Influence of Diversity on Employees' Satisfaction in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined how diversity in the workplace influences satisfaction of employees of tertiary institutions in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Survey research design was used and a sample of three hundred and eighty-nine (389) respondents were obtained from the total population of thirteen thousand, eight hundred and twenty-two (13,822) employees in six (6) Nigerian tertiary institutions. Data obtained in the survey were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools (such as frequency count, simple percentage, mean, standard deviation, and Karl Pearson correlation). In specific, the Karl Pearson correlation results indicated that while diversity dimensions of gender and age had insignificant influence on employees' satisfaction, it was found that ethnicity and education had significant influence on employees' satisfaction in Nigerian tertiary institutions. In view of the findings, it was recommended that management of tertiary institutions should consider workplace diversity (workforce educational level and ethnic groups) as a vital factor when formulating policy frameworks. In addition, there is the need for management of tertiary institutions to incessantly take proactive measures aimed at managing diversity elements such as age and gender in order to attain the desired satisfaction by the workforce. This study contributes to the human resource management literature by revealing that employees' satisfaction is driven not by age and gender, but as a result of educational qualification and tribal sentiments.

Keywords: *Gender; Ethnicity; Educational Level; Employee Involvement; Organizational Learning*

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary times, organizations operating as a social system retain personnel by satisfying their expectations in order to attain their goals. The need to ensure employees' satisfaction is informed on the underlying dogma that employees' satisfaction is divergent between and among them; thus, organizations would be far more effective if they recognize and manage employees' diversity in the workplace. Tan et al (Tan et al., 2021) opined that managing diversity in the workplace is a requisite to increase the satisfaction and performance of employees, given today's changing climate and competitive environment in which an organization finds itself.

Managing diversity is aimed at obtaining the collective mix of similarities and/or differences utilised in accordance with the accomplishment of the organization's objectives (Erasmus Chirume, 2018). In other words, distinctions are internal and extrinsic features that distinguish one person from or comparable to another. Effective diversity management improves organizational performance by encouraging people to collaborate and allowing them to use all of their abilities. Some of these contributions include the discovery of innovation, better qualified people selection, cost saving, increased management efficiency and organization's capacity to adapt and give flexibility to continue this activity.

Aside from organizational contributions, organizations that value differences and provide opportunities for their members to fully utilize their potential provide individual contributions such as employee comfort and confidence, morale, employee satisfaction, effective communication, teamwork, high performance, and loyalty (Briggs, 2016). Discrimination is growing more prevalent in the workplace and is detrimental to the firm. Any contemporary corporate aim should always include eliminating all forms of prejudice in the workplace and creating a pleasant atmosphere that embraces diversity. It is critical to understand that workplace discrimination does not affect only a specific group of people, but rather affects everyone, regardless of race, religion, culture, or sexual orientation. As a result, every organization has every reason to implement effective diversity management practices that reap the benefits of a diverse workforce.

Furthermore, any organization that fails to accept cultural diversity in its system and fails to take proactive actions to eliminate prejudice and injustice will have a devastating impact on employees. According to Arubayi, Eromafuru and Egbule (2020), it is imperative therefore for organizations to adopt proactive and best practices that focus on promoting the abilities and skills of employees in order to given the organization increased competitive advantage. Hence, the vital approach is to build, develop and sustain workplace diversity as well as establishing a structure that allows employees to be connected to the organization. In accordance with the above, the aim of this study is to provide a better

understanding on how diversity influences employees' satisfaction in Nigerian public tertiary institutions

Research Questions
It is in view of the above identified problems that the following research questions were raised:
1.   What is the link between gender diversity and employees' satisfaction in Nigerian public tertiary institutions?
2.   What is the connection between age diversity and employees' satisfaction in Nigerian public tertiary institutions?
3.   What is the relationship between ethnicity diversity and employees' satisfaction in Nigerian public tertiary institutions?
4.   What is the relationship between education diversity and employees' satisfaction in Nigerian public tertiary institutions?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Diverse working environments teach people to be tolerant of one another and improve their capacity to work in groups (Tuzun & Kalemci, 2012). The hybrid work structure has boosted the organization's market competitiveness. In a competitive environment, a corporation can compete with a hybrid structure that requires both diversity and employee involvement (Christiansen et al., 2016).

Diversity as observed by Raza, Ishtiaqi, Kanwal, Butt and Nawaz (Raza et al., 2013), may be described as a set of intentional actions that need a thorough awareness and appreciation of humans, cultures, and the natural world. Most significantly, diversity seeks to emphasize the disadvantages that prejudice poses to others and to forge relationships that allow individuals with various characteristics to collaborate (Burea & Henderson, 2016). Employee satisfaction on the other hand it is seen as a crucial component driving organizational transformation and organizational learning, and it has therefore remained an important field of cross-disciplinary research.

Employee happiness is higher in firms that have shared values and an open system of justice for all employees. A workplace that discriminates on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity, or education is unable to retain a broad mix of employees (E. S. Mason, 2002). Several nationalities have already changed jobs and relocated to other countries. It demonstrates that the law based on nationalism will benefit, but it will have a severe impact on market diversity and labor satisfaction. Employees with different educational backgrounds have no significant effect on employee satisfaction. Employee satisfaction will not be affected by a diverse work environment in terms of education levels.

Gender and Employee Satisfaction**.**

Employee satisfaction is higher in firms that have shared values and an open system of justice for all employees. A workplace that discriminates on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity, or education is unable to retain a broad mix of employees (E. S. Mason, 2002) because of its relationship to human variety, capital, and quality of life, gender is a vital focal point in many organizations. As a result, gender-related issues in organizations like pay disparities, promotion, and decision-making power among male, female, and transgender employees, remain a source of contention.

Age and Employee Satisfaction

Many nations are seeing an increase in their young population. As a result, the factor of age diversity is becoming increasingly crucial for employee happiness in a variety of workplaces. According to the conclusions of certain study papers, age differences have little effect on employee satisfaction. Employees working together are not dissatisfied because of age disparity (Briggs, 2016). Organizations that retain personnel of all ages are more productive and see their business grow. Employees of all ages have a diverse range of life experiences. Using these experiences, the organization may achieve success and create additional value.

One of the most difficult issues of workplace diversity is the generation gap. As a result, there is a loss of cohesiveness, which is produced in part by a lack of communication between older and younger generations. This causes issues in the workplace, especially when strategic changes are necessary for organizational progress. In light of this, generations that is far apart face difficulties during the adjustment phase, which is frequently attributed to generational differences but is actually a shift in the career cycle. Sometimes, aged personnel working at higher levels refuse to embrace change and new methods of doing things.

Ethnicity and Employee Satisfaction

Ethnicity is an aspect that contributes to human ethnic and cultural variations. As a result, the causes might lead to workplace animosity, discrimination, or contempt. However, because today's workplace includes people from all over the world, diversity and the issues it presents are seen as critical to organizations. Many organizations now have a multiracial and multicultural dynamic due to the variety of their working populations. A high percentage of ethnicity in the workplace increases the likelihood of employee conflict and degrades employee satisfaction (Abdullah, 2013).

Education and Employee Satisfaction

Different levels of education assist organizations to establish stronger business strategies, compete in the market, and create the best career succession plans for their personnel. Employees are more driven, which increases employee trust and happiness with the business. Influential individuals in many organizations have made it mandatory to incorporate educational diversity initiatives in campaign efforts to motivate and reassure individuals that goals established by organizations will be realized. Education backgrounds have significant capacity, abilities, and expertise.

Within a particular class of vocations, the amount of occupational choice is a function of intelligence. As a result, people choose situations that match their attributes, such as intellect. As a result, we anticipate that education is strongly connected to employee happiness. However, the effect's direction cannot be identified unequivocally. It may depend on whether or not the work is tough or exciting enough. Bures and Souza (2018) discovered that educational level segregation (graduate versus undergraduate) was associated with the desire to leave.

Workplace Diversity
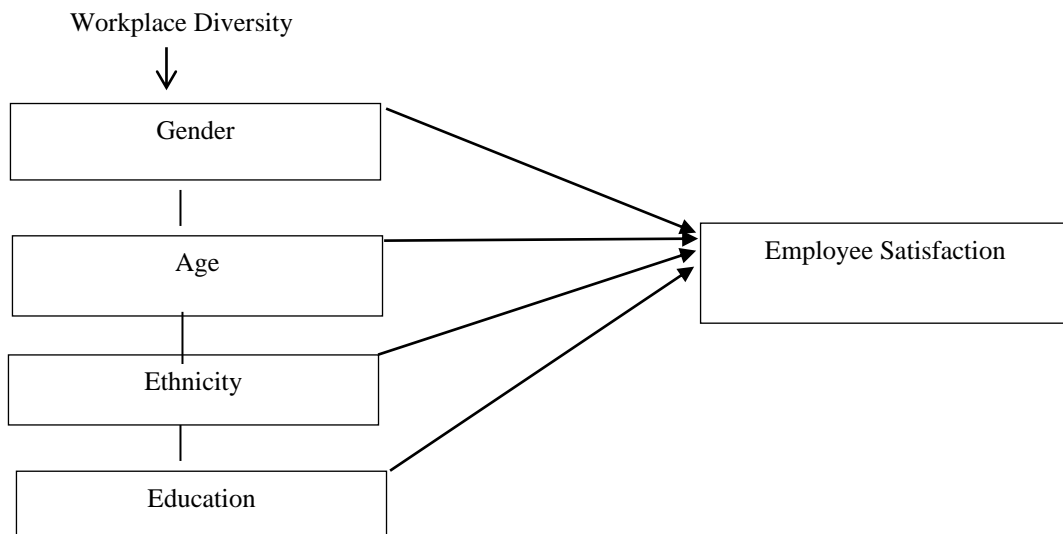
Figure 1. Conceptual Framework
Source: Conceptualized by the Researcher (2023)

The study is hinged on the social identity theory and the Similarity/Attraction theory. The Social exchange theory explains the classification of people based on social traits such as age, gender, and ethnicity, and how these variations generate stereotypes. According to social identity theory (Arubayi et al., 2020), one's self concept is derived from membership in specific social groups, particularly those groups that perceive themselves higher on the basis of certain social traits.

According to the similarity/attraction idea, likeness on characteristics such as age, ethnicity, race, or views increases reciprocal enticement and attractiveness

(Arubayi et al., 2020). The similarity-attraction hypothesis discusses the phenomena in which people tend to attract or be attracted to other people who are similar to them in key ways. When we talk about attraction, we don't just mean the physical component, but also a general like or want to be near them.

Review of Empirical Studies

Molnar (2015) conducted study on gender and employee engagement in selected Dubai enterprises. Purposive sampling techniques were used to select 200 employees for the study. Data was collected through questionnaires, which were then analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Gender has a substantial association with employee engagement and desire to work extra, according to the research.

Bender and Heywood (2015) conducted a study at Oxford on the nature of workplace diversity and how it tends to promote employee performance utilizing characteristics such as Gender, Age, and Educational Qualification using a sample of 300 respondents chosen at random. Data was collected using a 24-item questionnaire with a five-point likert scale. After applying Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at the 0.05 level of significance, it was determined that there is a positive association between the aforementioned factors and employee performance.

Winnat (2016) used 300 randomly selected workers from various firms in France to conduct a research on age disparities among employees and their performance inside the organization. The data was analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was performed to test the hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that age differences can have an impact on how employees perform within an organization.

Lent and Brown's (2016) study used a survey of 150 workers in Connecticut, USA, to investigate the link between the age difference and employee performance in the workplace. The questionnaire was the primary data collecting tool, and the data was analyzed using Spearman Ranking. Following a study, it was determined that employee performance.

According to de-Montfort's (2017) study, there is a substantial association between educational background and employee work engagement. A non-randomized quasi experimental design with a pretest and a posttest was employed in the investigation. Using a standard random sampling approach, 104 respondents yielded the sample size. Data was collected using a 20-item multiple-choice test on the concept of solubility. To answer the study questions, the mean and standard deviation were employed, and the hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). According to the findings, there is a considerable

association between an employee's educational background and their work involvement.

Pandev and Chicaro (2017) performed research to investigate the link between workplace diversity and employee performance. The study was carried out in Indonesia with a sample size of sixty (60) employees from chosen companies using simple random selection. A 12-item scale was used to collect data for the study. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance. According to the findings, there is a strong link between workplace diversity and employee performance.

In the United States, Leong and Saralica (2017) study the relationship between gender, employee happiness, and organizational success. The research questionnaire was used to perform a cross-sectional study on a sample of 78 respondents, and the findings were analyzed using the t-test. Gender has a favorable association with employee happiness and organizational success, according to the research.

Okikiola and Adetokunbo (2018) revealed that workplace diversity does not predict employee performance in Nigerian businesses. The research was a survey with a sample size of 150 people. A questionnaire was used to collect data. The data collected in the field was analyzed using Analysis of Variance, and the results revealed that workplace diversity had a considerable influence on employee performance in firms.

Mohammed and Usman (2018) investigated the influence of workplace diversity on the profitability of listed pharmaceutical enterprises in Nigeria using panel data from five selected firms collected over a ten-year period (2010-2018). They acquired data from the annual reports of the firms they chose. According to the study's findings, work place diversity influences firm profitability after careful analysis with t-test and multiple regression.

According to Mason (S. Mason, 2019), a 15-item questionnaire was used to conduct research on educational qualification and employee satisfaction among 200 selected staff members of business firms in the United States to determine if there was a relationship between educational qualification and employee satisfaction. The data collected during fieldwork was analyzed using the mean and standard deviation. The findings demonstrated a strong association between educational qualification and employee happiness.

Wierama (2019) revealed gender variations in job attribute preferences among Munich, Germany-based company employees. The study was cross-sectional in nature, with 250 employees from various firms participating. Gender is a determinant of workplace cooperation, employee engagement, and satisfaction, according to the results of a 20-point questionnaire administered and analyzed using the t-test.

Adetoro and Williams (2019) investigation on the association between age difference and employee performance discovered a strong relationship between

age and employee satisfaction in selected Nigerian enterprises. Three hypotheses were generated to guide the inquiry. A survey research design was used in the study. The study's sample included 240 employees from diverse companies. A 15-item questionnaire served as the primary data gathering instrument for the study. Spearman Ranking was used to analyze the collected data.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The survey research design was employed in this study; this design was employed because it required direct interaction between the researcher and the subjects, who answered the questions posed by the researcher. The study population comprised of all 13,822 university staff of six (6) universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Thus, the study participants are both academic and non-academic staff of the six (6) universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

The tertiary institutions covered comprised the University of Benin, University of Port-Harcourt, Ambrose Ali University, Delta State University, Benson Idahosa University and Igbenedion University. Probabilistic sampling technique (Taro-Yamane formula) was used in determining the sample size 389 respondents. Data gathering tool is the questionnaire which was administered by the researcher along two (2) researcher assistants on a face-to-face basis.

The questionnaire was designed on a 5-point Likert scale of strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree; the instrument scale is similar to those used in the study of Bender and Heywood (2015). The identity of the researcher subjects were kept confidential in order to conform to the ethical consideration in research. Data gotten from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools (such as frequency count, simple percentage, mean, standard deviation and Karl Pearson correlation).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Pearson Correlation Result for Gender and Employee Satisfaction

		Gender	Employee satisfaction
Gender	Pearson Correlation	1	.068[*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.133
	N	389	389
Employee satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.068[*]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.133	
	N	389	389

[*] Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
Source: Computed by the Researcher (2023)

Table 1 shows a Pearson's r-value of 0.068 and a p-value of 0.133. Testing at an alpha level of 0.05, the p-value is greater than the alpha level, so, the null

hypothesis which states that "There is no significant relationship between gender and organizational employee satisfaction is accepted. Consequently, there is no significant relationship between gender and organizational employee satisfaction.

Table 2. Pearson Correlation Result for Age and Employee Satisfaction

		Age	Employee satisfaction
Age	Pearson Correlation	1	.066*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.131
	N	389	389
Employee performance	Pearson Correlation	.0.66*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.131	
	N	389	389

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
Source: Computed by the Researcher (2023)

Table 2 shows a Pearson's r-value of 0.066 and a p-value of 0.131. Testing the hypothesis at an alpha level of 0.05, it is seen that the p-value is greater than the alpha level, so, the null hypothesis which states that "There is no significant relationship between age and employee satisfaction" is accepted. Consequently, there is no significant relationship between age and employee satisfaction.

Table 3. Pearson Correlation Result for Ethnicity and Employee Satisfaction

		Ethnicity	Employee satisfaction
Ethnicity	Pearson Correlation	1	.316*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.041
	N	389	389
Employee performance	Pearson Correlation	.316*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.041	
	N	389	389

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
Source: Computed by the Researcher (2023)

Table 3 shows a Pearson's r-value of 0.316 and a p-value of 0.041. Testing the hypothesis at an alpha level of 0.05, the p-value, which is 0.041 is less than the alpha level, so, the null hypothesis which states "there is no significant relationship between ethnicity and employee satisfaction" is rejected. The conclusion is that "there is significant relationship between ethnicity and employee satisfaction".

Table 4. Pearson Correlation Result for Education and Employee Satisfaction

		Education	Employee satisfaction
Education	Pearson Correlation	1	.522*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.046
	N	389	389

Employee performance	Pearson Correlation	.522[*]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.046	
	N	389	389

[*] Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
Source: Computed by the Researcher (2023)

Table 4 shows a Pearson's r-value of 0.522 and a p-value of 0.046. Testing the hypothesis at an alpha level of 0.05, the p-value, which is 0.046 is less than the alpha level, so, the null hypothesis which states "there is no significant relationship between education and employee satisfaction" is rejected. The conclusion is that "there is significant relationship between education and employee satisfaction".

In the literature, diversity in gender has been considered not playing a major role in enhancing employees' satisfaction. First, our findings showed an insignificant relationship between gender and employee satisfaction; this finding disagrees with the results of Molnar (2015); and Bender and Heywood (2015) who posited that gender diversity had significant relationship with employee satisfaction but rather point to contracting gender gaps. Therefore, the studies show that diversity in gender in the organization does not affect the satisfaction of employees.

Second, it was found that there is no significant relationship between age and employee; this finding agrees with the results of Mohammed and Usman who found that gaps in age is not an influence for employees' level of satisfaction. Third, we found that there is a significant relationship between ethnicity and employee satisfaction; this finding is in line with the results of Briggs (2016) who observed that numerous diversity factors such as language, religion, race, sexual orientation, gender, age, and ethnicity account for ethnic and cultural differences of human beings. As a result, these factors can result in hostility, discrimination or disrespect in the workplace environment.

The diversity of working populations has created an atmosphere of multiracial and multicultural dynamism in many organizations. As a result, it is expected that some individuals will not only harbor unfair prejudices but also project their inherent biases, anger and frustrations to others considered different in the organization. In the end, such attitudes can result in poor cohesion, team bonding, and create other problems such bullying, scapegoating or harassment in the workplace.

In practice, harassment occurs because of the race or color, religion, or nationality of an employee. Other factors can include disability genetic information or affiliation to selected social groups. Burea and Henderson (2016) noted that these issues significantly impact on organizations in a diversified work environment cannot be tolerated or permitted to thrive. Thus, organizations need

to carefully consider these challenges ethnic and sociocultural differences can have on the workplace.

Fourth, we found that there is a significant relationship between education and employee satisfaction; the finding is in agreement with the assertion of Max, Pons Suri (2015) who observed that a workplace having adequate education diversity becomes a source of competitive advantage, hence promoting the satisfaction of the workforce.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that while gender and age diversities do not play major roles in affecting employees' satisfaction, ethnicity and education diversities are major drivers of employees' satisfaction in Nigerian tertiary institutions. On the basis of the findings, it was recommended management of tertiary institutions should consider workplace diversity (educational and ethnicity) as a vital factor when formulating policy frameworks. In addition, there is the need for management of tertiary institutions to incessantly take proactive measures aimed at managing diversity elements such as age and gender in order to attain the desired satisfaction by the workforce.

Furthermore, management of tertiary institutions in Nigeria should ensure that adequate remuneration, promotion and other motivational incentives are offered to employees; these incentives should be based on merit and not on the basis of ethnic divide. This study contributes to the human resource management literature by revealing that employees' satisfaction is driven not by age and gender, but as a result of educational qualification and tribal sentiments. This study was limited to six (6) tertiary institutions in Niger Delta region of Nigeria; however, future studies should focus on other tertiary institutions in other regions of the Nigerian federation. Also, future researches should examine other tertiary institutions such as monotechnics and polytechnics

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