

Feminization of the Workplace and its Effect on the Performance: A Case of Mobile Telephony in Kenya

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Abstract

Feminization of work place in modern organizations is inevitable in today's world, in that women comprise 50% of the workforce and the discovery of women as a potential valuable resource. This is in line with realizing Millennium Development Goal number three on gender equality. In initial set up, men were known to attend social emergencies like death of a close relative, attend to a sick parent, and this could mean being absent from the job for some days hence this could mean less or no productivity and they also provided for the family while women undertook household duties. However, despite the paradigm shift in societal roles where work is no longer gender oriented, men still could have more problems in the work place due to women attributes which include, less numbers of corruption, embezzlement of funds or absconding of duties in addition, they are known for flexibility, meeting deadlines and they can deliver when motivated. In Kenyan situation, this has not been the case since women are not considered for higher positions despite their higher performance potentials. However, in certain organizations they strictly employ men only while others prefer men at the expense of women. The predominant focus of industrial relations academic studies, industrial relations practitioners and those of related disciplines had tended to neglect the fact and nature of women labour potentials by holding the view that women don't matter that much. This however is not the case since women equally play an important role in enhancing performance in workplace. Most studies have not been able to identify the extent of feminization of the workplace, to determine the effect of feminization on performance and to determine factors that promote feminization of the workplace. The study was conducted through a case study of Safaricom Company in Eldoret. The target population was drawn from managerial, clerical, human resource, engineering and marketing departments identified from five strata. The instruments used to collect data were, interviews, observation and document analysis. The research used purposive and simple random sampling to select sample size because of accessibility and convenience.

Keywords: *Feminization, Workplace, Gender equity, Performance*

Introduction

Feminization refers to a shift in gender and sex roles in the society, group, or organization towards a focus upon the feminine. This is the opposite of cultural masculinity (Sabrina and Ramet 1996) it also means the incorporation of women into groups or professionals that were once dominated only by men (Scholar A.S and Douglas, (2008). Feminization is a term used to describe emerging gendered within female labour market class, race and ethnicity or race intertwined with gender to define women job option. The feminization of work progressed as labour demand mounted and with place of publication.

The definition adopted in the study is adapted from Sabrina and Ramet (1996) feminization refers to shift in gender and sex roles in the society groups or organization towards a focus upon the feminine. In this study, feminization will be characterized by women, workplace, the offices, and the factory where work is done (Webster 2005). Performance refers to numerical measure of achievements that is easy to collect and use (Chary, 2004).

In this study performance will be characterized by productivity, length of service, meeting deadlines, profitability, efficiency and number of staff retained.

According to (Peterson, 2003) in response to the pressure from feminism and cultural trends highlighting character of workers which have been culturally been associated with women ,or men willing and able to operate with these more feminine modes of interaction. Drivers of these change are said to be in increase in socializing interactive work such as telesales, therapy, personal service giving professions and the like which have tended to place a premium on empathy, sociability, greater emotional engagement, a greater preference for a non–confrontational interaction and emotional sensibility. Moghedam and Valentine M (2005) said that the global expression of trade, capital flow and technology has resulted in increased formal and informal market opportunities specifically for women due to their lower reservation wages, and then willingness to take in flexible and part-time employment. According to Capon (2000) the sex discrimination act 1975 was established to eliminate discrimination on the ground of sex or mental status to promote equality of opportunity for women an men. Equal treatment of men and women should be seen in recruitment, training, promotion and dismissal. Equal opportunity commission (EOC) try to eliminate discrimination on the ground of sex or marital status, promote equal opportunities between men and women. These Acts will assist in realizing millennium development goal number three on gender equality. (Noe and etal, 2005) organization should set up action to be taken so as to seek out and remove the intended barriers to fair treatment in order to achieve equal opportunity .This study examines feminization of workplace an its effects in performance in modern organization which most studies in research have not been able identify the exact contribution of women in workplace in enhancing performance.

In response to the third Millennium Development Goal (MDGs) there should be equal representation of all genders in the work place. In the Kenyan context, the judicial system has embraced this in line with the new constitution which was voted for and enacted into law where the justices, judges and magistrates have been given equal positions.

The new constitution also advocates for more women leaders (a third) for the many leadership positions which have been created

Safaricom limited is a Kenya current leading mobile telephone operator. It was formed in 1997 as a fully subsidiary of Telkom Kenya. In May 2000 Vodafone group, the world largest telecommunication company acquired 40% stake and management responsibility for the company.Safaricom aims is to remain the leading mobile network operator in Kenya. In order to achieve this, a stronger focus has been placed on a quality of service to customers. Safaricom is and will continue implementing best practices based on Vodafone last international experience and Telkom Kenya unique knowledge of Kenya manner condition. The result of this will ensure the superior quality of service that is customer focused and will benefit every subscriber. With the company fast growing subscriber base, the growing company has now over 1000 employees to keep up with this fast growing industry. Safaricom has opened retail shops

country wide. The company also has a countrywide dealer to handle distribution and selling of safaricom services and products.

2. Statement of the Problem

The study is conducted to explore and establish an understanding of the general nature of the feminization or workplace and its effects on performance in the modern organization by taking a case of Safaricom Company within Eldoret. Feminization of work place in the modern organization is inevitable, in that today women comprise 50% of the workforce and the discovery of women as a potential valuable resource this is in line with realizing millennium development goal number three on gender equality. In initial set up, men were known to attend social emergencies like death of a close relative, attend to a sick parent, and this could mean being absent from the job for some days hence this could mean less or no productivity and they also provided for the family while women undertook household chores. However, despite the paradigm shift in societal roles where work is no longer gender oriented, men still could have more problems in the work place due to women attributes which include, less numbers of corruption, embezzlement of funds or absconding of duties. In addition, they are known for flexibility, meeting deadlines and they can deliver when motivated. In the Kenyan situation, this has not been the case since women are not considered for higher positions despite their higher performance potentials. However, in certain organizations they strictly employ men only while others prefer men at the expense of women. The predominant focus of industrial relation academics study, industrial relation practitioners and those of related discipline had tended to neglect the fact and nature of women labour potentials by holding the view that women don't matter that much. This however is not the case since women equally play an important role in enhancing performance in the workplace. Most studies have not been able to identify the extent of feminization of the workplace, to determine the effect of feminization on performance, to determine factors that promote feminization of the workplace.

This paper investigated the level of feminization in Safaricom company-Eldoret and its effects on organizational performance. This paper also hinges on the broader issue of how this can lead to the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on gender equality and women empowerment

3. Significance of the Study

It is hoped that the study will be useful to students in the institution and mostly to the organizations, the feminization of the workplace will be effective and efficient for an organization by increasing performance that is increasing volume of out, increasing profit, meeting deadlines extending processing capabilities and less tolerance to corruption as a way of re-organizing and responding to the changing world market and environmental circumstances. The study will be an important tool to assess how far the country has gone in realizing the millennium development goal number three which is attaining gender equality in area of education, employment and leadership.

To the institution it is significance to ensure in future will have books of reference and sometimes will direct the beneficiaries of adopting feminization of workplace in the organization to maximize their employee performance and give a great return on investment as they provide high quality and quantity production. The researcher hopes that the study will form a basis for further research on feminization of workplace and its effect on performance of employee in organization in general; this will lead to

generation of new ideas on the feminization of workplace and its effect on performance in the modern organization in Kenya and the rest of the world.

3.1 Limitation of the Study

The study being a case study is subjected to generalization of findings of small sample of respondents as representative of the whole universe. This is likely to affect the study since the response in the questionnaire and interviews are likely to be based on personal perception of the respondent. The study also focused in one of the many branches of Safaricom-Eldoret outlets

3.2 Scope Of The Study

The study investigated the feminization of workplace and its effect on performance in the modern organization in this case taking Safaricom Company-Eldoret as a point of reference and a case study was representative sample population were used. The data was be collected through interviews, document analysis and observation made by the researchers.

4. Theoretical Framework

The study is modeled on the theory of feminism advanced by Karl max. The theory was used by Dinkens (1989) looking through publication the British journal of industrial relation. It's apparent that articles analysis is in frequent. This becomes all the more surprising when the measuring of projection for job growth in the United Kingdom suggests that female employment will be favored. The theory postulate that if you wish to understand how men and women behave in the workplace, the analysis must commence with the description of capitalism which is informed by a discussion of the role of patriarchy in other words the overriding feature of modern society in the existence of the set of arrangement that have been designed by men with the effect of constantly defining women in an inferior position. Feminist theory therefore sets out to reveal the true nature of this form of domination. Each particular variant of feminist theory will emphasize its particular explanation of this dominance and indicate the favoured path of action to help resolve it. This theory was favoured over Marxist theory and industrial relation theory because it does not only contribute academic development but also provide understanding which can form policy design and understanding. As applied in the study the theory holds that it major concern was to establish that women were equal and not inferior to men. These imply that women have high potential thus this can improve their performance in the workplace. This is true considering the fact that today women comprise almost 50% of the workforce. This indicates the growing importance of women in labour market. The realization of the millennium development goal number three of gender equality can only be possible through feminization of workplace. However in adopting the theory of feminization for this study the research is not ignorant of its shortcomings. This theory argues that patriarchy and gender are arrangements that are deeply embedded in our society.

This study was conducted through a case study. The study is concerned with feminization of the workplace and its effect on the performance in the modern organization such issues is best investigated through a case study. The design was to enable the researcher to involve smaller samples, in depth, concrete and contextual analysis. A case study is a very powerful form of qualitative analysis as a method of study in depth rather than in breadth Kothari (2005)

4.1 Sample Size and Sample Design

Purposive sampling was used to select managers, while simple random sampling for subordinate was employed in the study. The reason of using these sampling methods is that they ensure inclusion of subgroups in the sample which was omitted entirely by the other sampling methods because of a small number of population targets. According to Mugenda and Mugenda [2003] sample size should not be less than 30% of the target population. 30% of the target population is picked from each stratum. Simple random sampling is used to select the employees who were involved in the study. The advantage of using this sampling is that it gives each subject equal and independent chance to be included in the sample. This is done by writing ‘yes’ or ‘no’ on small pieces of papers to choose from. Those who choose yes are the, who were involved in study.

5. Findings

To some extent, the successes of Safaricom-Eldoret are majorly attributed to the majority of the employees who are mostly women who make up part of the top management team. Women also tend to adapt to new situations and are more likely to delegate work and reward people and most importantly, they are dedicated to their work which leads them to even do better in the workplace where men have traditionally done well. Female employees will come early and stay in the place of work until the stipulated time and are honest more than their male counterparts. Sometimes, the male employees learn the business and are likely to swindle the company and start their own. Women are also ‘list-makers’ and they will adhere to their list and prioritize it and get through it and when there is a problem, they will confront it and deal with it head on. Women take things personally and will even lead the business towards transformation.

Women are more appealing to customers on the front office like in retail section, enquiries and customer care as the study found in Safaricom-Eldoret.

The women have also contributed to societal development in several ways like; education of their children and theirs. They have also made investments in various sectors of the economy and even participate in philanthropic activities like corporate social responsibility.

Female employees are expected to be proactive in embracing diversity practices in the workplace than male employees.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study findings support feminization of organizations as a strategy of improving performance and competitiveness.

Compared to organizations with more men than women, the ones with more women tend to perform well. This implies that organizations should focus more on women employees so as to achieve their targets.

From the research findings, the paper recommended that employing more women in organizations can lead to the achievement of Millennium Development Goal Number three of gender equality and women empowerment.

Since this study was conducted in the service industry, further studies could be carried out in other sectors of the economy such as; the public sector and non-service industries so as to determine the effect of feminization on their performance and competitiveness.

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