

Workplace diversity and human resource performance among non-teaching staff of selected private universities in Ogun state

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ABSTRACT

The proliferation of privately owned institutions in Nigeria has led to a range of challenges, including the issue of workplace diversity. The observed phenomenon is a naturally occurring event that can have varying effects on worker performance, depending on the effectiveness of its management. Numerous research studies have demonstrated the significant impact of non-teaching personnel management on their performance in private university settings. This study investigates the influence of workplace diversity on the efficacy of human resource management, expanding on the existing theoretical framework. The study utilised a survey research method, specifically targeting private universities in Ogun State that have obtained approval from the National Universities Commission (NUC). A representative sample of respondents was selected. The data was collected using a meticulously designed questionnaire. Regression analysis of ordinary least squares (OLS) and Pearson product correlation were used to analyse workplace diversity and human resources performance among non-teaching staff in a selected private university in Nigeria. The regression analysis conducted in this study revealed a statistically significant association between workplace diversity, encompassing factors such as age, education, and gender, and employees' performance in Nigeria. Ethnic diversity has a detrimental effect on workplace diversity. The study indicates that it is important for organisational management to establish and implement policies that support diversity in the workforce, considering the varied backgrounds of all individuals involved.



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1. INTRODUCTION

Organisations globally are established to fulfil predetermined goals. The achievement of these objectives depends on the efficient utilisation of resources. The human resource is considered the most important resource in organisations due to its critical role in effectively utilising other resources to achieve organisational objectives (Hassan, Naeem, & Muhammed, 2014). Researchers have attempted to understand how the effectiveness of employee performance can be improved over time due to their relevant characteristics (Olajide, 2014). The contributions of employees within an organisation are of great significance. Effective management and fair treatment of workers can improve the overall effectiveness of the firm, resulting in increased profitability. Tesfaye (2010) suggests that organisations that effectively utilise their staff's capabilities can achieve cost savings by reducing recruitment efforts and also motivate employees to enhance their performance. Afrin, Asyraf et al (2023) and Zen (2023) have asserted that employee performance significantly impacts the sustainability and growth of organisations. Therefore, it is crucial to provide employees with adequate training, development opportunities, motivation, and support to sustain their performance levels. Many global organisations have developed strategies to promote and manage diversity. Diversity management refers to the deliberate actions taken by organisations to promote the inclusion of employees from diverse backgrounds in both formal and informal structures. This is achieved through the implementation of intentional policies and programmes (Palmi, 2001; Nyambegera, 2002; Özbilgin, Mulholland, Tatli, & Worman, 2008; Shifnas & Sutha, 2016). Nigeria is a diverse nation, with significant variations in culture, religion, ethnicity, language, climate, occupation, and education. The diversity in the country is demonstrated by the existence of over 400 ethnic groups and more than 1000 dialects (Okibe, 2022). The significance of workplace diversity, particularly within different organisations such as universities, cannot be overstressed. This study seeks to examine the relationship between workplace diversity and employee performance among non-teaching staff members in selected private institutions in Ogun State.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

Byrne (1971) proposed that individuals are more likely to be attracted to others who share similar attitudes. This theory suggests that when individuals become more similar in terms of their demographics, they are more likely to feel attracted to and connected with each other. Individuals with shared backgrounds may exhibit greater similarity compared to those from different backgrounds. The common background among individuals promotes effective collaboration and the development of innovative solutions to diverse challenges. The existence of similarities strengthens the value and conceptual robustness of an individual's ideas and values. However, conflicts can create doubts about the validity and stability of one's ideas and values, resulting in a sense of uneasiness. Research has demonstrated that individuals tend to gravitate towards people who possess similar characteristics when given the opportunity to engage with a diverse range of people (Berman et al., 2018). Research conducted within organisational settings has shown that there is significant diversity, which can lead to flawed work practises. Substandard work can negatively impact employees' overall performance. Different age cohorts have unique knowledge bases. Therefore, the inclusion of employees from diverse age groups will promote employee growth and improve their understanding of job duties. The hypothesis suggests that there is a relationship between the similarity/attraction theory and employee performance, which can be used to support the presence of age diversity.

2.2 Diversity

Diversity encompasses differences in age, cultural heritage, physical abilities and disabilities, racial background, religious beliefs, gender, and sexual orientation (Xie & Shauman, 1998). Individuals display variations in gender, culture, race, social and psychological attributes, as well as in their perspectives and biases. Diversity in the labour force enhances its heterogeneity. In today's work environments, it is essential for all organisations to have a diverse workforce. Managing a diverse workforce poses a significant challenge for management (Asmita, 2015; Dahlin et al., 2018; Asimwe & Steyn, 2013; Asimwe & Zueni, 2023). The presence of a diverse workforce is crucial for the success of all organisations. In today's

business environment, organisations that hire talented and competitive employees, regardless of age, attitude, language, gender, religion, or caste, are the only ones able to effectively compete in the marketplace (Goyal, 2018). Goyal (2016) argues that modern companies must have a diverse workforce to succeed in today's highly competitive work environments. Multiple studies have demonstrated the positive influence of workforce diversity on staff productivity (Sharma & Sharma, 2014; Dahlin et al., 2018; Asiimwe & Steyn, 2013, 2014; Asiimwe & Zueni, 2023). The researchers' conclusions and perspectives are primarily supported by policy-based arguments.

2.3 Employee Performance

Employee performance has received considerable attention from management scholars due to its significance for individuals and organisations. Masa'deh et al. (2018) argue that enhancing employee performance is crucial for optimising organisational operations, particularly in terms of efficiency and productivity. Employee performance is not solely determined by the final outputs achieved, but encompasses other factors as well. Employee efforts play a crucial role in the overall process, ultimately leading to the accomplishment of organisational objectives. Employee performance refers to the results of employees' actions, which are influenced by their experience and skills. In organisational settings, employee performance is the combined result of the skills, efforts, and capabilities demonstrated by all individuals within the organisation. This collaborative effort improves productivity and helps achieve organisational goals. Enhanced organisational performance is achieved through efforts aimed at achieving goals, which require a corresponding improvement in staff performance (Ellinger et al., 2003). Markos and Sridevi (2010) suggest that employee performance is a reflection of their effectiveness and productivity, ultimately leading to the successful attainment of organisational objectives. This positive contribution ultimately contributes to the overall success of the organisation. Faiza and Nazir (2015) define employee performance as the observable behaviours displayed by employees that reflect their acquired knowledge and training. This statement suggests that it includes the effects on individuals' cognitive and emotional faculties.

2.3.1 Challenges of Workplace Diversity

According to Oyewunmi (2018), a significant challenge encountered by human resource management in organisations is the practice of excluding individuals or groups based on factors such as age, education, ethnicity, and income, among others.

2.3.2 Age Diversity

In their 2018 study, Kerga and Asefa in Ethiopia found a significant positive correlation between these two variables. Workforce diversity is measured across multiple dimensions, such as age, gender, ethnicity, education, work experience, and marital status while Prasad (2017) found no significant impact of workforce diversity on organisational success in Ethiopian banks. This finding was attributed to the moderating effect of the work environment. Kunze, Boehm, and Bruch (2017) conducted a cross-organizational study to examine the association between age diversity, age discrimination climate, and performance outcomes. The study utilised the proposed structural equation modelling (SEM) methodology and found support for all theoretical relationships. The findings suggest a relationship between age diversity and the presence of age discrimination within organisations. The adverse impact of this climate on the company's performance is evident in its effect on emotional commitment. These findings have significantly contributed to the existing literature on diversity and segregation by highlighting the importance of age segregation at the organisational level as a mediator in the relationship between age diversity and performance. Joseph (2018) investigates the influence of age diversity on employee performance in Singapore. The relationship between workers' age and organisational success was assessed using SPSS software for data analysis. The investigation found a negative correlation between workers' age groups and their performance. There are acknowledged variations in organisational culture, human resource practises, nature of work, and business processes among different firms. These variations are likely to affect the influence of different factors on employee performance, making it challenging to generalise observations across firms. academic and concise manner. Chu, Lam, and Liao (2017) offer suggestions for the effective implementation of diverse strategies for managing human assets while the study carried out by Backes-Gellner and Veen (2017) specifically investigated the influence of workforce age diversity on organisational efficiency. The study's findings suggest that organisational efficiency can be positively influenced by the presence of a diverse age group. However, this effect depends on the organization's involvement in innovative tasks rather than routine ones.

2.3.3 Education Diversity

Daniel (2019) found a correlation between educational attainment and productivity levels. Higher levels of education are linked to higher

levels of productivity. Glaeser, Kallal, Scheinkman & Shleifer (1992) also found that higher levels of education are positively correlated with economic growth. Also, Edward (2015), employees with lower educational degrees are more prone to experiencing feelings of inferiority, which can adversely affect their performance. Namachanja and Walter (2015) investigated the impact of staff management diversity on competitive advantage. The study found that the company's hiring practises aim to promote gender diversity in the selection of managers. The company's commitment to diversity management programmes in public and private institutions is motivated by the goal of improving learning and effectiveness. The performance of an organisation is greatly impacted by the confidence, abilities, training, and exposure of its staff. Hence, it can be deduced that a person's educational background is important in the workforce, as insufficient education can impede their job prospects and hinder their professional success. This is supported by the study of Daniel (2019) which suggested a correlation between education levels and types, and migration rates, which may vary. The employment prospects for individuals without a tertiary education but with work experience may vary from those with the same level of education but possessing tertiary credentials.

2.3.4 Ethnicity Diversity

Loeters (2017) conducted a study investigating the association between ethnic diversity and group performance. The study specifically explored the mediating impact of work value diversity and the moderating influence of group tenure. The study focused primarily on analysing ethnic variation within different groups. The study included individuals who were members of research and development teams from six different companies. The findings did not support the expected association between ethnic diversity and group performance, when considering the influence of work-value diversity as a mediator. Furthermore, the findings did not provide support for the anticipated association between work value diversity and group performance, which was expected to be influenced by group tenure. Esmail and Abel (2006) conducted a study investigating the influence of ethnicity and diversity on doctors' performance. This research study aimed to evaluate the impact of racism in the medical field, specifically focusing on the NCAA's efforts to comprehend the influence of ethnicity and diversity on staff performance. Research findings suggest a significantly higher likelihood of misconduct charges among doctors from ethnic minority backgrounds compared to their white colleagues, with a six-fold increase. Isobel Allen conducted a six-year inquiry commissioned by the General Medical Council (GMC). Although her findings support Esmail's claims, it seems that the GMC has not fully understood the root causes of the disproportionate representation of ethnic minority doctors in disciplinary proceedings. Pitts and Jarry (2015) investigated the correlation between ethnic diversity and organisational performance. This study examined the impact of diversity on managerial and employee levels within public industries. The growing ethnic diversity in the workforce has led organisations to place greater emphasis on managing diversity effectively. Consequently, there is a growing recognition of the significance of understanding how diversity impacts employee interactions and work-related outcomes. The study found a contrasting relationship for street-level officials, which contradicts the initial premise. The study's findings align with previous research suggesting that increased variety can pose difficulties in orientation and negatively impact work-related outcomes.

2.3.5 Gender Diversity

Gender is a sociocultural construct that involves categorising an individual's attributes as either feminine or masculine (McDowell, 2018). Gender qualities are present in all workforces. Gender diversity is considered a formal strategy in organisations to achieve a balance between male and female representation. Joecks, Pull, and Vetter (2013) conducted a study to analyse the influence of boardroom gender diversity on organisational performance. The analysis revealed that gender balance in the boardroom has a positive impact on decision-making quality within organisations. Chepkemai, Rop, and Chepkwony (2022) investigated the relationship between gender diversity and employee performance in Bomet, Kenya. The findings suggest a positive association between gender diversity and employee effectiveness. Gender diversity has been shown to influence employee performance in various ways. Nakagwa and Schreiber (2014) assess the influence of female managers on firm performance. The study's findings suggest that gender diversity in the workforce promotes innovation and facilitates the creation of high-quality problem-solving solutions. In addition, Busolo (2017) examined the influence of workplace diversity on performance in a study. The researcher examined gender, age, education level, and culture as significant variables for assessment. The investigation found that effective leadership, high-quality management, job happiness, organisational culture, and competition are factors that contribute to improved performance and productivity for individuals of all genders. Abdullah (2014) conducted a study to examine the relationship between gender diversity and employee performance, specifically focusing

on a case study involving Malaysian airlines. The study found a significant positive correlation between gender diversity and employee performance in the aviation industry.

2.3.6 Work Place Diversity and Employee Performance

Employee performance assessment involves evaluating how well an employee's work aligns with predetermined job standards (Nur, Halifah, et al., 2019). Andoh (2019) conducted a study investigating the influence of workplace diversity on employee performance. The study's results suggest that the presence of diversity in the workplace has a notable influence on the performance of employees. In another vein, Preeti, Poonam & Ekanshi (2014) explored how companies manage workforce diversity and its consequences to the company's existence as well as examined how companies' deal with challenges that comes with employees from diverse cultural backgrounds in India. The research answers the question 'Has workplace diversity contributed to organizational success. Abdul, Muhammed, Aumbareen & Arif (2020) examined the relationship between diversity and human resource management in higher academic institutions. The study explored the effect of mediating factors which contributes and have an impact on traditional human resource management process that will enable the leaders to manage diversity such that challenges could be handled with care and turned into opportunities. Also, Andoh et al. (2019) conducted a study to examine the impact of workplace diversity on employee performance in selected private institutions in Ghana. The study's findings indicated that workplace diversity significantly impacted employee performance. Education and age exerted stronger influence than gender and ethnicity. Toriola et al. (2019) investigated the influence of workforce diversity on the productivity of academic staff. The study utilised a mixed research approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods. Its finding suggests that there is no statistically significant correlation between workforce diversity and academic staff productivity in chartered private universities in Uganda.

3. CONCLUSION

This study employed regression analysis using ordinary least squares (OLS) and Pearson product correlation to examine the relationship between workplace diversity and human resources performance in specific private universities in Nigeria. The regression analysis conducted in this study revealed a significant correlation between workplace diversity, encompassing factors such as age, education, ethnicity, and gender, and employees' performance in Nigeria. The research revealed that ethnic diversity has a detrimental effect on workplace diversity. In conclusion, this study affirms that it is crucial for organisational leaders and managers to actively address gender diversity in the workplace

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the conclusions reached in this study, the following recommendations are put forward:

- that it is advisable for organisational management to establish and implement policies that support workforce diversity, while considering the diverse backgrounds of all individuals involved. This approach has the potential to enhance interpersonal relationships among individuals within the organisation.
- Organisations should implement a diverse management strategy that takes into account the age, education, and gender of employees in order to improve their performance. This approach has the potential to enhance individuals' dedication to the organisation.
- Organisations should carefully evaluate the influence of ethnic diversity on the job performance of non-teaching staff in private universities in Nigeria. By recognising this variable, organisations can develop a policy that promotes fair and equitable treatment, fostering a harmonious work environment among employees.

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