



Workforce diversity's impact on the performance of healthcare employees

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Abstract

This paper sought to examine the connection between workforce diversity and worker performance in Abuja's healthcare institutions. The workforce is diverse in terms of gender, age, education, and ethnicity. A series of standardized questionnaire were employed in order to conduct the study. 82.5% of the returned questionnaire from four Abuja healthcare facilities were utilized for the study. There was usage of a multi-regression model. The study's findings revealed a strong correlation between gender diversity and employee effectiveness. It suggests that the majority of employees agreed that the company should not discriminate when employing people of different gender. The findings, however, indicated that both education and racial diversity have no effect on employees' performance. Therefore, businesses need to focus more on diversity management in order to improve employee performance, which finally aids in the accomplishment of organizational objectives.

Keywords: Age, education, employee performance, ethnic, gender, workforce diversity

Introduction

Companies and organizations ought to accommodate diversify issues in order to be competitive in the 21st century economy. It is the variations in educational background, talents, and job perspectives across individuals within an organization. Additionally, it is due to the variations in the personal, cultural, and demographic traits of workers. When members of a group or organization are different from one another in terms of demographic characteristics including age, gender, race, ethnicity, immigration, and education workforce diversity. Due to these considerations, the new workforce has a significantly more diversified makeup than it did in the past (Erasmus, 2007) [16]. Additionally, a variety of reasons, including globalization, aging populations, the entry of women and minorities into new professions, knowledge-based workers, work-teams, virtual workers, and part-time or contingent workers, have led to a much more diverse workforce (Agrawal, 2018; Adhikari, 2021; Adhikari & Shrestha, 2019) [4, 1, 2].

The labor diversity in Abuja is quite remarkable. Abuja is a state having a diverse ethnic and linguistic population (Shrestha & Parajuli, 2022) [32]. People from a variety of ethnic groups live in Abuja. Similarly, people from distinct ethnic groups speak various languages and practice numerous religions (Shrestha, 2022) [31]. Around 55.2% of the population is Muslim, which makes up the majority of the religion. Similarly, Abuja had 35.8% Christians and 9% Traditionalists. The cities of Abuja, though, are increasingly influenced by other cultures (CBS, 2012). According to Wikipedia, Abuja has 129 languages and 125 castes and ethnic groupings. All of these contributing to workforce diversity in Abuja's workplaces.

According to Kochan *et al.* (2019) [20], diversity can cause a range of emotions at the workplace because some view it as a problem that needs to be solved rather than as a tool that can be exploited to develop the business. Several academics concur that organizations that are cognizant of diversity provide results that are more valuable. Organizations that prioritize diversity will benefit from cost savings in attrition

and increased sales far more than organizations that do not (Brown & Lam, 2018) [7]. Organizations that see diversity as a fundamental component of their strategy rather than a cost of doing business will reap significantly greater rewards than those who do not. According to Choi (2007), diversity promotes synergistic success when employees of an organization are able to accept and understand one another as well as benefit from one another's experiences, knowledge, and viewpoints.

Employee performance is impacted by a number of important factors, including workforce diversity (Khan, 2019) [19]. Managing workforce diversity is a current emphasis for many businesses, especially facilities, in order to improve employee performance and boost organizational productivity. The banking sector is one that is expanding quickly (Shrestha, 2018, 2019). Numerous difficulties have been created by the banking industry's fast growth, including a diverse workforce. This is a natural occurrence that can have a beneficial or bad impact on an organization's productivity, depending on how it is managed. Since operational excellence can be sparked by a productive human resource and is a cornerstone of the sustainability of the optimal degree of company success, effective human resources have traditionally been recognized as the foundation of a business enterprise (Kyalo & Gachunga, 2021) [21].

Because they are ineffective at mobilizing a diverse workforce to operate as a team in terms of managing several dimensions, policymaking, training, visibility, and approach to clear and overall goals, the majority of businesses today suffer. Businesses that include diversity into their overall strategy will prosper far more than those that do not, since they will experience cost savings in turnover and increased sales (Brown, 2018) [7]. These debates suggest that the study examining the impact of workforce diversity on employee performance of great important. Workforce diversity awareness can help current managers assess the impact of age, gender, ethnicity, degree of education, and other diversity-related aspects on employee performance. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine how employee performance in Abuja's healthcare institutions is impacted by workforce diversity.

Literature Review

1. Workforce Diversity

Diversity is increasingly acknowledged and leveraged as a valuable corporate resource in order to deliver exceptional customer service or to maintain a competitive edge (Kyalo & Gachunga, 2021) [21]. According to Omankhanlen and Ogaga-oghene (2021), the workforce's diversity refers to the differences among people inside an organization that can have an impact on a position or relationship, including age, gender, ethnicity, and education. It involves revealing these distinctions in a secure, accepting, and supportive atmosphere. Diversity in the workplace is a complicated, contentious, and political subject. The productivity of employees and companies is increased by the diversity of workforce activities in the field of human resources, according to Emiko and Eunmi (2021) [15]. Respecting one another and going beyond mere tolerance are necessary for accepting and honoring the many dimensions of variety that each individual person brings to the organization (Carrel, Mann, & Sigler, 2018). The key contributors to worker diversity include gender, age, ethnicity, and education.

Gender Diversity

It is a fair to embrace equal representation of people from various genders in the workplace. Gender diversity has always existed across cultures and throughout history. Gender-based disparities in an organization are maintained and explained by stereotypes and prejudices that associate males with good traits and, consequently, a higher status (Leonard & Devine, 2019). Only within those locations that were normally more distinct in terms of gender performed better than others (Kochan *et al.* 2019) [20]. At both managerial and non-managerial levels, gender-based diversity is said to foster greater cooperation and teamwork. Mixed-gender groups outperformed equal gender groupings, according to Eagly and Wood (2021). Diversity would benefit the workforce if gender concerns were recognized, discussed, and dealt with (Emiko & Eunmi, 2021) [15].

Age Diversity

In the workplace, a corporation might recognize people from various age groups. A prevalent factor now is how the organization handles the aging population in all conceivable ways. Many groups now include people of varying ages. Studies like those by Barrington & Troske (2001) and Algahtani (2019) have demonstrated that older workers are more active, successful, and skilled than younger ones. Therefore, an employee age group that is heterogeneous would be more creative, diversified, and productive than an employee age group that is homogeneous (Williams & O'Reilly III, 1998).

Diversity in Education

There are many levels of education credentials for employees. Employee productivity is also impacted by educational diversity. According to Choi and Rainey (2010), a higher output level is fueled by a larger proportion of trained workers. According to Emiko and Eunmi (2021) [15], a person's efficiency would also depend on their level of schooling. Therefore, a staff member's educational background matters.

Ethnic Diversity

There are people there from many ethnic backgrounds. The development in multicultural aspirations in society is due to

the increase in multiethnic corporate groupings, which include organizations devoted to religion, family, and education. Zgourides, John, and Watson (2018) observed that, after teams understood how to take use of these differences, ethnic diversity facilitates problem-solving with ethnically diverse problem-solving viewpoints, such organizations could expect better team success. Ethnically diverse communities lead to more innovation and development because of learning chances (Garen, 2019).

2.2. Performance of Employees

The term "performance" relates to the act of carrying out a responsibility; putting into effect or identifying an action, achievement, or achievement (Shrestha, 2019, 2018) [27, 2]. Rue and Byars (1993) defined employee performance as the effective performance of one's duty for positive outcomes. It is how well a worker satisfies the requirements of the position. It is evaluated based on productivity, effectiveness, job quality, and performance ratings (Kyalo & Gachunga, 2021) [21]. In the discipline of human resource management, it is thought that effective workforce diversity strategies are necessary to improve and raise individual and organizational performance (Adler, 1986) [3]. The benefits of employee diversity at the workforce level will also be inherent and external motivational factors for them and help them foster employee cooperation because the success of an individual employee is fundamentally influenced by organizational performance.

Research Methods

1. Design of the study

This study used a descriptive research design to gather information and provides specifics regarding the elements affecting employee performance in Abuja's healthcare facilities. This study also used the causal research design to establish a causal association between workforce diversity and employee performance in Abuja's healthcare facilities.

2. Participants

There are 656 healthcare establishments operating in Abuja. There are only six healthcare facilities were randomly chosen for the study (Lumen Hospital, Ugonma Hospital Limited, Salihu Memorial Hospital, Kabi Mangoro Phc Clinic, Farakuti Health Clinic, And Splendour Vixion Eye Clinic). 420 employees were contacted in order to learn more about diversity and the outcomes based on a practical method. There were 347 (82.5%) participants in this study. The following table displays the response rates of the participants:

Table 1

Gender	Percent	Ethnicity	Percent
Male Female	54.09 45.91	Bgagi	27.76
		Hausa	28.83
		Igala	32.74
		Others	10.67
Education	Percent	Age (years)	Percent
Ph. D	0.72	up to 24	1.44
M.Phil.	2.14	25-34	61.55
Master	45.21	35-44	32.03
Bachelor	45.52	45-54	4.98
+2	6.41	Above 55	0.00

Note: n = 347

Data Source

Information about the effects of workforce diversity on employee performance at healthcare facilities in Abuja was gathered from employees using primary sources. The personnel of a sample sites were given a set of structured questionnaires to complete as part of the study. The questionnaire is evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale with a range of one (strongly agree) to five (strongly agree).

3.3 Research Framework

Based on the aforementioned literature and debate, the following research methodology has been developed for this study to ascertain the effect of workforce diversity on employee performance in Abuja's healthcare institutions.

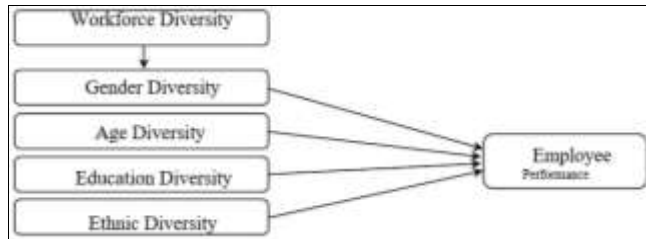


Fig 1: Workforce Diversity and Employee Performance

In this study, employee performance is viewed as a dependent variable, whereas workforce diversity is viewed as an independent variable in terms of gender, age, education, and ethnic diversity.

3.4. Analysis Tools

Mean and standard deviation are just two examples of descriptive statistics that are utilized in data processing (S.D.). Similar to that study, this one utilizes a multi-regression model to examine how workforce diversity affects employee performance. The model is as follows:

$$EP = \alpha + \beta_1GD + \beta_2AD + \beta_3ED + \beta_4EthD + \epsilon$$

Where,

- A = Constant
- $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$ = Coefficient of the variables
- EP = Employee performance
- GD = Gender diversity
- AD = Age diversity
- ED = Education diversity
- EthD = Ethnic diversity
- ϵ = Error term

Empirical data and findings.

1. Statistical Analysis

Table 2 displays the averages, standard deviations, and reliability metrics (Cronbach's alpha) for each variable used in the analysis

Table 2: Means, S.D and Reliability Statistics (Cronbach's alpha) of Study Variables

Variables	Mean	S.D.	Reliability
Gender Diversity	3.67	0.55	0.77
Age Diversity	4.15	0.63	0.80
Education Diversity	4.37	0.62	0.76
Ethnic Diversity	3.62	0.56	0.83
Employee Performance	4.32	0.67	0.82

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Employee agreement that gender diversity increases performance is shown by a mean score of 3.67. The staff at healthcare facilities concur that managing gender diversity is crucial for maximizing performance. Employees agree that age diversity exists in their firms, as evidenced by the mean score of 4.15. The workforce's diversity in terms of age enables older workers to gain a better understanding of contemporary technologies.

Employee agreement with the presence of educational diversity at their organizations is indicated by a mean of 4.37. They believe that educational diversity is useful in raising performance. Employees strongly agree with the presence of ethnic diversity at their firms, as evidenced by a mean score of 3.62. They think they *get along* well with their coworkers who are of different racial and cultural backgrounds. They also concur that there is no animosity among the workers as a result of the employment of several languages for communication. The employees' varied native tongues contribute to the establishment and cohesiveness of groups. Evidently, employees concur that the diversity of the workforce within their firms contributes to their high performance level. The average value of 4.32 demonstrates this.

2. Model Specifications

To ascertain the connection between workforce diversity and employee performance, the study offered a linear model. The model is shown as follows:

$$EP = \alpha + \beta_1GD + \beta_2AD + \beta_3ED + \beta_4 EthD + \epsilon$$

The model summary is presented in the tables below:

Table 3: Model Summary of Linear Regression Result

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.938 ^a	0.889	0.889	0.24657

The proportion of the dependent variable's (employee performance) variance that the independent factors can account for is measured by the R-squared (gender, age, education, and ethnic). The R-squared for this study is 0.889, indicating that the four independent variables (diversity in gender, age, education, and ethnicity) can account for 89.7% of the dependent variable and that the remaining 10.3% can be accounted for by other factors..

Table 4: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	55.319	4	13.830	227.475	0.000 ^b
Residual	6.384	105	0.061		
Total	61.702	109			

In this study, the analysis of variance is utilized to assess how well the model fits the data. The model is effective at predicting how the four independent variables (gender diversity, age diversity, education diversity, and ethnic diversity) influence employee performance in the banking sector because the results show that the p-value is 0.000, which is less than 1 percent level of significance. Additionally, the calculated F (227.475) is higher than the F-critical value (2.46), demonstrating that the models are

adequate for forecasting how the independent variables will affect the dependent variables.

Table 5: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Coefficients Beta		
(Constant)	1.002	0.155		6.461	0.000
Gender Diversity	0.418	0.102	0.533	4.111	0.000**
Age Diversity	0.572	0.163	0.682	3.514	0.001**
Education Diversity	-0.87	0.164	-0.116	-0.529	0.598
Ethnic Diversity	-0.105	0.78	-0.150	-1.348	0.181

Dependent variable: Employee Performance

Note: **p<0.01. *p<0.05

Based on the above results, the equation for the regression model is:

$$EP = 1.002 + 0.418 GD + 0.572 AD - 0.87 ED - 0.105 EthD$$

When the four variables are held constant, the value of employee performance in the healthcare banking sector will be 1.002, according to the intercept (). Holding all other independent factors fixed, there would be a 0.418 improvement in employee performance for every unit increase in gender diversity. A p-value of 0.000 indicated that the association was significant. A unit increase in age diversity would also result in a 0.572 rise in worker performance in the healthcare banking industry, keeping all other independent factors constant. P-value of 0.001 demonstrates the significance of the link. The results demonstrate that education diversity has little to no effect on employee performance in the healthcare banking industry. In the healthcare banking sector, there is no discernible effect of ethnic diversity on staff performance.

These results lead us to the conclusion that, after gender diversity, age diversity has the greatest impact on employee performance. The effect of racial and educational diversity on employee performance, however, is minimal.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study sought to examine the relationship between employee performance and workforce diversity in Abuja's healthcare institutions. The workforce is diverse in terms of gender, age, education, and ethnicity. According to the study, of these four characteristics, gender and age had the greatest positive effects on employee performance.

The findings of the study demonstrated that gender diversity significantly improves employee performance. It shows that the majority of employees agreed that the company should not discriminate when employing people of different gender and that women have an equal opportunity to advance their careers. Emiko and Eunmi (2021) [15], Kochan *et al.* (2019) [20], Leonard and Devine (2019) [22], Weiliang *et al.* (2021) [34], and Raaza-Naqvi *et al.* (2019) [25] all came to similar conclusions. It is expected that a significant gender equity partnership would also indicate that employees would prefer to collaborate with individuals of the opposite gender as long as they can complete their tasks competently and successfully. Similar to this, the results indicated that age diversity has a sizable favorable impact on staff

performance. This is in line with findings from Algahtani, Wegge *et al.* (2018) [33], Barrington and Troske (2001) [6], and (2019). The facilities in Abuja employ workers of all ages. However, the staff members claimed that because this boosts their productivity, they feel secure working with either older or younger staff members of various ages. Gender and age diversity are thus excellent indicators of employee effectiveness in Abuja.

The results also demonstrate the diversity of Abuja's educational facilities. The workers have specific professional backgrounds. However, as employees join the organization and bring their various abilities and experiences with them, there is less conflict between them and more success. The findings indicated that ethnic diversity has little to no effect on employees' performance. However, the majority of employees said that they *get along* well with coworkers from different ethnic origins. This implies that having workers of different ethnicities does not lead to conflict regardless of linguistic disparities. Ethnicity can have a detrimental effect on performance when workers experience racism, stereotyping, and prejudice because of their racial or ethnic heritage. Where there is ethnic diversity, there may be concerns with mistrust, less contact, and employee cooperation, as Oerlemans, Peeters, and Schaufeli (2001) [23] noted. However, a number of research (such as Weiliang *et al.*, 2021; Early & Mosakowski, 2000) [34, 14] have found a connection between ethnic diversity and employee performance. Therefore, businesses need to focus more on diversity management in order to improve employee performance, which finally aids in the accomplishment of organizational objectives.

Implications

This study offers important consequences from theoretical and practical perspectives. This study contributes further information and solid theoretical support to the body of knowledge on employee performance and workforce diversity. Additionally, this study provides data that will serve as the foundation for additional workforce diversity and employee performance studies. From a practical standpoint, this study provides greater insights into how employee performance is impacted by workplace diversity. The results of this study can also be used to create strategies that will increase how workforce diversity is used within the present day competitive global workforce.

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