significant (α =0.000); hence, the study concluded that there is a significant effect of workforce diversity on organizational performance among Public Universities in Western Kenya. The findings are in line with past research findings of Markos and Sridevi (2010), Devi (2017),

Kazimoto (2016), and Alagaraja and Shuck (2010), who found out that workforce diversity has a significant positive effect on organization performance.

C) Organizational Performance among Public Universities in Western Kenya.

This section looks at the dependent variable of the study, which is organizational performance among Public Universities in Western Kenya. The statements were anchored on a five-point Likert-type scale. Respondents were required to state their level of agreement with seven statements, where 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= not sure, 4= agree, and 5= strongly agree. The results for descriptive statistics are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Organizational Performance among Public Universities in Western Kenya

Description	SD	D	U	A	SA	Total
1. In my University, performance is rated based on the	0.0%	3.5%	0.0%	22.8%	73.7%	100.0%
development and service delivery to the public?	(0)	(11)	(0)	(71)	(230)	(312)
(Enrolment, students graduating						
2. In my University, performance depends on the	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	39.1%	60.9%	100.0%
success of workforce diversity and meeting the set	(0)	(0)	(0)	(122)	(190)	(312)
organizational objectives						
3. In my University, performance has improved due to	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	13.5%	86.5%	100.0%
workforce diversity	(0)	(0)	(0)	(42)	(270)	(312)
4. In my University, Financial resource availability	0.0%	6.1%	0.0%	26%	67.9%	100.0%
influences workforce diversity	(0)	(19)	(0)	(81)	(212)	(312)
5. In my University, the organization structure has	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	23.4%	76.6%	100.0%
influenced work force diversity.	(0)	(0)	(0)	(73)	(239)	(312)
6. In my University, Organizational culture influences	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	21.5%	78.5%	100.0%
workforce diversity	(0)	(0)	(0)	(67)	(245)	(312)
workloree diversity	(0)	(0)	(0)	(07)	(243)	(312)
7. In my University, there is a relationship between	0%	0%	0.0%	16.3%	0.0%	100.0%
workforce diversity and the university's performance.	(0)	(0)	(0)	(51)	(261)	(312)
		1				

Source: Research data, 2021

The study sought to investigate whether their University performance is rated based on the development and service delivery to the public (Enrolment, students graduating, etc.). It was realized that 0.0% (0) strongly disagreed, 3.5% (11) disagreed, 0.0% (0) were undecided, 22.8% (71) agreed, and 73.7% (230) strongly agreed. A higher percentage of 96.5% (302) shows that their university performance is rated based on the development and service delivery to the public (Enrolment, students graduating). However, 3.5% (11) disagreed.

The second item under this theme was in their university, performance depends on the success of workforce diversity and meeting the set organizational objectives. It was established that 0.0% (0) strongly disagreed, 0.0% (0) disagreed, 0.0% (0) were undecided, 39.1% (122) agreed and 60.9% (190) strongly agreed. As indicated, all 100.0% (312) of respondents agreed that in their university, performance depends on the success of workforce diversity and meeting the set organizational objectives.

The third item under this theme was to establish whether their University performance has improved due to workforce diversity. It was found that 0.0% (0) strongly disagreed, 0.0% (0) disagreed, 0.0% (0) was undecided, 13.5% (42) agreed and 86.5% (270) strongly agreed. Generally, it was evident that 100.0% (312) of their University performance has improved due to work force diversity.

The study sought to establish whether in their university, financial resource availability influences workforce diversity. The responses were as follows: 0.0 (0) strongly disagreed, 6.1% (19) disagreed, 0.0% (0) were undecided, 26% (81) agreed, and 67.9% (212) strongly agreed. Therefore, a majority of respondents, 93.9% (293), generally agreed that in their university, financial resource availability influences workforce diversity.

In establishing whether, in their university, the organization structure has influenced workforce diversity, 0.0% (0) strongly disagreed, 0.0% (0) disagreed, 0.0% (0) were undecided, 23.4% (73) agreed, and 76.6% (239) strongly agreed. This finding indicates that all respondents agreed, as seen from the high percentage of 100.0% (312), that their university the organization structure has influenced strategy. In establishing whether their university's organizational culture influences workforce diversity, 0.0% (0) strongly disagreed, 0.0% (0) disagreed, 0.0% (0) were undecided, 21.5% (67) agreed, and 78.5% (245) strongly agreed. This finding indicates that all respondents agreed, as seen from the high percentage of 100.0% (312), that in their university, organizational culture influences workforce diversity. The respondents also agreed that in the

university, there is a relationship between workforce diversity and University performance depicted, with 16.3% (51) agreeing and 83.7% (261) strongly agreeing.

The interviewees revealed that the sampled Universities had not considered many diversity practices and that this gap was hindering effective service delivery. In their own words, the respondents outlined the following.

These findings are supported by the works of Asif and Searcy (2014), who assert that measures of performance play a dual role in educational environments like universities. Initially, they are used to determine whether the efforts undertaken satisfy the required indicators or objectives. Second, they are utilized to assess processes and promote a culture of continuous improvement. Since university's are public institutions with a policy mandate, their results would be measured by outcomes such as student enrolment, student retention and students registering for exams compared against targets. Indeed, it's agreeable to infer that strategy influences performance in the Universities.

V. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

A) Summary of Findings on Work Force Diversity

Participants were invited to share their thoughts on whether their university has employed staff of varied educational levels. The majority, 45.3% (141) of the employees, generally agreed that their university has employed staff of varied educational levels. The study also sought to investigate whether their university has given equal opportunity for both men and women for employment. As indicated by the high percentage of 95.4% (298), the majority of employees agreed that their university has given equal opportunity for both men and women for employment. The third item under this theme was to establish whether they hire staff based on competencies and not ethnicity. As indicated by the high percentage of 98.5% (307), the majority of employees agreed that they hire staff based on competencies and not ethnicity.

The fourth item under this theme was to establish whether the university does not discriminate against age while employing staff. In general, it was evident that 100.0% (312) of employees agreed that the university does not discriminate against age while employing staff. The study sought to establish whether staff in their university differ in skillset. All employees 100% (312) generally agreed that staff in our university differ in skillset. In establishing whether they have minimal staff conflicts due to diversity in their department, the majority of employees agreed, as seen from the high percentage 98.4% (307), that they have minimal staff conflicts due to diversity in our department. The seventh item under this theme was to determine how workforce diversity enhances the performance of the university. As indicated by the high percentage of 96.9% (302), the majority of employees agreed that workforce diversity enhances the performance of the university. However, 1.6% (5) disagreed.

B) Conclusion

If the variables are held at zero or are absent, the organizational performance would be significant. When other variables in the model are controlled, a unit change in workforce diversity will result in a significant change in organizational performance in the same direction.

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