

**EFFECTS OF KENYAN CULTURE ON FOREIGN
EMPLOYEES WITHIN AIRTEL NETWORKS KENYA LTD**

BY

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DECLARATION

This research is my original work and has not been presented for examination in any other university.

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This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the university supervisor.

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DEDICATION

This Research Project is dedicated to my Daughter Joy Tanya Murugi.

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to determine the dynamism of Kenyan culture as experienced in social settings and also in the global world of business. The study looked in to how foreign employees with in Airtel Networks K Ltd are impacted by the Kenyan culture during their tenure here by collecting primary data through the use of questionnaire. It was evident that the expatriates when they relocate to Kenya are faced with cultural differences and they have to orient themselves to the new culture to enable them cope with the differences. Culture shock was a common phenomenon among the respondents as each found the Kenyan social setting to be in contrast with their home nations. What they considered to be the norm in their society was quite different in the Kenyan context. The issue of economic, social, education and religious differences were on the forefront of the cultural differences. As an international organization Airtel Networks is engaged in the recruitment of employees from different nationalities and this allows the organization to be ideal for the case study as it incorporates employees from different social backgrounds who were chosen as part of the respondents. The study concludes that for foreign employees to effectively integrate themselves to the Kenyan work environment the management needs to engage in detailed orientation programs that will show case the expatriates the differences in the new culture and come up with mechanism to handle any negative eventually that may arise. The expatriate employees on their part as well need to develop methods on how they can be able to interact with the new culture to enable them understand why and how things are done leading to appreciation of the same. In addition it's not only the management and the employee who are to engage in orientation but generally the whole organization should be encouraged to engage with the foreign employees to allow them settle in well in the new culture.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The increased interdependence of countries resulting from the increase in trade and ideas in a continually growing international marketplace has led to globalization. According to Terborgh (2003) international trade grew rapidly in the two decades after the Second World War. This was due to the opening up of various international markets after the restrictive world wars. He continues to state that economic historians explain this growth through the liberalization of trade policies although his view is that it had more to do with the availability and redistribution of capital policies implemented by the Breton Wood institutions.

This growth in globalization has also led to increased movement of people across the globe hence bringing about the mix of culture. With the growth of multinational corporations with branches in different countries, there has been an increase in distribution of workers from different cultural backgrounds into other cultures. This movement has also been realized in Kenya, particularly in Airtel. As a multinational company, Airtel Kenya employs workers from different parts of the world and who are from different cultural backgrounds. The aim of this study is to look at these foreign workers from different cultural backgrounds and the impact of the Kenyan culture on them as well as the impact of their different cultures to their work at Airtel Kenya. More significantly, the study intends to examine massive task interdependence, procedural justice, and output and group mentality as the key areas in the relationship between local culture and foreign workers.

This project represents the initial study to analyze differences in viewpoints, approaches, and conduct of foreign workers in overseas environments, based on distinctions in their employment outcomes, relationships and ethics.

Muriuki (2012), quoting Beardwell et al (2004) pointed out that “expatriates play a significant role in the global strategies of many organizations by filling a skill gap in a foreign business operation, transferring management expertise or corporate culture, starting new operations and coordinating global activities”. The differences in practices and behaviors across the countries are a significant element that cannot be overlooked.

Rose et al (2008) noted that “there are some aspects of corporate culture that may enhance performance in one national setting, but they may not be effective, and may even be dysfunctional, in another.” This statement is an explicit illustration of the complexity and sensitivity of cross-cultural relationships within the workplace and their consequent influence in the organization.

1.1.1 Concept of International Business

Sen (2010) posits that the beginning of what is today’s standard of international trade can be traced back to the years between 1776 and 1826. These years respectively mark the publications of Adam Smith’s ‘Wealth of Nations’ and David Ricardo’s ‘Principles of Economics’. He continues to state that these two volumes formed the genesis of a theory of free trade, based on the unprecedented success of England in the respective fields of industry and trade. According to Adam Smith, the division of labor, in the large-scale industries of his homeland England provided the base for lowering labor costs.

These in turn ensured effective competition across countries. More to this the growth of these industries led to an acute need for raw materials hence a global campaign by European kingdoms to create colonies in other parts of the globe and secure raw materials for the industries. This concept of trade has kept on growing and with it the integration of world trade into one market.

Al-Rodhan and Stoudmann (2006) state that globalization involves, among other things, the issue of economic integration, the transfer of policies across borders, the transmission of knowledge, cultural stability and the reproduction, relations, and discourses of power. They continue to argue that “an individual’s political ideology, geographic location, social status, cultural background, and ethnic and religious affiliation provide the background that determines how globalization is interpreted”.

Thus the increased activity in the international trade arena has led to the need by both local and international companies to recruit human resource teams that will compete with a global edge. This has led to numerous hires across nations and back grounds. Chang and Huang (2006), note that the rapid changes in operating environments such as globalization, changing consumer needs and expectations and competition to provide innovative products have become the standard backdrop for many organizations. For these organizations to be able to compete effectively, they have had to constantly enhance the quality of their products and services. However, this growth has not been uniformly achieved across the globe. According to Mrak (2000) there are two macroeconomic patterns that have emerged.

The first one is that countries with early advancement have been able to rapid liberalization of the economy coupled with sound fiscal policies hence resulting in sustained macroeconomic stabilization. Secondly, the less developed countries have experienced slow progress in liberalization and privatization with the stabilization of the macro economy being jeopardized by persistent soft budget constraints. It is with this notion that most less developed countries try to catch up with the rest of the world by opening up their economies to Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). One of the main aims of FDI is to provide financial capital to the host country.

More to this FDI is also used as a source of valuable technology, human resource and the fostering of linkages with local firms, which can help jumpstart an economy (Alfaro, 2003). Hence majority of developing countries adopt FDI as an economic model to help them come up to par with other developed nations in terms of the quality of products and services they offer.

In Kenya, FDI has been encouraged across various industries and one of the most vibrant is the telecommunication industry. The three key players in this industry are Safaricom, Orange and Airtel. All three companies are partly owned by foreign companies who bring in capital, technology and managerial skills. The Interests of Airtel Kenya are owned by Bharti Airtel Limited, a global telecommunications company with operations in 19 countries across Asia and Africa. This investment by Bharti Airtel has brought with it the need of various human resource skill sets that could not be satisfied by the local population and that needed cultural dynamism hence the inclusion of employees from other countries, this brought with it the meeting and mixing of different cultures.

1.1.2 Concept of Culture

The business and working culture within a nation reflects the conventional values, norms and conduct of specific groups. According to the definition offered by Deal and Kennedy (2002), culture is “the way we do things around here.” Within each country, there are diverse elements of culture that are unique to that particular region and greatly affect the implementation of organizational activities.

These procedures include initiation and orientation problems, communication, negotiation, accommodation and transport formalities, attachments and work practices. Dimba and Rugimbana (2013) stated that Kenyan culture contains numerous minute traditions that can impede cooperation and communication between local and foreign employees. Culture is a fundamental element in business and has an influence on the realization of departmental and strategic objectives of the business (Dimba and Rugimbana, 2013). Muriuki (2012) reiterated this statement by claiming that “successful cultural adaptation of business expatriates affects their organizational commitment as well as other performance variables”.

In particular, culture has a significant influence on numerous business functions, management decisions and other tertiary functions ranging from bookkeeping to manufacturing. Prior discussion on the concept has predominantly focused on the national culture but this represents only one side (Dimba, and Rugimbana, 2013). Many other inconsequential but equally important elements of business culture apply in the conduct of international business. International employees or expatriates represent the essential group of individuals within the business structure that need to be sensitive and aware of these elements of business culture (McCormick et al., 2007). Bhatti (2012) argument was that “expatriates ability to positively perceive the cultural differences might help them to adjust in the host country and improve

their performance. Furthermore, the positive perception of an expatriate about cultural differences might help him/her to build better relationship and understanding with host county nationals.”

1.1.3 Role of Culture in International Business

With the increasing growth of international business operations, this has resulted in a melting pot approach where various diverse cultures have merged bringing about a global culture which is universal to all cultures. This study is focused on the Kenyan business sector. In particular, the study will investigate the presence of expatriates within the Kenya Tele Communication sector and their relationship with the Kenyan culture. Nyambegera (et al., 2000) noted that “culture has generated more interest in the field of comparative HRM because of the belief that cultures are at the base of people’s behaviors.” Foreign employees working within Kenya are subjected to new and different styles of conducting business.

For the particular study, Airtel Networks Kenya Limited and its employees will be used as the research site. Muriuki (2012) noted that successful expatriates who are employed within the Kenyan corporate world introduce several fundamental skills in the management: endurance, tolerance for cultural diversity, appreciation for ambiguity, and the capacity to develop personal relationships with business associates. Muriuki (2012) describes these foreign employees as “either highly paid managers of multinational companies, or development and NGO employees and volunteers.” While broad in scope, this description excludes many other professionals that work in a consultative capacity with the government and private sector. Ng’ang’a and Nyongesa (2012) similarly attempted to shed light on the relationship between culture and performance. However, their argument concentrated more

on economic elements. They stated that “focused cultures provide better financial returns, which include higher return on investment (ROI), higher return on assets (ROA) and higher return on equity (ROE).

1.1.4 Telecommunications Industry

Foreign employees that have managed to master and maneuver within the Kenyan context have noted the futility of initiatives designed to eliminate the vices of graft, bureaucracy and ethnic discrimination that challenge Kenya’s business environment (Dimba, and Rugimbana, 2013). Indeed, Muriuki (2012) noted that “understanding the culture and the mindset that determine one's values and behaviors is a vast challenge for international expatriate and those responsible for their performance and wellbeing. Dimba and Rugimbana (2013) were more accurate in their description of the Kenya business culture. For example, they noted that junior employees received “instructions from their managers and when in doubt,” opted to “wait for the managers to decide the way out”.

Both authors also noted a sense of patronage and dependency within the employee ranks that was characterized by the title “boss”. The closer the cultural backgrounds, the easier and faster the adjustment”. Organizations and companies have only freshly adopted liberal and fair recruitment approaches that embrace ethnic diversity and meritocracy, and the resultant cultural problems can be an obstacle instead of being of benefit to the organization. As Dimba and Rugimbana (2013) noted “developing countries are increasingly adopting technologies and expertise that are similar to those of developed countries, foreign multinational companies (MNCs) tend to become conduits for transferring host-country Senior Human Resource Management practices to their developing host-countries often without making any adaptive changes to these practices.” The limited number of foreign

employees that manage to mitigate the negative effects of bureaucracy, and obstacles, will discover that Kenya offers vibrant business chances, with a quickly growing information technology and communications sector, and compact links to the rest of the business communities in the world.

According to Muriuki (2012), “expatriate life can be insulated from Kenyan society, as the fear of crime, particularly in the large cities, sometimes cloisters foreigners behind the gates of compound housing complexes, and locked car doors. Those who emerge from behind this curtain of fear can really enjoy the different cultures of Kenya, all of which are famously welcoming and cheerful.” Nyambegeera, Sparrow, and Daniels (2000) described Kenyan organization as those that “became bureaucratic and autocratic and were used to achieve partisan, ethnic or political objectives, leading to inefficiency and ineffectiveness.” Airtel Kenya has been able to mix people from different cultures while working towards a common goal with good results. Currently Bharti Airtel boasts approximately 50 Million subscribers across Africa of which 7.6 Million are in Kenya.

1.1.5 Company Background on Airtel Networks Kenya limited

Bharti Airtel Limited is a leading global telecommunications company with operations in 19 countries across Asia and Africa. The company offers 3G voice and data services, fixed line for enterprises and national and international long distance services to carriers globally. In the rest of the geographies it offers mobile voice and high speed wireless internet. Bharti Airtel has been ranked among the six best performing technology companies in the world by Business Week. By the end of October 2011, Bharti Airtel had over 238 million customers across its operations. In Kenya, Airtel was originally launched in 2000 as Kencell which latter on rebranded to Celtel.

In 2008 the company was bought by Kuwait telecommunication firm Zain. This later on in 2010, Bharti Airtel Limited from India acquired 15 African operations from Zain. This made Bharti Airtel Limited one of the largest mobile operators in the world by subscriber numbers and geographical footprint. The company currently boasts of 50 million subscribers in Africa, a milestone it achieved within 17 months of acquiring Zain's mobile operations in 15 African countries and added 14 million new mobile customers during this period. Airtel vision for Africa is to become the most loved brand in the daily lives of the African people by 2015. The telecommunications scene in Kenya is quite competitive as Airtel faces 3 competitors. Safaricom being the largest telecommunication company in Kenya which is locally owned through the sale of its shares in the Nairobi stock exchange and the most profitable with a subscriber base of 17m which translates to 70% of the market share.

Airtel follows second in terms of subscriber base with around 3.5 m subscribers which is about 16% of the stake in the market share in Kenya. Orange with a market share of 8 % and lastly YU with a market share of 6%. Airtel in Kenya is the fourth company to take over the firm after Zain and thus has inherited brand connection issues as consumers still refer to the firm as Zain or by the former name of Celtel. This is a difficult situation as Airtel is also largely viewed as a foreign company and thus not connecting with the Kenyan market.

Airtel is largely credited for revolutionizing the telecommunication industry in Kenya by implementing a low price strategy that has seen consumers enjoy more value with affordable calling rates. This resulted in its rivals reducing their calling rates to offer more value to the customer. Airtel products and services are: Postpaid and prepaid plans, Blackberry devices and services, International roaming, Airtel Money- Mobile Money transfer services, 2G and 3G data services. In regards to culture Airtel Networks Kenya limited can be considered a

“melting pot’ as it accommodates numerous nationalities in the telecom industry. As earlier stated, the evolution from Kencell to Celtel to Zain and now Airtel has resulted to the incorporation of expatriates from different nations as the company changes management.

With Kencell also known as Alcatel-Lucent it was a joint investment of a local entrepreneur Naushad Merali and his French partner, Vivendi in 2000 (Ownership changes leave Merali as Face of Kencell, December 31, 2010). With this partnership there was a high presence of the French culture in the company right from their employee relations and product branding i.e. slogan “ Yes! Clearly the best”. Then rebranding to Celtel with the slogan ‘Making Life Better” saw a change in management with the coming of Gerhard May as the new Chief Executive Officer of Celtel Kenya.

Zain “A wonderful world” introduced a new management under Rene Meza who was Chief Executive Officer. The acquisition of Zain African unit by Bharti Airtel Limited (Kachwanya, February 24,2010) led to a different approach in management and employees relations at Airtel. There was the introduction of the Indian culture who were now the new owners of the company and right from the C E O of the company Mr. Shivan Bhargava (FM, April 18,2012) most of the top management was of Indian origin. However, in recent times this has changed with the appointment of Mr. Adil El Youssefi (Mbote, March 24, 2014) as the CEO of Airtel who is of African origin and with a Muslim background. From above we can conclude that most of the senior and top management at Airtel through the various transitions during ownership have been expatriates and at one time they had to interact with the Kenyan culture. Telecommunication being initially a green area in Africa, it is therefore evident that Telecom operators are increasingly relying on foreign executives to drive their

business as the industry continues to suffer from a shortage of experienced marketers and technical staff (as evidenced by Airtel's top management).

The telecommunications industry in Kenya has filled their commercial and technical divisions with expatriates after reportedly failing to get local talent to boost their network quality and sales (Okuttah, February 8, 2012). This has resulted to an influx of expatriates in the industry especially at Airtel where six out of the thirteen top managerial positions are filled by expatriates.

1.2 Research Problem

Societal culture has a significant influence on performance in such a way that it can affect the effectiveness of expatriate employees and adaptation to a new culture. Frequently, the local culture within a country contains elements that can create challenges for foreign employees in the initial stages. Academicians and managers of international enterprises frequently make the assumption that management is universal in nature. For this reason, Dimba and Rugimbana (2013) state that "MNCs have a tendency to take the management concepts and techniques that work at home into other countries. Dimba and Rugimbana (2013) also shared the same sentiments in their statement that "...large foreign multinational companies have generally applied Senior Human Resource Management practices without adaptation when trying to improve employee performance".

The Kenyan culture is no exception (McCormick, Alila, and Omosa, 2007). Nyambegera (et al., 2000) noted that the dominant factors that appeared dominant in the Kenyan environment included "...a wide range of ethnic groups; high levels of population growth; and constrained economic development focused mainly in urban areas" Foreign employees

originating from different regions such as Europe, Americas and Asia are accustomed to a certain way of conducting business. Being posted in an African country such as Kenya exposes such employees to unfamiliar working environments and practices (Dimba, and Rugimbana, 2013).

This clash of cultures creates significant problems for the foreign employee particularly by influencing their ability to be productive in their positions. The two authors therefore conclude that “...in this regard, the universality perspective of Senior Human Resource Management practices, specifically, recruitment, training, staff appraisals, and compensation systems to improve organizational performance needs to be contextualized (Dimba and Rugimbana, 2013).” Challenges such as lack of an information technology platform, insufficient training and corruption can greatly hinder expatriates from delivering their objectives. Therefore, studying the fundamental implications of Kenyan culture on foreign employees will greatly improve the understanding of the situation and assist in reducing any negative elements.

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of this research were to standardize the operations within Airtel Networks to a global level in line with other international firms through the process of;

- I. Diminishing explicit and implicit negative aspects of the Kenyan culture that can inhibit the realization of organizational objectives in Airtel Networks
- II. Maximizing the benefits of positive aspects of the Kenyan culture to the advantage of Airtel Networks Kenya Ltd.

1.4 Value of the Study

The value of this study is twofold. In terms of academic value, studying the positive and negative effects of Kenyan culture on the performance of foreign employees holds several benefits. One, it adds to the body of existing knowledge on the impact of diverse business cultures on the productivity and satisfaction levels among foreign employees. The greater part of literature has previously focused on studying different cultures in a secluded manner. Therefore, analyzing different cultures vis-à-vis foreign employee performance adds to the academic pool of knowledge. Furthermore, increasing the literature on international business cultural studies is imperative for new entrants into the market (Peterson, and Søndergaard, 2008).

Relatively few studies have examined the significance of self-efficacy, cultural awareness and social capital in the vast number of foreign employee literature. In addition, the role of preceding international experience has produced contradictory results in past studies. Therefore, this study is to increase knowledge on the theoretical foundation and emphasize the significance of those personal and organizational factors neglected by previous researchers. Apart from academic value, this study also possesses industrial value. Theoretical understanding of culture alone is insufficient, practical comprehension of the challenges faced by foreign employees as well as the various approaches towards overcoming them is equally important. With the high amount of cultural diversity across the countries, it is expected that implementation will be equally diverse. Foreign employees are frequently forced to divert from their conventional methods of operation when working in overseas to fit in with the existing situation. This study offers the different ways of practically addressing these cultural challenges faced by foreign employees.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section defines the foundation of the study by providing the theoretical framework of the study based on various theories, literature and studies that have been carried out and analyzed to provide deeper understanding on cultural issues affecting foreign employees.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation

The culture of each nation is distinctive and consequently, has an effect on the working environment within different sectors. Relocating from one working context into another is characterized by an encounter with different approaches, practices and cultures. Various studies have been conducted on the impact of new cultures on the productivity, comfort levels and acceptance levels among foreign employees.

The following section presents selected literature by scholars that concentrates on the dynamics of these relationships, the resultant environment as well as the relationship with local employees. Dimba and Rugimbana (2013) raised an alarm over the low level of “applicability of Western nations’ models of Senior Human Resource Management practices in MNCs operating in developing countries.” In Bhatti (2012), Claus argued that “...social networks support expatriates’ intercultural adjustment and job performance”.

2.2.1 Theory of Social Capital Model for Foreign Employees Efficacy

Social capital can be defined as capital that is present within associations among people. The essential aspects of social capital can be captured in social resources and structure, chances

for networking, trust, practices, planned actions, and associations. Nonetheless, the precise location of social capital is vaguer. It is present in the associations and individual networks between social players; it is developed through interaction. Consequently, the trend of networks and the links created through them are important for social capital (Ochumbo, 2008).

Therefore, social capitals is a multifaceted and dialectical procedure in which a unique form of capital is developed and maintained as people alternate and facilitate more social capital. As Liu (2004) put it, "...social capital may have significant implications for their effectiveness or success in terms of adjustment and performance." To the extent that expatriates are immersed in social networks for the duration of their international duties, social capital definitely has significant consequences for their efficiency or their level of adjustment and productivity (Cavusgil, Knight, Riesenberger, Rammal, and Rose, 2015).

Based on the social capital theory, a potential benefit or downside of the social capital process is a change in psychological conditions. This implies that the change in working environment can negatively or positive affect the physical and emotional health of the foreign employee. However, it also encompasses consequences that affect performance (Cavusgil et al., 2015). Numerous authors on the theoretical literature on social capital concur that expressive outcomes as well as instrumental focused outcomes are based on motivation, opportunity and ability.

Adjustment and performance are factors that are frequently evaluated to determine the success of foreign employees (Ochumbo, 2008). Opportunity determinants refer to a group of factors that establish the level of access to social resources controlled by other actors. Social

networks represent the typical way for foreign employees to create new relationships and reinforce older ones. Specifically, it allows the expatriates to interact with the host country nationals and this improves the workplace and personal relationships. Consequently, this translates into improved performance within the workplace. The other aspect of social capital model is concerned with access to information. Social capital can either improve or worsen the access to valuable resources.

Official or casual networks offer foreign employees with chances to exchange information and resources, such as advice on their duties, strategic data, or even emotional advice from their domestic colleagues or from foreign employees within the same working environment. Several network-based studies concerning expatriates capture the idea that under tentative and evolving conditions characteristic in entrepreneurial circles, the people charged with the duty of controlling resources will most probable seek information that assists in measuring the fundamental prospects of a venture. Both foreign employees and entrepreneurs are comparable when it comes to their information seeking demands as both indulge in such behaviors to lower improbability.

2.2.2 The Theory of Met Expectations

This theory argues that the productivity and comfort of foreign employees is largely determined by the working conditions, attitudes and approaches in the host country. In particular, the theory suggests that all foreign employees have expectations concerning their professional and personal experiences in another country (Peterson, and Søndergaard, 2008). The degree to which the expectations are met is vital in determining the level of dedication, contribution towards the organization and so forth. In other words, when expectations are “met”, foreign employees’ exhibit increased tendencies to be cooperative especially with the

local employees. The threshold of expectations is largely determined by the local business and working culture.

This represents the relationship between foreign employee expectations and local cultures (Peterson, and Søndergaard, 2008). Within most local working environments, there is an everlasting presence of reluctance and resistance to foreign employees. For such foreigners, their main expectations would be an increased cooperation particularly with peers and subordinates. In as far as job performance was concerned; Bhatti (2012) noted that "...expatriates who successfully handle their conflicts with the host country workforce are more likely to experience smooth adjustment at their workplace." Wanjiku and Aguisoma concluded that "...organization culture has a great influence on performance as it dictates how things are done, organization's philosophy, work environment, performance targets and organizations stability."

2.3 Relationship of Concept of Culture and Expatriates

There is a strong correlation between the working environment in a host country and the foreign employees. The biggest motivational factor that draws foreign workers to overseas countries is the shortage of highly skilled labor in those regions (Taylor, 2012).

Given the high number of expatriates in foreign lands, it is imperative to examine the attitudes, professional perceptions and behaviors of this category of employees in relation to the new business and social culture. Most foreign employees are normally employed on a short term basis given their temporary citizenship within the country. Foreign workers recruited under short term contracts generate increasing diversity of substitute staffing approaches for the recruiting organization and introduce a remarkable disparity to domestic

workers who assume the same position and carry out similar responsibilities, but who were employed for longer contracts or even indefinite (Taylor, 2012).

The cultural and individual disparity noted in the previous part is responsible for significant social-psychological influences on workplace perceptions and conduct. Ang (et al., 2004) argued that “when employees feel as though they receive a lot from the organization, their citizenship behavior will be higher. When they feel their exchange relationship is less positive, they can withhold these discretionary behaviors with little fear of negative consequences.”

In the process of understanding the relationship between a local culture and foreign employees working in it, examining the organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) contributes greatly towards displaying the correlation. Organizational citizenship behavior refers to the behavior exhibited by employees that is not captured in the job description. For instance, environments exhibiting high OCB are characterized by horizontal cooperation among foreign and local employees as well as high levels of exchange among the two groups (Taylor, 2012). However, Ang (et al., 2004) proposed that “suggest that since foreign workers receive less from the organization, they will contribute less to the organization.”

The relationship between the Kenyan workplace and business culture and foreign employees is also characterized by other aspects such as job satisfaction (Coulson Harney Advocates, 2013). This represents one of the important areas for employees. Ang (et al., 2004) claimed that “foreign workers under employment of limited duration create greater variety of alternative staffing strategies for the employing organization and present an interesting

contrast to local workers who hold the same job and perform the same tasks, but who are hired at will and for open or long-term employment relationships”.

There is also a strong correlation between local cultures and job performance in relation to foreign employees. Local cultures are complicated, unique and act as a stumbling block to efficient operation for foreign employees. With the introduction of new ways of doing business, foreign employees are at a loss on the approach to adopt. On one hand, they can maintain their international standards while conducting their operations in a different country. This can create a positive reaction in that the organization will benefit from advanced strategies and perspectives of management. However, the entry of sophisticated foreign employees can also result in negative consequences for individuals and to the organization. The foreign concepts can prove to be complicated and different. They can result in reduced departmental and individual performance that can harm the organization.

2.4 Summary of the chapter

This chapter has traced the development of research focused on the role that culture play in the integration of foreign workers into a local organization. Using the Theory of Social Capital Model for Foreign Employees Efficacy and the Theory of Met Expectations, it explores the variables that determine the comfort and productivity of foreign employees in a local context, determining the areas that have been covered by research and those that have not.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The main sections of the research methodology included data collection and analysis, population, sampling methods and sample design.

3.2 Research Design

This research was a case study of Airtel Kenya. Yin (1984) defines case study research method as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, where the boundaries between context and phenomenon are not clearly evident. Basically a case study delves into details from a contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships. The research adopted a correlational structure that aimed to describe the characteristics of the population. More importantly, this case study analyzed the correlation between foreign employees from different cultures and the local culture.

3.3 Data Collection

The point of analysis for this research was at the personal level in which data was gathered using self-administered questionnaires. The raw data for this study originated from employees of the Airtel Kenya Limited in Nairobi, Kenya. This category of respondents had been used by researchers on previous occasions. Given that the company has a directory with records of local employees; it was necessary to identify qualified participants by initially eliminating Kenyan surnames, and consequently doing away with the entries that were registered under local names. This procedure generated approximately 50 names for the

mailing address list. Consequently, it is impracticable for the yearly published directories to be totally precise (Coulson Harney Advocates, 2013).

Harzing (2004) discusses this phenomenon in his publication and states “...expatriate failure is more complicated than merely returning home before an international assignment contracts has expired. He states that high labor turnover during or shortly after international assignments and expatriates who fail to perform adequately, are those assignees seen to bring more loss to the organization than those who return prematurely”. For instance, several reports were collected via mail and mobile phone from specific foreign employees concerning their decision to go back home (McCormick et al., 2007). However, such instances are rare. The respondents from Airtel Networks are analogous to data collected from earlier expatriate studies.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data obtained from the interview guide was analyzed using content analysis. Nachmias and Nachmias (1996) have defined content analysis as any technique used to make inferences through systematic and objective identification of specified characteristic messages. Kothari (2004) further defines content analysis as the analysis of the content of documentary and verbal material and describes it as qualitative analysis concerned with the general import of message of the existing document. It also measures pervasiveness. The research analyzed the information provided by the interviewees during data collection and analyzed against known cultural challenges or concepts in order to establish the level to which expatriates in Kenya are influenced by Kenyan culture and their ultimate job performance with thus regard.

3.5 Summary of the chapter

This chapter looks at the research design used in the study. This is a case study of Airtel Kenya concerned with exploring the variables that determine the comfort and productivity of foreign employees. The chapter has also looked at the data collection tool used for the study and the method of content analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter covers data analysis and also the findings of the study. The data was collected from the 30 expatriate who work in the head office of Airtel Kenya. The response rate was 100% with all questionnaires filled and returned on time.

The study was carried out to establish the effects of Kenyan culture to expatriate employees and their job performance at Airtel Networks. It also examined the challenges faced by the expatriate employees of relocating from their home countries and the impact this had to their relations back at home. The data was gathered through the use of questionnaires, developed in line with the objectives of the study stated above. Moreover, additional data through observations gained from observation and informal interactions were incorporated in the findings. The study sought data on key cultural elements impacting the respondents. Such information was considered necessary in laying the basis of obtaining pertinent information on cultural influences which impact on the ability of expatriates to orient themselves effectively in their new environment.

4.2 Data Analysis

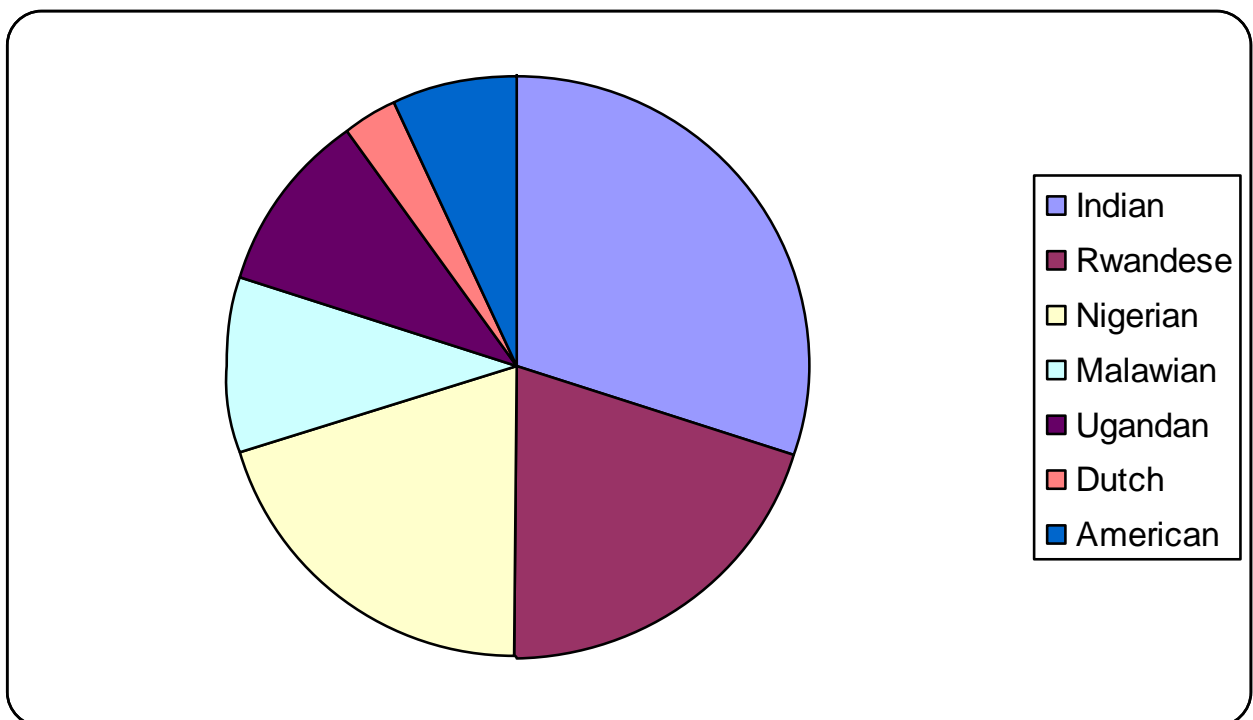
In analyzing the data, the respondent's profiles were put under consideration. These were expounded on in terms of their nationalities, the period they have served as expatriates and their positions in the organization. From the information obtained, the results indicate that the respondents head critical docket in various departments hence having managerial positions. The respondent's expertise as expatriates ranged from the lowest 10 months to the highest 5 years.

This is as a result of the high rate of management change and restructuring processes at Airtel. It was established that most of the respondents had been expatriates in other countries before relocating to Kenya.

The analysis included respondents from India, Rwanda, Nigeria, Malawi, Uganda, European, Ghana and United States of America. It was noted that, the Indian origin respondents occupied managerial positions of higher level whereas the other nationalities occupied mid-level management positions.

Of the respondents sampled, 9 were Indian, 6 were Rwandese, another 6 were Nigerian, 3 Malawians, 3 Ugandans, 2 Americans and 1 Dutch.

Figure 4.1 Nationality Distribution Pie chart



4.3 Culture Shock

From the study, the respondents listed an array of cultural elements that were shocking to them. The most common included: The importance given to tribal affiliations, high number of single ladies and single mothers, high level of insecurity, high use of slang during work hours. However, it was the general opinion that the Kenyan nationals are a hospitable people who are welcoming to everyone.

The analysis showed that majority of the expatriates in an effort to mitigate against the effects of culture shock they engaged in activities that allowed them to interact at a much deeper and personal level with those elements that they found strange to them. As such, they have undergone processes of continuous learning of the people and environment around them. Some of the activities included visiting the recreational facilities in Kenya something which 80% of the respondents found to be very good relative to their home facilities on the same. The learning of the Kenyan language also has had a positive impact on their integration to their new environment reducing the initial difficulties of orientation at their work place this is in terms of communication as it was established that most Kenyan employees use Swahili and slang during work hours. Hence learning this language helped in communication.

The population age at Airtel Networks ranges between 25 years to 55 years with majority in their early 30's. This has had a positive impact on the foreign employees as they are able to interact with this age group in terms of Social Media instruments such as face book, Instagram, Imo, whatsapp and google chat. This similarity in social media on a global scale has reduced significantly the culture shock element as faced by expatriate employees.

With this, they are able to connect and share experiences both with their local and foreign relations which assist in reducing the negatives effects of culture shock as experienced during the rejection and regression stages.

4.3 Social Amenities

The respondents gave feedback on various social amenities using a Likert scale with the following values: Very good = 1, good =2, neutral = 3, bad = 4, very bad = 5.

In relation to the Likert scale and values given above, table 4.1 summarizes the mean value of each of the variables tested in the case study in relation to the country of origin of the foreign workers.

Table 4.1: Social Amenities summary

	Indian	Rwandese	Nigerian	Malawi	Ugandan	American	Dutch
Transport	4	2	3	3	2	4	5
Communication	3	2	3	2	2	2	4
Health	4	1	4	3	2	4	4
Education	4	1	4	3	3	4	4
Legal	3	2	3	3	3	3	4
Recreational activities	1	1	2	2	2	4	4
Work ethic	4	2	4	2	3	4	4
Food	4	2	4	3	4	2	1
Housing	2	1	2	3	2	2	2

From the data collected, it was established that ranging in terms of our food and feeding habits, most of the Indian expatriates found this to be very bad as there are few vegetarian options in the Kenyan cuisine. Most of the African expatriates also found Kenyan food and feeding habits to be bad as most of the traditional food is widely acceptable in Kenya and are not highly spiced as compared to their nations this is mostly in the case of western African states.

With regards to recreational facilities the European respondent found the standards of all sectors performing badly. This is ranging from education, health systems to transport. As compared to their home nations the state of Kenyan social amenities was found to be lacking. Mostly cited was the issue of traffic congestion, poor road systems, the current teachers strike in the education sector as well as the nurses' strike. The only positive element of the Kenyan social amenities as per the European and American respondent was the food and housing.

On the other hand most of the African expatriate found the social amenities to be good except the food. Of interest was the finding that except for the European respondent the other respondents found the quality of Kenyan recreational facilities to be good as they considered Kenyan social lifestyle advanced as compared to their home nations.

4.4 Corporate Administrative Culture

This section looked into the administrative aspects of the corporate culture that affects foreign staff at Airtel Kenya. Of significance was the element of the role of women in the corporate setting. As compared to West Africa states, the respondent depicted that women in Kenya were more independent and more aggressive as compared to their home nationals. Women in Kenya were holding more managerial positions as compared to men and the element of women empowerment in the country (Kenya) was evident to all.

This was also an element of importance to the employees of Indian origin where the role of the women was considered to be much inferior to that of men. In some instances, the respondents had an issue with the idea of a female manager as this was not considered acceptable in their culture.

Bureaucracy also stood out as a challenge in Kenya, thus inhibiting both work and process flow within the organization. The numerous approval hierarchy structures that are incorporated with in the organizations' organization structure made it difficult to conduct business especially to the expatriates from Europe and America who are accustomed to quick decision making usually from the line managers in their home nations while in Kenya, decisions are usually made at C E O level / Director levels.

4.5 Work hours

From the data, it was established that it is only in India where the work days and hours were different. In India the work week runs from Monday to Saturday and the work hours run from 9:30 am to 6:30 pm. The rest of the respondents had similar work hours. As such this as an element of culture did not affect most expatriates. However, the issue of national holidays came up as an element which most of the foreign staff found to be conflicting to that of their home nations. The expatriates expressed their disappointments in not being able to celebrate their national holidays but they had to celebrate the Kenyan national. This was a common element among all respondents.

Among the respondents from North Africa / Muslim states the issue of working days was prominent as Fridays are considered working days in Kenya while in their home nations these

are considered as their worship days while in Kenya Sundays are considered and gazetted as the day of worship. This proved to be much of a challenge to our Muslim brothers.

4.6 Dressing

The respondents found that Kenyan workers adhere less to the set corporate wear. At Airtel Networks (K) Ltd they have incorporated a culture of informal dressing at the work place and this has aided in alleviating culture shock as each individual is allowed to dress up as they find appropriate. This has allowed individuals to incorporate some elements of their culture in their dressing. For instance the dressing of Sari's at the office by Indian women and wearing of jeans – Levi's at the office on non weekends by those from America. This has been widely accepted by majority of the staff at Airtel as each individual can embrace a dress code that best suites them.

4.7 Work challenges

Except for the Malawian respondents, the other respondents stated numerous challenges encountered in the work place. These challenges included: poor work ethics by Kenyan workers; passive aggressiveness; independent thinking whereas the need is for team thinking and the use of Swahili and slang during work hours and in communicating work issues. Kenya being a country of 42 ethnic backgrounds, it was established that employees of Kenyan origin tend to form cliques of the various ethnicity and use their native language at the office. This has resulted to the foreign employees feeling discriminated against resulting to communication barriers.

In some instances, the foreign employees have experienced rejection by the Kenyan employees as they are considered as threat to their job security hence hindering cooperation

on work related processes and tasks and at times leading to sabotage of the foreign employees. This has been a conflicting emotion to many expatriates as in all other areas that are non-job related the Kenyan employees have been cooperative and hospitable but in relation to work they react negatively.

This in turn has resulted to feelings of resentment among the foreign employees resulting to their creation of their own informal groups to push for their own agenda where they find difficulties. This at times may involve the top management resulting to greater divide where the Kenyan employees feel as though they are being subjected to unfair treatment at their home country.

4.8 Corrective measures

Respondents were asked to state steps they have taken to mitigate the cultural challenges they encountered at the work place. The answers were varied. All the respondents with an Indian origin stated that they became less aggressive and more understanding and appreciative of people. Two of the Indian and the American respondents stated that they initiated meeting up with the locals after work to assimilate themselves into the Kenyan culture and get to know the Kenyan counterparts better. The same issue of assimilating into the Kenyan culture through events was also put forth by the respondents from Rwanda. This ranged from attending weddings, burials to visiting local recreation facilities. learning of the local language especially the common term that are widely accepted across all ethnic cultures in Kenya especially using Swahili language have also assisted in minimizing the language barriers.

There has been an increase in lobbying for the management to intervene in areas where a foreign employee feels rejected due to the perception of them being a threat to local's job security which has resulted to incorporation of employee communication forums where all Airtel employees are encouraged to discuss contentious issues without victimization.

The indulgence in local cuisines has also assisted the foreign employees to be able to orient themselves to the Kenyan foods and feeding habits hence reducing the impact that this has had on their stay here in Kenya.

4.9 Summary of the chapter

This chapter engages in the finding of the study after the data was analyzed. Using a table that creates a matrix for the variables that affect the foreign workers in relation to their particular country of origin, the chapter analyses the extend of the relationship between the two. The chapter also looks at corrective measures that can be employed to enable the foreign workers settle down better, as suggested by the foreign workers themselves.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to present the summary, conclusion and recommendation concerning cultural factors affecting work performance by expatriates' workers at Airtel Networks Kenya Ltd as accrued from the case study.

5.2 Summary

From the study we note that there are various cultural factors that affect the work environment of expatriate workers at Airtel Kenya, eventually reflecting in the achievement of their set organizational targets. This study focused only on the expatriate staff at Airtel Kenya with the first part of the questionnaire seeking to find out the respondents country of origin including the length of time they have been expatriates and the length of this expatriate period has been in Airtel Kenya.

The second part of the questionnaire sought to find out their rating of Kenyan social amenities using a Likert scale. The social amenities in focus were transport, health, education, communication, legal, housing, food, work ethic and recreational systems.

The third part of the questionnaire focused on the cultural issues that the expatriates had encountered and the mitigating factors that they had brought on board to enable them cope with these cultural differences.

From the findings obtained from data based on the first section of the questionnaire, it was noted that the biggest percentage of expatriates at Airtel Kenya originated from India. Most of these had worked for three years and below as expatriates in the Kenyan market.

It was also noted that the group from India had not worked in another country as expatriates before coming to Kenya. The other expatriates were mostly from African countries. Rwanda had the biggest percentage of expatriates followed by West Africa. Malawi, Uganda and Netherlands had one respondent each. It was noted that the respondents from West Africa and Netherlands had worked in other countries as expatriates before coming to Kenya and had worked in Kenya for an average of four years.

Data obtained from the second part of the questionnaire showed that the Indian nationals had mixed responses concerning the quality of social amenities in Kenya. The average values from the Likert scale show that they found Kenya's transport, health, education, work ethic and food to be below par in terms of quality as compared to India. They also found Kenya to be equal to India in terms of its quality of legal and communication systems. Furthermore they noted that the housing and recreational facilities in Kenya were of good quality.

The respondents from other African countries found the Kenyan social amenities to be good in terms of quality. The respondent from Malawi noted that all the amenities listed on this section of the questionnaire were of the same value as those found back in his country; hence he did not experience much difference. The respondent from Netherlands noted that all the listed social amenities, with the exception of food, were below quality.

From the third section of the questionnaire which focused of particular cultural aspects that were shocking or different to the expatriates, the respondents from India noted that Kenyan workmates did not like being shouted at or being told what to do. They also noted that the Kenyan counter parts took the issue of respect seriously. They also noted that the Kenyan society had many single ladies, single mothers and most of these were independent.

The respondents from Rwanda found the Kenyan men in the work place to be aggressive and not gentle even when dealing with ladies. They also found the Kenyan lady counterparts to be equally aggressive, independent and outspoken. The responded from Netherlands found the Kenyan work ethic frustrating noting that the Kenyan workmates had to be followed up most of the time in order to achieve their targets.

Another challenge noted by most of the respondents was that the Kenyans counter parts used a lot of Swahili and slang when communicating in the office hence cutting out the expatriates who did not understand the languages well.

In order to mitigate these challenges, the respondents from India stated that they had to cut down on their aggressiveness in exercising their power since Kenyans workers do not take being talked to in loud voice kindly whereas that was the norm in India. Most of the respondents also noted that they had to start attending Kenyan cultural functions in order to familiarize themselves with the Kenyan culture and the local languages.

5.3 Conclusion

From the finding of this study, the researcher concluded that there are numerous aspects of the Kenyan culture that affect expatriates working at Airtel Kenya. These aspects when contrasted to the work environment that the expatriates are used to working in become challenges that need to be addressed.

The cultural aspects noted in this research are not necessarily corporate administration issues but rather the social aspects of culture that affect the way people work. The researcher concluded that for there to be greater efficiency by the expatriate staff these cultural issues have to be continually noted and corrective measures put in place to enable ease of work by foreign staff.

The researcher concluded that the organization needs to have continuous cross cultural which included both the expatriate and Kenyan staff. This training is to help the expatriate staff assimilate into the local culture and also to help the Kenyan staffs know how to help the expatriate staff settle.

5.4 Recommendations

From the findings and conclusions, the researcher recommends that Airtel Kenya should incorporate the cultural issues that have been brought forth from this research to be part of their work practices.

Language was determined to be the largest cultural element that affects work performance of expatriates' employees. The researcher recommends that Airtel Kenya ensures that the official work language is English and that the use of Swahili shall only be limited to

customers without a good grasp of the English language. This will ensure inclusion of all staff in the conversations going on in the offices.

The work ethics came out as a source of concern as Kenyan employees are not very keen on adhering to set limits and time lines. The researcher recommends that Airtel Kenya should create strict work target systems that will ensure all work targets are achieved at the set periods. This system should also include a reward and reprimand subsystem. Training also came out as an area where focus should be emphasized especially on the diversity of culture. The researcher recommends that Airtel Kenya initiates continuous training programs for both the Local and expatriate staff to help them work together in a more unified way. This training should also include team building activities both on site and off site.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

The researcher recommends further research on more sustainable ways that organizations can reduce the amount of time it takes for expatriate staff to settle down in the local work environment and with their local work mates and come to par with their targets.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Interview Guide

This questionnaire has been designed for the sole purpose of collecting data on impact of Kenyan culture on expatriates working at Airtel Networks Limited. The data collected will be treated with a very high degree of confidentiality and it is meant for academic purpose only.

1. What is your nationality?
2. What is your position in this organization?
3. How long have you been in this position?
4. For how long have you worked as an expatriate?
5. What were your main reasons for engaging in expatriate employment?
6. What different cultural elements do find prominent in Kenya from your own culture?
7. What elements of culture shock have you encountered?
8. Using either of the following ratios: Strongly accepted it, accepted it, was Neutral, Opposed it, strongly opposed it. Rate the reaction of your relatives and friends perception with regards to your relocation to Kenya.

Using either of the following ratios: Very good, Good, Equal, Bad, Very bad. In terms of infrastructure; Rate the following systems in Kenya in comparison to our home country.

9. Transport system

10. Communication systems

11. Health System

12. Education system

13. Legal System

14. Housing

15. Quality of Kenyan recreational facilities

16. Kenyan food

17. Kenyan work ethic

18. How do the following corporate norms in Kenya compare to your home corporate norms: Monday to Friday work day

19. How do the following corporate norms in Kenya compare to your home corporate norms: 8am -5pm work hours

20. How do the following corporate norms in Kenya compare to your home corporate norms: Kenyan corporate wear

21. Impact of religious beliefs and customs found in Kenya as compared to your home country?

22. What has been the impact of culture on your job performance at Airtel Networks?

23. What have been the challenges have you encountered in adapting to the Kenyan culture?

24. What is your general opinion regarding aspects of Kenyan culture? How has it impacted on your performance?

25. What measures have you found useful in assisting to integrate yourself and minimize culture shock effects in Kenya?