

Diversity Management and Employee Performance in Edo State University Iyamho, Edo State

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Abstract

The study investigated the connection between diversity management and academic success in Edo State University Iyamho, Edo State, Nigeria. Given the growing importance of diversity in academic settings, it is crucial to determine the effects of gender, ethnicity, and educational background on employee engagement, productivity, and job satisfaction. To gather information from respondent, the study used both quantitative and qualitative techniques, such as surveys and in-depth interviews. All eighty-one questionnaire were distributed to gather information from the respondent. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for data analysis. For the descriptive parts, tables of frequencies and percentages were utilised. With the exception of ethnic diversity, the study's results demonstrated that every component of workforce diversity significantly correlates with employee performance. Additionally, it was shown that educational attainment, gender, and age diversity all significantly impact productivity in the workplace. It was recommended that management should maintain its diversity policies and procedures to maximise the benefits of diversity. Similarly, it was also recommended that trainings on diversity problems should be mandatory for all employees, as it will assist workers in overcoming unconscious biases and habits that impede inclusion and diversity efforts.

Keywords: Diversity Management, Employee Performance, Employee Engagement, Productivity and Job Satisfaction

Introduction

Diversity management has emerged as a crucial tactic for businesses worldwide, especially in the educational field. Diversity management is essential to creating a productive, welcoming, and peaceful workplace at educational establishments like Edo State University, Iyamho. The university employs a varied workforce with variations in gender, ethnicity, age, educational background, and job experience, similar to that of many other higher education establishments. Understanding how managing these variations might affect overall institutional performance is crucial as diversity continues to impact workplace dynamics. The deliberate steps that organisations take to encourage the inclusion of people with diverse origins, cultures, and viewpoints are referred to as diversity management. Diversity may boost organisational results including greater creativity, better problem-solving, higher employee happiness, and stronger cooperation if it is well managed. However, improper management can result in disagreements, miscommunications, and a decline in output (Barak, 2020). Higher education establishments such as Edo State University in Iyamho are thus realising more and more how crucial it is to include diversity management techniques in order to establish a favourable working and learning environment (Ely & Thomas, 2021).

Thus, this study's main goal was to examine the relationship between diversity management and employee performance at Edo State University in Iyamho. Promoting fair treatment, equal opportunity, and inclusive hiring, training, and career progression policies are other aspects of diversity management. Measuring how successfully diversity management policies match staff and students performance goals is crucial as more universities, including Edo State University, concentrate on developing inclusive and diverse campuses.

The report also acknowledges the importance of variety in Nigeria's educational system. According to Nwachukwu (2023), institutions must adjust to the more varied workforce as the nation develops by creating an

atmosphere that values individuality and optimises each person's potential. As a school dedicated to greatness, Edo State University has to make sure that its diversity management procedures complement the worldwide movement to encourage inclusion and optimise employee potential and to create a diverse inclusive workplace, both for the sake of the staff and the institution's overall performance. The degree to which the institution successfully incorporates diversity into its organisational structure and procedures determined its capacity to draw in and keep top talent, enhance academic results, and achieve high performance (Johnson & O'Leary, 2022).

In the context of Edo State University, it is also necessary to investigate the ways in which different aspects of diversity, including gender, ethnicity, and age, affect worker performance and productivity. According to studies, organisations that successfully handle diversity see improvements in employee happiness, creativity, and problem-solving skills (Johnson & O'Leary, 2022).

However, the knowledge of how these results might be attained inside this specific school was limited by Edo State University's lack of thorough study. The possible discrepancy between the university's diversity policy and their actual application is another problem (Nwachukwu, 2023).

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to examine the relationship between diversity management and performance at Edo State University Iyamho, Edo State. Specific objective are to:

1. Examine the relationship between gender diversity and employee effectiveness at Edo State University Iyamho, Edo State.
2. Explore the relationship between ethnic diversity and employee engagement at Edo State University Iyamho, Edo State, and
3. Evaluate the relationship between educational diversity and employee job satisfaction at Edo State University Iyamho, Edo State.

Research Questions

The research questions aim to guide the study in exploring the link between diversity management and performance within the context of Edo State University Iyamho. The questions are stated below as follows;

1. What is the relationship between gender diversity and employee effectiveness?
2. What is the relationship between ethnic diversity and employee engagement?
3. What is the relationship between educational diversity and employee job satisfaction?

Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses was tested to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between diversity management practices and the performance of Edo State University Iyamho. The hypotheses are stated in the null form below as follows;

- Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between gender diversity and employee effectiveness.
Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between ethnic diversity and employee efficiency.
Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between educational diversity and employee efficiency.

Review of Related Literature

Concept of Diversity Management

The term "diversity management" describes the tactics, procedures, and guidelines that businesses use to establish an academic or professional setting where people from various backgrounds are treated equally and fairly. In order to promote an inclusive and peaceful atmosphere, this strategy entails not just acknowledging but also actively managing individual differences. Diversity management aims to improve worker quality, boost organisational efficacy, and lower obstacles that can keep people from fully supporting the objectives of the company. Diversity management in the contemporary day encompasses more than just fulfilling moral or legal commitments to fair

opportunity. Its main goal is to establish an inclusive culture that celebrates variety in all of its manifestations, including physical ability, religion, sexual orientation, age, gender, colour, ethnicity, and even cultural heritage (Shore et al., 2019). The idea is to maximise the benefits of having a diverse workforce by identifying and using the unique viewpoints that individuals from various backgrounds bring to the organisation or workplace. In the globalised world, where businesses and institutions must deal with a more varied workforce or student population, the demand for diversity management has increased. Diversity management techniques may lead to increased employee engagement, better decision-making, and creativity, all of which enhance organisational success, claim Garcia et al. (2020). These procedures usually include inclusive hiring methods, leadership development programs, and diversity training courses.

The significance of leadership in directing diversity efforts is also emphasised by diversity management. It is required of leaders to show their dedication to diversity by establishing rules that guarantee equity, responsibility, and chances for everyone to succeed. Setting the tone for the company's diversity culture and removing any obstacles that stand in the way of diversity being completely incorporated into its procedures and structure are critical tasks for leadership (Ely & Thomas, 2021). The idea of diversity management is based on the understanding that individuals contribute distinct viewpoints and experiences that can be beneficial to the goals of the company. Organisations must, however, foster an atmosphere that values and fosters these varied qualities if they are to successfully capitalise on these distinctions. This entails putting policies into place that lessen prejudice, encourage inclusivity, and advance equal opportunity. This entails fostering an atmosphere at Edo State University Iyamho where staff, instructors, and students from varied backgrounds feel appreciated and included, which improves performance in a number of areas. Furthermore, managing diversity in an organisation is an ongoing process that calls for frequent policy and practice review and modification. New diversity-related issues may surface when organisations change, necessitating modifications to the tactics used. Reiterating the importance of diversity and keeping it at the forefront of organisational goals requires regular training and awareness efforts (Jackson & Ruderman, 2021). This is especially crucial in educational establishments like Edo State University Iyamho, where encouraging diversity may improve students' educational experiences and support academic success. Because they use the wide range of viewpoints available to tackle complicated issues and produce original solutions, institutions that welcome diversity are typically more inventive (Mayer et al., 2023).

Concept of Organizational Performance

In recent years, a lot of study has been done on the relationship between diversity and organisational effectiveness. Numerous studies have demonstrated that diversity in organisations improves performance on a number of parameters, including employee engagement, financial performance, and creativity. However, the link between diversity and performance is complicated and depends on a number of variables, including leadership commitment, organisational culture, and the effectiveness of diversity management techniques. Innovation is one of the most obvious ways that diversity affects an organization's effectiveness. Because they bring a greater variety of viewpoints and ideas to the table, diverse teams have been found to be more creative (Harrison et al., 2020). This is especially crucial in fields and establishments that demand innovative approaches to problem-solving and ongoing development. For instance, a more varied staff can result in more creative teaching strategies and a wider range of research techniques, both of which can improve the academic output and prestige of a school such as Edo State University Iyamho engagement among employees is also influenced by diversity.

This is especially crucial for colleges looking to draw in foreign faculty, students, and research collaborations (Patel et al., 2023). It is not always clear how diversity and performance are related, though. How well diversity is handled has a big influence on how it affects performance. Performance may suffer if diversity is not actively handled and included into the company culture. This might result in miscommunications and conflict. Maximising the advantages of diversity requires effective diversity management, which includes supportive leadership, training, and transparent communication (Kulik et al., 2021).

By deliberately managing diversity and fostering an atmosphere where everyone feels appreciated and involved, institutions such as Edo State University Iyamho may improve both their academic and operational performance.

Theoretical framework

This study adopted the social identity theory

Social Identity Theory

Tajfel developed the Social Identity Theory in 1978 to explain occupational marginalisation. Tajfel (1978) defined social identity theory as "that aspect of a person's self-concept that stems from his or her affiliation with a social group or groups, as well as the significance and emotional weight associated with that affiliation." The idea describes how people organise themselves and other people into social categories, which affects their attitudes and behaviours in work environments. Employees may strongly identify with specific groups in diverse workplaces due to factors like gender, race, or educational background. This can have an influence on cooperation and intergroup dynamics. Managing possible biases and creating an inclusive workplace that capitalises on diversity for improved performance need an understanding of these identifications (Cook & Glass, 2022). The theory is extremely pertinent to comprehending and enhancing employee performance and diversity management at establishments such as Edo State University, Iyamho, Edo State. This theory provides important insights into how people identify themselves in relation to belonging to a group and how it influences their attitudes, actions, and productivity at work. A thorough examination of the theory's applicability to employee performance and diversity management in a university setting can be found below:

Empirical Review

Nkpurukwe, Nwokah, and Arumdeben (2024) carried out a research named Diversity Management Strategies and Employee Performance at Unilever Plc. 260 individuals were chosen as a sample from the 560 Unilever Plc employees that were the subject of the study. Survey questionnaires were used to gather data, and regression analysis was used to examine the results. The results showed that fair policy practices, training and development, and inclusive leadership all had a favourable impact on worker performance. The study came to the conclusion that diversity management is a strategic tool that improves worker performance and suggested funding for fair policies, ongoing training, and inclusive leadership development. In their study, Diversity Management and Employees Performance in selected Ministries, Departments, and Agencies in Bauchi State, Nigeria, Hamisu, Zakari, Ahmad, and Olaniyi (2021) investigated the connection between diversity management and worker performance. The study included 245 respondents and focused on workers in several MDAs in Bauchi State. The study discovered a strong positive association between employee performance and diversity management, particularly gender and age diversity, using survey questionnaires for data collection and Spearman's rank correlation for data analysis. The authors advocated avoiding gender prejudice while concentrating on hiring younger staff members and came to the conclusion that diversity management improves employee performance. In their study, Workplace Diversity and Employee Performance: An Empirical Analysis of Nigeria's Banking Sector, Ngalo, Ogohi, and Ibrahim (2023) Cited in Nwachukwu, (2023) examined the effect of workplace diversity on employee performance. With a sample of 300 respondents, the study looked at workers at 22 Nigerian commercial banks. Internet mail survey questions were used to gather data, and SPSS was used for both descriptive and inferential statistics analysis. The findings demonstrated that while age and educational diversity had no discernible influence on employee effectiveness, variation in gender, income, ethnicity, and beliefs did. The authors came to the conclusion that some diversity-related factors affect employee performance and suggested that companies address demographics to obtain a competitive edge while making sure that diversity training is adequate.

Methodology

Descriptive survey was used as the study design. One hundred workers chosen from Edo State University Iyamho make up the study's population. This was achieved by giving questionnaire to the first respondents using

convenience method. This consist of a set of questions that the respondents had to respond to on the study's goals and the hypotheses that needed to be confirmed. Information on the respondents' demographics was included in the first section of the questionnaire, which was followed by sections on employee performance and workforce diversity. Statement-based questions were generated, and the researcher ranked them from lowest to highest on a likert scale: "strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), undecided (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5)." To determine the relationship between performance and diversity management, regression analysis was used. In order to thoroughly examine the data, the researcher additionally coded the items and entered them into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

The purpose of the investigation was to evaluate the connection between employee performance and diversity management, including gender, ethnicity, and educational diversity.

Demographic Response of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Remark
Gender	Male	60	60%	Majority
Gender	Female	40	40%	Minority
Age	18–30	25	25%	
Age	31–40	45	45%	Majority
Age	41 and above	30	30%	
Educational Qualification	B.Sc./B.A.	30	30%	
Educational Qualification	M.Sc./M.A.	50	50%	Majority
Educational Qualification	Ph.D.	20	20%	
Years of Experience	1–5 years	20	20%	
Years of Experience	6–10 years	50	50%	Majority
Years of Experience	Above 10 years	30	30%	

Source: Field survey, 2025

Reliability Test

Cronbach's Alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of each variable.

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Gender Diversity	5	0.813
Ethnic Diversity	5	0.794
Educational Diversity	5	0.806
Employee Performance	5	0.845

Interpretation: All values exceed the minimum threshold of 0.70, indicating high reliability of the measurement items

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Gender Diversity	4.10	0.58
Ethnic Diversity	4.03	0.61
Educational Diversity	4.21	0.54
Employee Performance	4.18	0.59

Interpretation: Respondents generally agreed that diversity is positively managed in their workplace and that it enhances performance.

Correlation Analysis

Variables	R	p-value
Gender Diversity & Effectiveness	0.621	0.000
Ethnic Diversity & Engagement	0.582	0.000
Educational Diversity & Job Satisfaction	0.652	0.000

Interpretation: There is a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between all dimensions of diversity and employee performance indicators.

A multiple regression analysis was carried out to assess the influence of gender diversity, ethnic diversity, and educational diversity on employee performance. The results are summarized below using standardized Beta coefficients (β), t-values, and significance levels (p-values).

Model Summary

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of Estimate
0.720	0.518	0.504	0.410

Interpretation: The model summary shows that 51.8% of the variance in employee performance is explained by the combined predictors (gender, ethnic, and educational diversity).

Coefficients

Predictor Variable	Beta Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Gender Diversity	0.288	3.59	0.001	Statistically significant
Ethnic Diversity	0.244	2.95	0.004	Statistically significant
Educational Diversity	0.344	4.31	0.000	Highly significant

Interpretation: The regression coefficients show that all the independent variables significantly predict employee performance. Among them, educational diversity has the strongest influence ($\beta = 0.344$, $p < 0.001$), followed by gender diversity ($\beta = 0.288$, $p < 0.01$) and ethnic diversity ($\beta = 0.244$, $p < 0.01$).

ANOVA Table

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig.
Regression	22.6	3	7.53	44.76	.000
Residual	21.0	96	0.22		
Total	43.6	99			

Coefficients

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Gender Diversity	0.312	0.087	0.288	3.59	0.001
Ethnic Diversity	0.274	0.093	0.244	2.95	0.004
Educational Diversity	0.366	0.085	0.344	4.31	0.000

Interpretation: All variables are statistically significant predictors of employee performance. Educational diversity has the highest standardized beta coefficient, implying it contributes the most to predicting employee performance.

Discussion of Findings

The objective of this study was to assess how gender, ethnic, and educational diversity influence employee performance at Edo State University, Iyamho. The findings revealed that all three dimensions of diversity have a statistically significant and positive relationship with employee performance indicators such as effectiveness, engagement, and job satisfaction.

1. Gender Diversity and Employee Effectiveness

The regression analysis indicated a positive and significant relationship between gender diversity and employee effectiveness ($\beta = 0.288, p < 0.01$). This finding supports the assertion of Ali, Kulik, and Metz (2011) that gender-diverse teams enhance creativity, innovation, and overall performance due to the variety of perspectives contributed by both men and women. Similarly, Ng and Burke (2005) found that organizations with inclusive gender policies report better morale and productivity. In the context of Edo State University, it suggests that gender-inclusive practices foster collaboration and mutual respect, thereby increasing effectiveness.

2. Ethnic Diversity and Employee Engagement

Ethnic diversity was also found to have a positive and significant impact on employee engagement ($\beta = 0.244, p < 0.01$). This aligns with the study by Cox and Blake (1991), who emphasized that ethnic diversity can provide a competitive advantage by improving decision-making quality, problem-solving, and employee involvement when well-managed. Richard (2000) further supported that ethnically diverse organizations experience greater engagement and innovation when inclusion is prioritized. The implication for Edo State University is that ethnic inclusivity may enhance the sense of belonging and loyalty among employees, leading to higher engagement levels.

3. Educational Diversity and Job Satisfaction

The most significant predictor of employee performance in this study was educational diversity ($\beta = 0.344, p < 0.001$). This corroborates the work of Horwitz and Horwitz (2007), who found that cognitive diversity, especially in terms of education and expertise, significantly enhances team performance and satisfaction. Van Knippenberg and Schippers (2007) also concluded that educational diversity, when effectively managed, brings complementary knowledge and experience, leading to improved job satisfaction and output. At Edo State University, the presence of employees with diverse academic qualifications likely contributes to richer intellectual exchange and innovation, fostering higher satisfaction.

The findings align with Social Identity Theory and Resource-Based View (RBV). Social Identity Theory explains that when diversity is managed inclusively, it reduces intergroup bias and fosters a unified organizational identity. The RBV suggests that a diverse workforce constitutes a strategic resource that enhances an institution's capabilities and competitive advantage.

Conclusion

This study investigated the influence of diversity management—specifically gender diversity, ethnic diversity, and educational diversity—on employee performance at Edo State University, Iyamho. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods, the research revealed that all three forms of diversity significantly impact key aspects of employee performance, including effectiveness, engagement, and job satisfaction.

The multiple regression analysis showed that educational diversity had the strongest influence, followed by gender and ethnic diversity. These findings suggest that when diversity is well managed and inclusivity is promoted, it can become a strategic asset that enhances organizational productivity, creativity, and cohesion.

In conclusion, the research affirms that embracing and managing workforce diversity is essential for optimizing employee performance in higher education institutions. A diverse and inclusive environment not only reflects fairness and equity but also fosters better decision-making, innovation, and staff commitment.

Recommendations

The following are hereby recommended

1. The management of Edo State University Iyamho should develop and enforce HR policies that actively promote inclusion across gender, ethnicity, and education levels. Recruitment, promotions, and leadership appointments should be free from bias to represent the university's diverse workforce.
2. Regular training programs should be organized to sensitize staff on the benefits of diversity and inclusion in the University. Workshops and seminars can be used to address unconscious biases, promote cultural competence, and improve communication among diverse employee groups. Such interventions will enhance cooperation, reduce conflict, and foster a more inclusive work environment.
3. The University should leverage interdisciplinary collaboration. This can be achieved through joint committees, cross-functional research teams, and mentorship programs that pair junior staff with more experienced academics from different disciplines. This will enhance knowledge sharing, creativity, and innovation.

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