

## **Influence of Disability Diversity Policy Implementation on Service Delivery among Chartered Universities in Kenya**

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### **Abstract**

Diversity entails embracing and recognizing the contribution of people with differences in education background, perspectives and experiences. Organizations have realized that they can attract and retain competent employees by embracing diversity. In Kenya, a diversity policy has been developed to guide the public institutions on the management of diversity at the workplace. The policy outlines the management of diverse workforce, such as persons with disability and ethnicity. However, there remains a notable research gap concerning the effect of diversity policies on service delivery in the universities. This study aimed at determining the influence of disability diversity policy implementation on service delivery in Chartered Universities in Kenya. The study was guided by the Social Identity theory, self-categorization and SERVQUAL model. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The target population comprised eight Chartered universities in Kenya (both private and public) which were purposively selected; comprising 15,545 administrative staff and full-time lecturers. A sample size of 390 was drawn using the Yamane (1967) formula. Data was collected using questionnaires. Both validity and reliability of the research instruments were ensured. Inferential and descriptive statistics were adopted in the analysis. The findings of the study indicated that universities have a strong affirmative action policy for persons with disability. The study concluded that disability policy implementation established a positive and statistically significant effect on service delivery among chartered universities in Kenya. It recommends university management to collaborate with organizations dedicated to persons with disabilities, and to utilize accessible recruitment channels such as sharing job opportunities in braille, so as to attract individuals with disabilities. Furthermore, universities ought to enhance the accessibility of their premises by expanding the provision of assistive and supportive devices. The findings have implications to human resource practitioners in universities in enhancing quality service delivery by implementation of diversity policies.

**Keywords:** *Disability Diversity Policy, Service Delivery, Chartered Universities, Inclusivity, Policy Implementation*

## **1.0 Introduction**

Diversity refers to embracing and recognizing the contribution of people with differences in education background, perspectives and experiences (Ricucci, 2021). Organizations have realized that they can attract and retain competent employees by embracing diversity. This has been necessitated by the fact that organizations are operating in a very dynamic environment and the market place has changed due to globalization and advances in technology. Higher education institutions provide equitable opportunities and enhance service quality through the implementation of comprehensive disability diversity policies (Salmi & D'Addio, 2021). These policies are essential for fostering inclusive environments where all students, including those with disabilities, can thrive. The effective implementation of such policies not only promotes fairness, but also contributes to the overall efficiency and quality of service delivery within academic institutions.

Globally, many developed nations have recognized the importance of inclusive education and have implemented robust policies to support students with disabilities (Cerna et al., 2021). For instance, in the United States of America, the public is mandated by the Individuals' Education Disabilities Act (IDEA) that free and appropriate education should be provided to persons with disabilities, ensuring access to necessary services and accommodations (Bleak & Abernathy, 2022). Similarly, Equality Act (2010) of the United Kingdom, protects individuals with disabilities by requiring reasonable adjustment in the country's educational settings, facilitating an inclusive learning environment (Little et al., 2023). However, despite these provisions, the implementation of these policies in university setup is hindered by little administrative support in terms of working

conditions, promotions, and pay rises (Kundu et al., 2019).

In contrast, developing nations, particularly in Africa, face significant challenges in implementing disability diversity policies due to limited resources and infrastructural constraints (Zickafoose et al., 2024). South Africa, for instance, has made progress through its White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, whose main objective is to eliminate obstacles and encourage the inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of life, including education (Zongozzi, 2022). However, the execution and enforcement of these policies are frequently inconsistent, underscoring the necessity for more targeted strategies and investments. The need for more targeted strategies and investments is highlighted by the fact that the implementation and enforcement of such policies frequently remain inconsistent (Zickafoose et al., 2024).

Kenya, as a developing nation, has also taken steps towards improving inclusivity in education. The Kenyan government has enacted policies such as the Persons with Disabilities Act, which mandates the provision of special services and facilities to ensure access to education for persons with disabilities (Ireru et al., 2020). Moreover, Kenyan universities, particularly chartered ones, have started adopting affirmative action measures and other supportive practices to enhance accessibility and inclusion for students with disabilities. However, there is still a notable research gap regarding the impact of these policies on service delivery such as teamwork, performance and effectiveness within higher education institutions.

### ***Problem Statement***

In an ideal educational landscape, higher education institutions prioritize inclusivity, and demands that regardless of disabilities, opportunities are provided to all without discrimination (Scheef et al., 2020). However, the reality in universities in

Kenya presents a stark contrast to this ideal. Despite efforts to implement disability diversity policies, significant challenges persist, undermining the quality-of-service delivery and hindering the full participation of persons with disabilities.

While Kenyan universities have made strides in adopting affirmative action measures and providing support for students with disabilities, there is still a remarkable research gap on the effect of the policies on service delivery in higher education institutions (Karanja et al., 2021). Nonetheless, despite the presence of policies, the effectiveness of their implementation in enhancing service delivery remains uncertain (Khakali, 2021; Kioupi et al., 2023).

This research gap focuses attention on the need for a comprehensive assessment of the influence of disability diversity policy implementation on service delivery in Kenyan chartered universities. Understanding the current state of policy implementation and its impact on service delivery is paramount for recognizing areas that require improvement, and developing targeted intervention measures to enhance inclusivity and accessibility among institutions of higher education.

### **Objective**

To establish the influence of persons with disabilities' diversity policy implementation on service delivery among Chartered Universities in Kenya.

### **Hypothesis**

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no statistically significant relationship between Persons with Disabilities Diversity Policy implementation and service delivery among Chartered Universities in Kenya.

*“The study found that, attention is needed on proper execution of policies on recruitment channels, infrastructure and implementing affirmative action plans”*

### **Theoretical framework**

This study was underpinned by the Social Identity theory. In the late 1970s, Brown, Turner and Tajfel proposed the social identity hypothesis. The idea offers a structure for clarifying how inter-group behaviour influences one's performance in the workplace and in the society. The social identity theory, asserts that people or employees will always associate with people with whom they have something in common, may it be language, religion, tribe, ethnic grouping, education background or culture. They are comfortable interacting with the in-group and are loyal to the group more than those they have nothing in common referred to as out-group. The Social Identity theory therefore underpins the variables on disabilities' diversity policy implementation and service delivery among Chartered Universities in Kenya.

### **Literature review**

Disability, a multifaceted phenomenon with both medical and social dimensions, poses challenges globally. While legal frameworks, including Kenya's Constitution and disability policy, aim to support Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), various forms of exclusion persist (Chibaya et al., 2021; Muigua, 2018). Internationally, disability is understood as impairment and

participation limitations, highlighting its complex interplay with society (Hofmann et al., 2020). In developed nations like the UK, disabled individuals face profound challenges in daily activities (Shakespeare et al., 2022).

A research in India by Kundu et al. (2019) reveals disparities in administrative support for minorities and the disabled. Similarly, studies like that of Schloemer-Jarvis et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of inclusive human resource practices, particularly in hiring and staffing processes. In Kenya, Gitau and Mose (2023) investigated the impact of diversity management practices on employment participation of PWDs in the telecommunications sector, highlighting the significance of recruitment practices and policy frameworks. These findings underscore the importance of inclusive approaches in various contexts.

Additionally, insights from community organizations, as observed by Hermansson et al. (2022) emphasize the significance of communal activities and cross-border networks in achieving inclusion. Overall, these studies contribute to understanding the complexities of disability and the importance of inclusive practices in diverse settings.

## 2.0 Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in chartered university institutions in Kenya. To bridge this research gap, an extensive research methodology was implemented. The study adopted a mixed methods approach, and employed a descriptive survey research design. Data collection was collected using a questionnaire. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were computed in the analysis of data. The target population was 15, 545 administrative staff and full-time lecturers across 8 Kenyan chartered universities. The sample population drawn from the 8 universities comprised of 121 administrative staff and 269 full time lecturers. This was possible through the

adoption of Yamane's formula leading to a final sample size of 390 respondents. To achieve this, a combination of stratified and purposive sampling techniques was chosen, ensuring inclusion of diverse demographic groups and stakeholders. The study accordingly ensured face, construct and content validities. Additionally, reliability was attained by calculating the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. Data analysis utilized SPSS version 26, allowing for thorough exploration of intricate relationships and patterns within the data set. Quantitative data obtained, was analysed, and descriptive statistics, comprising mean, standard deviation and percentages, were computed, and findings presented in tables. Ethical considerations, such as privacy, anonymity, confidentiality, voluntary participation and citation and referencing the different sources that informed the research were conformed to.

## 3.0 Results and Discussion

### *Response rate*

The study targeted a sample size of 390 respondents. Out of 390 questionnaires that were distributed, 326 were fully completed and returned, resulting in a response rate of 84%. Considering that a response rate of 30% to 70% is deemed acceptable in social sciences (De Vaus, 2013, as cited in Ali et al., 2021), this response rate was considered satisfactory.

### *Reliability of the data*

The reliability of the data was determined using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. A Cronbach's alpha value of .787 was noted. According to Cronbach's criteria (1951), a coefficient of 0.70 or higher suggests high reliability of the data.

### *Results on Disability Policy*

The respondents rated disability policy constructs on a Likert scale (1 to 5), with 1 representing strongly disagree and 5 representing strongly agree as shown in Table 1. The 8 Chartered universities in Kenya exhibited strong affirmative action

policies for persons with disabilities (mean = 4.095, SD = 0.999), with 42% strongly agreeing and 35% agreeing. 16.9% were

neutral, 2.8% disagreed, and 3.4% strongly disagreed.

**Table 1**

*Selected disability policies*

	strongly disagree %	Dis-agree %	Neutral %	Agree %	strongly agree %	Mean	Std. Dev.
Job vacancies are advertised in format accessible to persons with disability.	4.6	14.7	18.7	34.4	27.6	3.66	1.16
Institution conducts affirmative action measures in support of persons with disability.	3.4	2.8	16.9	35.0	42.0	4.10	1.00
Premises and Information is accessible for persons with disability in our institution.	0.0	4.0	12.9	37.1	46.0	4.25	.83
There exist assistive and support devices for persons with disability in our institution.	.9	1.2	8.9	45.4	43.6	4.29	.76
Persons with disability are offered opportunities for attachments and internship	1.8	4.0	23.0	40.5	30.7	3.94	.93
Composite mean and standard deviation							

Employees in chartered universities in Kenya generally agreed with a (mean = 3.656) that job vacancies are advertised in accessible formats, such as print, large print, braille, and shared with the National Council for persons with disability. Majority of respondents (34.4% agreeing, 27.6% strongly agreeing) supported this, but with a standard deviation of 1.163, indicating varied opinions across universities. Additionally, most respondents (mean = 4.252) agreed that university premises and information are

accessible for persons with disabilities, with 46% strongly agreeing and 37.1% agreeing.

Further, a significant proportion of respondents (mean = 4.29) agreed that their universities provide assistive and supportive devices for persons with disabilities, with 45.4% agreeing, and 43.6% strongly agreeing. Few were neutral (8.9%), disagreed (1.2%), or strongly disagreed (0.9%).

In terms of attachment and internship opportunities for persons with disabilities, most respondents (mean = 3.942) supported their institutions having such policies, with 40.5% agreeing, 30.7% strongly agreeing, and 23% being neutral, while 4% disagreed, and 1.8% strongly disagreeing.

**Results on Service Delivery**

The study's primary purpose was to establish the influence of persons with disabilities' diversity policy

implementation on service delivery among Chartered Universities in Kenya. The dependent variable was service delivery in selected universities in Kenya. Different sentiments on service delivery were posed to the respondents who were expected to respond using a 5-level Likert coded 1 to 5; whereby 1 represented "Strongly Disagree" (SD), 2 denoted "Disagree" (D), 3 indicated "Neutral" (N), 4 stood for "Agree" (A), and 5 represented "Strongly Agree" (SA). The responses are as documented in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Service Delivery*

Statements	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	neutral	Disagreed	Strongly disagreed	Mean	Std. Dev.
Key performance indicators	59.5	32.8	5.5	1.2	.9	4.49	.74
Infrastructure	42.3	36.8	13.5	6.1	1.2	4.13	.95
employee engagement	33.1	36.2	18.7	11.0	.9	3.90	1.02
Responsive to customer needs	35.0	36.8	19.0	8.3	.9	4.00	.98
Service charter	55.5	32.5	11.0	.3	.6	4.42	.75

The results in Table 2 provide essential aspects that characterize service delivery in the selected universities. The prevalent aspects of service delivery included: universities had a performance indicators in regard to the number of students who graduated every year; and the university enrolled the rate of retention of both the students, and the employee offering of accredited courses. Regarding infrastructure, majority of the respondents agreed that their institutions had proper infrastructure in terms of buildings, lecturer rooms, and laboratories which are crucial

elements for learning. It was also reported by a majority of respondents that the universities had employee engagement practices depicted by a conducive work environment, adequate remuneration and career progression in most of the universities. Furthermore, there was of a clear service delivery charter that ensures prompt service delivery among universities which was represented by 55.5% of respondents who strongly agreed, and 32.5% who agreed.

**Correlation analysis between selected disability policies and service delivery**

A correlation was conducted to assess the hypothesized relationship between selected

disability policy and service delivery at selected chartered universities in Kenya. Table 3 present the results.

**Table 3**

*Correlations analysis between selected disability policies and service delivery*

		Y	X1
Service delivery	Pearson Correlation	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	326	
Disability policies	Pearson Correlation	.412**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	326	326

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 indicates a statistically significant positive relationship ( $r = 0.412$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) between disability policy and service delivery in Chartered universities in Kenya. This aligns with Accenture and Disability's findings (2018) which showed that entities embracing disability employment outperformed peers with 28% higher revenues and doubled net incomes. Found that involving people with disabilities in the workforce enhanced innovation and competitiveness across markets, meeting diverse consumer expectations to address the objective on the effect of disability diversity policy implementation on service delivery among chartered universities in Kenya. The study was further guided by the following hypothesis:

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no statistically significant effect of persons with disability policy implementation on service delivery among chartered universities in Kenya.

Results in Table 3 show that implementation of disability policy had a positive relationship with service delivery ( $r = 0.412$ ). The results also indicate that the  $p = 0.000$  value is also significant,  $P < 0.05$ . This led to the rejection of the null hypothesis and concluded that there was a statistically significant positive relationship between persons with disability policy

implementation and service delivery among chartered universities in Kenya. The findings are in line with the study by Kuo and Kalargyrou (2014) which found out that companies that hired people with disability had a moderately positive effect on attracting customers due to improved perception of service quality. The results also corroborate findings by Narayanan and Terris (2020) that increasing diversity of employees with disability leads to an enhancement of productivity.

This improvement in performance is attributed to the reduced turnover as people with disability are deemed loyal, reliable, and motivated. They also create a barrier-free environment that positively alters the workplace.

**4.0 Conclusion**

In conclusion, the study provides compelling evidence that disability diversity policy implementation significantly enhances service delivery in Kenyan chartered universities. It is concluded that disability diversity policy had statistically significant positive influence on service delivery among the selected chartered universities in Kenya. Based on the study's findings and aligned with its objective, the findings underscore

that proper implementation of disability diversity policies lead to improved service delivery in Kenyan universities. In essence, attention is needed with regard to proper execution of policies such as recruitment channels, infrastructure and implementing affirmative action plans.

## 5.0 Recommendations

Based on the findings corresponding to the objective, the following recommendations are proposed:

The study has demonstrated that the implementation of disability diversity policies yields positive and statistically significant impacts on service delivery within chartered universities in Kenya. Hence, it is the management of university institutions are advised to take specific actions. Firstly, they should collaborate with organizations dedicated to persons with disabilities and utilize accessible recruitment channels, such as sharing job opportunities in braille, to attract individuals with disabilities. Further, universities ought to enhance the accessibility of their premises by expanding the provision of assistive and supportive devices for persons with disabilities. Additionally, they should consistently

implement affirmative action measures to support individuals with disabilities. Lastly, it is recommended that these institutions offer internship and attachment opportunities specifically tailored for individuals with disabilities.

## Implications

This research holds significant implications for theory, practice, and policy in the realm of disability inclusion within higher education. The findings validate the positive impact of disability diversity policies on service delivery in chartered universities, aligning with established theories like the social model of disability. Practical recommendations derived from the study offer actionable insights for university management, emphasizing the adoption of accessible recruitment channels and premises, alongside consistent implementation of affirmative action measures. Policymakers can leverage these findings to advocate for robust disability policies, ensuring equitable access to higher education for individuals with disabilities. Overall, the research advances theoretical understanding, informs practical strategies, and guides policy development to enhance disability inclusion in higher education institutions.

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