

WORKFORCE DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE IN NIGERIAN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS.

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ABSTRACT:

Workforce diversity management and employees' performance in Nigerian public institutions is a detailed investigation of how public institutions in Nigeria manage the increasing difference in the mix and values of workforce, in other to maximize gains and minimize losses accruable from the assemblage of heterogeneous workforce. The objectives of the study therefore is to investigate the impact of genuine commitment to workforce diversity management on employees' performance in Nigerian public institutions; and to examine the effects of organizations' perception and interpretation of diversity on employees' performance. The study is anchored on resource-based, and core competencies theories. The study adopted descriptive survey using questionnaire to elicit information from respondents purposively selected from Nigerian public institutions. Findings of the study include; lack of genuine commitment to diversity management impacts negatively on employees' performance; wrong perception and interpretation of workface diversity affects employees' performance. The study therefore recommend among others; understanding the fundamental differences among workers of Nigeria public institutions; effective workforce diversity management as an organization with such strategy will have a leading edge in employee productivity and retention.

Keywords: *Workforce Diversity, Diversity Management, and Employees' performance.*

INTRODUCTION:

Employees enter the workforce with unique experience and backgrounds that affect their perception of work rules, expectations of work, and personal concerns. Although employees may have essentially the same work hours, job description, tenure with the organization, and compensation, their reactions to the work situation may differ notably because of their primary and secondary dimension of diversity (Onah, 2015:121) Public institutions are faced with myriad of challenges but the one that appear prominent among them is the management of differences among people. This is because as people bring all of who they are to their work place, they may be conditioned by their personal background to exhibit certain behaviour different from the organization prescribed behavioural standard(munjuri and maina, 2013). The knowledge of this according to Ugwuzor (2011) inform the need for workforce diversity management so as to get the diverse and best contributions from the diverse employees, and minimise conflict accruable from the assemblage of heterogeneous workforce. In the words

of Onah (2015) workforce diversity is the differences that make up the employees of an organization. These differences according to him have both primary and secondary dimensions. The primary dimension of workforce diversity are; age, gender, race, physical abilities etc, while secondary dimension include; educational background, geographical location, income, work experiences, marital status, religious believe among others (Onah,2015;121). Similarly, Ekot(2017) posits that workforce diversity encompasses the range of differences in ethnicity, nationality, gender, function, ability, language, religion, life style and tenure. To Griffin and Moorhead (2014) workforce diversity refers to those significant differences and similarities that are present among employees within an organisation. While Ugwuzor (2011) defines workforce diversity as the demographic composition of workforce. To him, workforce diversity could be measured from both the surface-level and deep-level dimensions although many existing empirical studies measured diversity from the compositional approach which centres on the

surface level dimension. The surface-level dimension centres on demographic diversity which explain the extent to which a unit is heterogeneous in characteristics such as; gender, ethnicity, religion, age, functional background, and organizational tenure, while the deep-level dimension is concern with difference in characters that cannot be easily seen. i.e. differences in respect to personality, attitude and value (Ugwuzor, 2011). Workforce diversity has become an important element in organisations of all sizes and type hence, the growing interest in organizations and businesses that take workforce diversity management serious. In many cases, the working population is changing with culturally diverse groups, different races, greater number of female employees and more mature workers. Good knowledge of workforce diversity is important because it will benefit organisations to consider how to meet the needs of a diverse workforce, in turn, to contribute to meeting a wider range of customer expectation and organisational growth. In response to these changes, most organisations have embraced the notion of workforce diversity management, but to varying degrees. Although there is a broad assumption that workforce diversity generally has positive effects on organisations and the society, the notion of economic imperatives for diversity remains largely untested. In other words, the issues of diversity have a positive or a negative influence or no influence on employees' service delivery, and organizational performance. If a relationship does exist, what factors influence the nature of the relationship? Hence, this paper attempts to look into the connection between workforce diversity and employees' service delivery.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM:

The changing mix and values of workforce have made workforce diversity management an important task of human resource managers, as the varied workforce composition calls for prudent management to maximise gains and minimise losses accruable from the assemblage of diverse workforce (Ugwuzor, 2011). Workforce diversity has become an important element in organisations of all sizes and types. In many cases, the working population is changing with culturally diverse groups, different races, greater number of female employees and more mature workers with differences in personality, attitudes and values. Similar changes are also taking place in Nigeria public institutions, and in response to these changes, most organisations have embraced at a varying degree, the notion of workforce diversity management as an integral part of human resource management (Ekot, 2017). For instance, management of several public institutions have created diversity policies that are in line with labour Act and other related laws put in place to protect all kinds of employees from discrimination against social categorization (Akinnusi,

Sonubi, and Oyewumi, 2017). However, despite the enormous gain associated with efficient management of workforce diversity, many public institutions are still backward in diversity management thereby allowing its negative effects to be more visible in their organization than the positive gains. For instance, many Nigeria public institutions have refused to show genuine commitment to the principle of diversity and inclusion. This was rightly put by Ugwuzor, (2011) that there are still cases of tribalism, regional identities and nepotism both in public and private institutions in Nigeria. Cases of ethnic bias and other forms of discrimination still take place in Nigeria public institutions during hiring, promotion, and other employer-employees related practices. For instance, it is not uncommon to notice discrimination on the ground of gender, age, ethnic, and background, leaving the potentials inherent in diverse workgroup. Also, it is often seen that recruitment of workers into Nigeria public institutions is often dominated by people within the geographical location thereby pushing away more competent applicants from other states and zones irrespective of their competency and supposed contributions to the organization. Even during performance appraisal, it is often seen that no matter how efficient one may be at work, he/she may be surprise to see his/her assessment showing nothing better than those from the same region with the superior who assesses them. A lady who has refused sexual advancement of his boss may never do well in his eye no matter how committed and dedicated she might be to work. These have posed challenges to prudent management of diverse workforce to minimise conflicts arising from it.

Purpose of the study:

Broadly, the study tend to examine The effect of workforce diversity management on employees' performance in Nigeria public institutions

Specific objectives:

1. The objective of this study is to investigate the impact of genuine commitment to workforce diversity management on employees' performance in Nigerian public institutions
2. To examine the effects of organizations' perception and interpretation of diversity on employees' performance.

Research Questions:

- i. To what extent are the Nigeria public institutions committed to managing the diversity in their workforce composition?
- ii. What's the effects of organizational perception and interpretation of diversity on the performance of workers of Nigerian public institutions?

Hypothesis:

Ho1: Genuine commitment to workforce diversity management has no effect on performance of employees' of Nigerian public institutions

Ho2: Organizational perception and interpretation of diversity has no effect on the performance of workers of Nigerian public institutions

Review of Conceptual and Empirical Studies:

Workforce diversity refers to the ways that people differ that can affect a task or relationship within an organization such as age, gender, race, education, religion, and culture. It is the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual within the organization (Carrell, 2006). Jackson (2012) defines diversity as the presence of differences among members of a social unit. Today, the workforce is more diverse in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin and comprises people who are different and share different attitudes, needs, desires, values and work behaviours(2012). Richard (2013) also defines workplace diversity refers to the variety of differences between people in an organization including race, gender, ethnic group, age, personality, cognitive style, tenure, organizational function, education, background and more. The U. S National Partnership for Reinventing Government (NPR) Diversity Task Force in conjunction with the US Department of Commerce in their sponsored benchmark study of diversity (2007) defined diversity as including all the characteristics and experiences that define each of us as individuals. It is clear from these definitions that most scholars concur on the definition of workforce diversity. The main sources of diversity include age, race, gender, ethnicity (culture) and education although there are other sources of diversity like personal demographics; knowledge, skills, and abilities; values, beliefs, and attitudes; personality and cognitive and behavioral style; and organizational demographics Shifna and Sutha (2016). Richard (2000) cites other sources of diversity as political favoritism, family connections, educational advantage, friendships, and Leader Member Exchange partnering skills including performance on team skills. Thompson and DiTomasso in Graffin & Moorhead (2014) also argue that a multicultural management perspective fosters more innovative and creative decision making, satisfying work environments, and better products because all people who have a contribution to make are encouraged to be involved in a meaningful way this in turn yields more information, more points of view, more ideas and fewer reservations. According to D'Netto and Sohal in

Fourie &Jagar (2015), organizations which plan for the anticipated workforce and accept cultural diversity management as a progressive technique will benefit from better employee retention, increased productivity, less absenteeism, better morale, an expanded marketplace and improved customer service (Osuman-Gani, 2006). He further maintain that a company that discriminates either directly or indirectly curtails the potential of available talent, underutilizes the employees and loses the financial benefits of retaining them. Ellis and Sonnenfield in Rizwan et al (2016) argue that there is a relationship between a positive diversity climate, job satisfaction, and commitment to the organization. Proper diversity management can increase an employee's self esteem and feeling of non-belongingness to the organization especially, if the employee is from a minority group. Although an increasing number of organizations are attempting to enhance inclusiveness of under represented individuals through proactive efforts to manage their diversity, they may only gain from diversity through proper management and adjustment. To effectively manage diversity, an organization must value diversity; it must have diversity, and it must change the organization to accommodate diversity and make it an integral part of the organization (White., 1999). Good workforce diversity practices in the area of human resources are believed to enhance employee and organizational performance (Besley and Gatak 2017). Diversity brings the value of different employee perspectives and varied types of contribution especially when organizational members increasingly reflect the diverse custom base of the organization. This provides a way in which organizations can understand, and therefore meet, their customer needs(Besley and Gatak 2017). Following the same line of argument, Allen and Montgomery Aditiya (2017) say that for an organization to succeed, its strategies must consist of managing change, establishment of appropriate diversity management policies and procedures and target diversity related competencies. Todd Campbell, manager of the Society for Human Resource Management in-house diversity initiative also argues that while affirmative action focuses on recruiting and hiring a group of people of particular races, genders, or cultures, diversity management initiatives maximize the potential of all employees in direct benefit to the organization. The desired outcomes include attracting and developing the best employees which should give the organization a competitive edge to generate greater profits that support job security (Aditiya, 2017). Due to the fact that employees can understand how these outcomes are desirable, they will support the organization's efforts at managing diversity and embrace a culture that supports diversity (Carrel, 2006). The increased diversity in the workplace converges with the increased use of teams in the workplace through clusters of attributes like personal

demographics; knowledge, skills, and abilities; values, beliefs, and attitudes; personality and cognitive and behavioral style; and organizational demographics. Diversity recognizes the unique barriers of race and gender among others while at the same time creating a work environment that values the diversity that all employees bring to the organization. According to the findings of the research study by Adler (2005) on the effects of diverse recruitment policies on employee performance, discovered that diversity can improve performance and recruiting from a wider range of age and ethnicity gives the firm a larger talent pool. He also found out that increasing diversity expands the breadth of perspectives and ideas available to organisations in making decisions and that cultural diversity, educational, individual personalities and professional background can influence the range and depth of information use. Various studies such as the 12-year comparison of diversity policies and programs by Carrell in her longitudinal study on 'Defining Workforce Diversity Programs And Practices In Organizations: A Longitudinal Study' (Spring, 2006) showed that 53 percent of respondents did not have a written policy or program that includes the concept of employee diversity in their organization while only 7 percent of the respondents in the study indicated that their organizations were discussing adding such a policy or program (Carrel, 2006). Regarding the organizational activities that were included in the diversity program or policy for those companies which had the diversity program, the most frequently reported activities were recruitment (73 percent) and selection (59 percent). This shows that there is still a long way to go in the development of workforce diversity programmes.

An empirical longitudinal study by Carrel (2006) on 'Defining Workforce Diversity:

Programs And Practices In Organizations: A Longitudinal Study' registered more positive effects of workforce diversity than the negative effects. The positive effects of workforce diversity included organizational culture, creativity; customer relations; decision making, and goal achievement while the negative effects include training costs, factionalism, productivity and turnover. In another empirical study by the Runnymede Richard (2000) titled 'Racial diversity, business strategy and firm performance: A resource-based view', it was discovered that managers explained their equal opportunities policy differently from employee views about what happened in practice. Richard. (2012) in his study titled " Competitive practices in diversity "investigated the implementation of a race equality action plan and found a stark difference between paper and practice.

Managing workforce Diversity:

Managing workforce diversity refers to a comprehensive managerial process for developing an environment that works for all employees. According to Ellis and Sonnenfield in White (1999) argues that the challenge of meeting the needs of a culturally diverse workforce and sensitizing workers and managers to differences associated with gender, race, age and nationality in an attempt to maximize the potential productivity of all employees, has made effective management of diversity to become a prerequisite in Human Resource Management. Workforce diversity can be managed through various approaches such as affirmative action to the minority groups, diverse recruitment policies, empathy, tolerance, good organizational policies and practices, diversity-based training, diversity friendly organizational culture, and strategic diversity management. Thomas and Ely in Carrel (2006) observe that the way a company defines diversity and manages its diverse workforce may determine its effectiveness. This is also highly dependent on organizational leadership. According to Morrison in Ismail and Akiosamy (2008) managing diversity involves leveraging and using the cultural differences in people's skills, ideas and creativity to contribute to a common goal, and doing it in a way that gives the organization a competitive edge. Recent studies have shown a strong correlation between good diversity practices and profits as diversity allows increased creativity, a wider range of perspectives, better problem definition, more alternatives and better solutions (Ekot, 2017). Kacham (2016) opine that though there are many paradigms of dealing with diversity, the most effective of which is the Learning and Effectiveness paradigm. This is a paradigm that integrates the differences that people bring to work so that the organization changes whoever it hires and how the work is accomplished. This promotes equal opportunity for all individuals, acknowledges differences among employees, and recognizes the value in those differences. It lets the organization internalize differences among employees so that it learns and grows because of them.

The strategic Workforce diversity management process:

Ross and Schneider in Munjuri and Maina (2013) contend that the strategic process for managing workforce diversity involves the following steps: Diagnosis of the current situation in terms of statistics, policy and culture, and looking at both issues and causes; Setting aims which involve the business case for equal opportunities; identifying the critical role of commitment from the top of the organization, and a vision of what the organization would look like if it successfully managed diversity; Spreading the ownership. This is a critical stage in which awareness needs be raised, via a process of encouraging people to

question their attitudes and conceptions. Awareness needs to be raised in all employees at all levels, especially managers, and it needs to be clear that diversity is not something owned by the personnel function; Policy development comes after creating awareness as it enables a contribution to be made from all in the organization-new systems need to be changed via involvement and not through imposition; Managing the transition needs to involve a range of training initiatives. Positive action programmes, specifically designed for minority groups, may be used to help them understand the culture of the organization and acquire essential skills; policy implementation programmes, particularly focusing on selection, appraisal, development and coaching; further awareness training and training to identify cultural diversity and manage different cultures and across different cultures; Managing the programme to sustain momentum. This involves a champion, not necessarily from the HR function, but someone who continues the process. The continued involvement of senior management and trade unions is also critical. Ross and Schneider also recommend measuring the beneficial achievements to the business in terms of improvements in productivity and profitability which need to be communicated to all employees. Ellis and Sonnenfeld in Rizwan et al (2016) point out that training for diversity should be more extensive. They recommend a series of workshops which give time for individuals to think, check their assumptions and reassess between sessions. This should involve competent trainers and a carefully considered participant mix. Changing culture has a significant role in the process for managing diversity as a negative organizational culture can be very retrogressive.

Performance:

A good performance of employees is necessary for every organization since an organizational success is dependent on the employees' creativity innovativeness and commitment (Onuka, 2016). Though employee performance and employee productivity seems to be related, performance is in some cases measured as the number and value of goods produced. That is to say that while productivity tends to be associated with production – oriented terms, like profit and turnover employee performance is linked to efficiency or perception – oriented terms, like supervisory ratings and goal accomplishments (Nwosu, Ikpor and Kanu 2016:435). To Breugh in Adeyemin, Dumade & Fadare (2015,), there are four different performance demission on which employees are measured, and they are; quality; quantity; dependability and job knowledge. In the words of Oku (2013), performance is a multi-dimensional construct the measurement of which varies depending on verity of factors. They argued that it is important to determine whether the measurement objective is to assess performance

outcome or behavior before embarking on employee performance assessment. As a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Akul (2014) identified performance demands, to include; efficiency, effectiveness economy, productivity, quality; and behavioral performance. Similarly, Tolu (2011) states that employee performance deal with attributes that goes beyond task competence to foster behavior that enhances the climate and effectiveness of the organization. In the same view, Sodipe (2015) argues thus; **Performance means both behavior and result, because behavior emanates from the performer and transforms performance from abstraction to reality/action. Not just the instrument for result, behavior are also outcomes in their own right, the product of mental and physical effort applied to task which can be judged apart from results.** According to Armstrong and Baron in Akul (2011), employee performance is the behavior or action relevant to the attainment of the organizations goals that can be scaled or measured. The duo conceptualized organization performance as a strategic and integrated approach to delivering sustainable success to organization by improving the capacities of teams and individual contributors. Implicit in the above definition is that it is the capacities and competence of employee, and the efficiency of their individual performance that determine the overall organization performance, i.e., organization performance is a product of employee performance. Corroborating the above points, kostuik and Follmann in Nwosu et al (2016) opines that employees with good abilities in combination with sufficient experience are twice as productive after two years and therefore learning the job is indeed a key to employee performance. They maintain that most organization measures employee performance by supervisory ratings, quality, quantity, dependability, job knowledge and job accomplishments even though they are highly subjective. The overall purpose of performance management is getting better results from the organization, teams and individuals by understanding and managing performance within an agreed framework at planned goals, standard and competence requirement (Sodipe 2015).Employee performance is a vital aspect of every organization because according to Yousif (2017) any organization that ceases to perform its functions to the society is eliminated by the society in the business world, and society that fails to eliminate such organization, but instead go on subsidizing them are soon dragged down like the organization. Ejiofor in Conroy (2017) argues that until recent, Nigeria as a nation was almost dragged down to a confused society by failed originations. He argued thus..... **post a letter and it disappeared and dumped away; pick up your telephone for a call and it was dead; turn the water tap and it was dried; work for government and you were owned**

salary or contract fee; retire from government service and you were declared a “deed wood”; take an examination and the results got cancelled; have a fire out break and all got burnt with no rescuer in sight, carry out a census and unleash countless troubles on the nation, conduct elections and they got rigged, go to court and the naira becomes the judgeThe above assertion shows the level of failure by government institutions to satisfy the needs, yearnings and aspiration of Nigeria citizenry. But since organization on its own does no job, it is the personnel of those organizations that fail to perform optimally. This implies that it is the employee performance that determines the level of organization performance. Therefore to perform and achieve results, organizations hire individuals, reward them as long as they are performing their functions creditable (Ejiofor in Conroy 2017). Employee performance is a measurable concept and should ideally be measured by attempting to quantify achievement (results) output and cost input (Akul 2011). However, since performance is so vital to the existence of an organization, it follows that every organization should exert itself to achieve visible and vile performance. This could only be done through proper procurement of employee who are technically competent and effective to carry out the assigned functions in such a manner that will give the organization a success story (Yousif, 2017). From the above explanation, it is clear that the link between manpower procurement process and employee performance is critical/crucial in the life of any organization.

Workforce Diversity Management and Organizational Excellence in Performance:

Potential benefits of workforce diversity management include better decision making, higher creativity and innovation, greater success in foreign and domestic investment, and a better distribution of economic opportunities (Ekot, 2017; white, 1999). Culturally, diverse groups relative to homogeneous groups are more effective both in interaction process and work performance. However, this benefit will be occurring after a diverse group has been together for a certain period of time. Fernandez in Osman-Gani (2006) argues that good workforce diversity practices in the area of human resources are believed to enhance employee and organizational performance. This is because managing diversity involves leveraging and using the cultural differences in people’s skills, ideas and creativity to contribute to a common goal, and doing it in a way that gives the organization a competitive edge. Hayles and Mendez in Richard (2000) add that even recent studies have shown a strong correlation between good diversity practices and profits. There is a greater impact to having a diverse workforce in terms of retaining staff. Having a diverse workforce creates an increase in attracting and

retaining the most qualified candidates if it is based on meritocracy. The Strategic Human Resource Management’s (SHRM) study, has found that diversity initiatives help their organisations maintain a competitive advantage. This is because companies believe their diversity will improve corporate culture, recruitment, and foster better client relations. Companies will gain a competitive advantage of being able to market and deliver their products within different cultures. A multicultural company can penetrate and widen their market with the proper knowledge of political, social, legal, economic and cultural environments of the country (White, 1999). Organizations with a diverse workforce can provide superior services because they can better understand customers’ needs (Wentling and Palma-Rivas, 2000). Hiring diverse groups will help organisations to tap this niche and diversified market segments. As all the segments of society have a stake in the development and prosperity of society as a whole, creating and managing a diverse workforce should be seen as a social and moral imperatives. This diversified market segments will eventually lead to enhance organizational excellence in service delivery. As the economies are shifting from manufacturing to service economies, diversity issues will gain importance because in a service economy affective interactions and communications between people are essential to business success (Wentling and Palma-Rivas, 2000). This is especially supported by the fact that as globalisation is increasing, diversity will help organisations to enter the international arena (Cascio, 1998). Diversity enhances creativity and innovation (Jackson et al., 1992), and produces competitive advantages (Jackson et al., 1992). Diverse teams make it possible to enhance flexibility and rapid response and adaptation to change (Jackson et al., 1992). From the legal perspective generally legislations is used to promote gender equality and therefore diverse workforce helps in addressing concerns against discriminatory practices so as to improve human prerogative. For example women’s rights in the area of pregnancy and maternity in relations to recruitment and maternity leave policies. This in turn helps to promote fair opportunities in the field of employment and vocational training. Workforce diversity enriches an organisational human capital. Managing a diverse workforce entails a minimisation of cloning that is preventing the production of an exact copy in selection and promotion. This leads to a wider range of ideas and abilities, offering greater scope for innovation and competitive performance in the future, therefore enriching an organisation’s human capital. Not all studies support a positive linkage between diversity and performance. However, Kwak(2003) noted that diversity can either help or hinder performance, depending on the organization’s policy culture, strategies, and human resource practices. According to

Richard, McMillan Chadwick and Dwyer (2003), racial diversity improved bank performance when innovation was a core aspect of the organisation's strategy, but hindered performance when innovation was de-emphasised. A number of studies however, have found that workforce diversity can negatively affect organisational processes and performance. Group heterogeneity has been associated with stereotyping in group/out group effects, affective conflict, and turnover (Jehn, Northcraft, & Neale, 2000). Empirical evidence shows that in-group demographic preference exists in organizations. In group preference involves favouring interaction with the in-group (e.g., same race, same gender) over the outgroup. Tsui and associates (1992) found that diversity may lead to organisational detachment among white male employees while the research of Thomas and Ely (1996) suggests that increasing demographic variation within firms did not in itself increase organisational performance. These studies give a clear indication of the nature of the challenges confronting those seeking to promote commitment amongst diverse work groups. In addition, in organizational cultural, that is a concept called ethno-centrality/centrism that refers to tendency to some to look at people of the same race, culture, and religion as superior to those from others cultural groups. Williams and O'Reilly (1998), conclude that mismanaged diversity initiatives can negatively affect both processes and outcomes. Miliken and Martins (1996) reviewed the workforce diversity literature and drew the conclusion that racial and gender diversity can have negative effects on individual and group outcomes in certain instances. For instance, group members who differ from the majority tend to have lower levels of psychological commitment and higher levels of turnover intent and absenteeism. Group coordination costs- such as increased communication time, appear to increase with diversity. Diversity appears to create additional coordination and control costs. However, these negatives effects may diminish with strategic workforce diversity management, time, and creative decisions (Osman-Gani, 2006).

Theoretical Framework:

The study adopted two theoretical frameworks; the resource-based theory, and core competencies. These theories - resource-based theory of the firm, and core competencies- have provided an outline to examine the relationship between workforce diversity and human resource development which in turn leads to organisational performance. The resource based theory of the firm and the theory of core competencies establish a basis that knowledge resources can be heterogeneous and this heterogeneity provides differentiation for competitive advantages. This logic suggests that diversity in employee will lead to firm heterogeneity and results in positive performance. The

resource-based theory of firms emphasises a link between internal resources, a firm's strategy and its performance (Barney, 1991). More scholars such as Wright, MacMahan, and McWilliams (1994) argue that human resources are the sources of competitive advantage and many practices and policies of firms create strategic advantages through human resource development. Schroeder, Bates, and Junttila (2002) have developed a model that integrates employee training, and problem solving with customer and supplier, as drivers of manufacturing performance through human competence. The conceptual view of the resource based theory acknowledges a shift from labour as an input factor to labour as a knowledge resource. A linkage of employee skills and knowledge with financial performance supports the notion of workforce as a potential competitive advantage and an integral resource for effective implementation of organisation performance. This assumes that firms can be heterogeneous with respect to knowledge resources as such heterogeneity in knowledge capability can result in marketplace advantage. The resource-based theory establishes a basis for the connection between differentiated knowledge resources and organisational performance. Herling and Provo (1997) establish that organisational competence is limited by individual competence, which they define as a "cluster of related factual knowledge, skills, experiences, and attitudes directly related to one's job". Following this logic the collection of individual skills and abilities that become a unique combination of organisational core competencies provides the synergistic accumulation. Extending the notion to a multi-level perspective of a firm, the synergies are created by an accumulation and alignment of capabilities at organisational, process and individual levels. Therefore, with diverse workforce, firms will benefit through assimilation of skills and knowledge. The core competence establishes a foundation for the connection between individual competencies and organizational excellence. Within this theoretical framework of the resource-based view and core competencies, it can be established that there is a link between an employees' performance with the competence and expertise found in line with the diverse groups in the organisation.

METHODOLOGY:

The study adopted descriptive survey using well framed questionnaire to elicit information from 350 respondents purposively choose from the selected public institutions. The institutions (Federal College of Agriculture, Ishiagu; Federal polytechnic Unwana, and Ebonyi State College of Education, Ikwo) were purposively selected on the basis of nearness, accessibility and relevance. The study generated data largely from secondary sources such as; newspapers magazine, textbooks journals, electronic publications, among others. Data generated from primary source

were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The questionnaire instrument was structured on five point- Likert scale with weights assigned as; Strongly Agree (SA) - 5points, Agree (A) - 4points, Disagree (SD) -3point, Strongly Disagree (D) - 2points and Neutral (N) -1point.

Tables and mean (x) were used for the data presentation and analysis.

The mean will be calculated as:

$$\frac{5+ 4+ 3 + 2 + 1}{5} = 15 = 3.0$$

Decision Rule:

Based on the mean of 3.0, the decision is that any item with a mean of 3.0 and above will be regarded as agree while items with a mean below 3.0 will be regarded as disagree. The hypotheses were tested using Pearson correlation coefficient at .05 level of significance, through Statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Data presentation and Analysis:

Table 1: Analysis of the Responses to Research Question One

Research Question 1: To what extent are the Nigeria public institutions committed to managing the diversity in their workforce composition?

S/ N	ITEMS	Rating and Weight Value					Σ fx	X	Decisions
		SA (5)	A (4)	N (1)	SD (3)	D (2)			
1	Nigeria public institutions are committed to effective management of differences among workers	2	3	12	158	175	858	2.45	Disagreed
2	There is discrimination of workers on the basis of ethnic differences in Nigeria public institutions	125	135	0	85	5	1430	4.09	Agreed
3	Assessment of the performance of employees is often done in favour of people from same region with the immediate boss and against workers of different ethnic nationality with their immediate superior.	170	155	1	15	9	1534	4.38	Agreed
4	Discrimination among workers of different ethnics, gender and backgrounds leads to high employee turnover in Nigeria public institutions	190	135	2	15	8	1553	4.43	Agreed
5	There are cases of ethnic and gender biases in Nigerian public institutions during hiring , placement, promotion Transfer, and other employer-employees related practices	185	145	2	7	11	1550	4.42	Agreed
6	Genuine commitment to diversity management enhance employees' performance in Nigerian public institutions	160	135	5	45	5	1490	4.26	Agreed
	Grand total of Mean Score							24.0	
								3	
	Overall Mean score							4.01	Agreed

Source: Usulor's field work,2021

The above table shows responses to statements related to genuine commitment to workforce diversity management in Nigerian public institutions. The table has six statements to which the respondents disagreed to 1 and agreed to 5 of the statements. The respondents disagreed that Nigerian public institutions are committed to effective management of differences among their workers as indicated by the mean score of (2.45). The respondents however agreed that; There is discrimination of workers on the basis of ethnic differences in Nigeria public institutions(4.09); Assessment of the performance of employees' are

often done in favour of people from same region with the immediate boss and against workers of different ethnic nationality with their immediate superior(4.38); Discrimination among workers of different ethnics, gender and backgrounds leads to high employee turnover in Nigeria public institutions(4.43); There are cases of ethnic and gender biases in Nigerian public institutions during hiring , placement, promotion Transfer, and other employer-employees related practices(4.42); and genuine commitment to diversity management enhance employees' performance in Nigerian public institutions(4.26).

Table2: Analysis of the Responses to Research Question Two

Question 2: What's the effects of organizational perception and interpretation of diversity on the performance of workers of Nigerian public institutions?

S/ N	ITEMS	Rating and Weight Value					Σ fx	X	Decisions
		SA (5)	A (4)	N (1)	SD (3)	D (2)			
7	There are negative perception and interpretation of diversity among workers of Nigerian Public institutions	215	95	3	23	14	1075	3.01	Agreed
8	Wrong perception of diversity among workers of Nigerian public institutions affect employees' performance	130	115	35	45	25	1330	3.80	Agreed
9	Host community of Nigerian public institutions often see workers from other regions as an alien	100	95	45	50	60	1195	3.41	Agreed
10	There is often conflict between staff from host state/region and staff from other regions over leadership of the institutions	135	115	30	35	35	1340	3.82	Agreed
11	Workers of Nigeria public institutions are often side line on the basis of ethnicity, religion and gender differences	200	115	5	15	15	1540	4.40	Agreed
12	Wrong perception and interpretation of diversity often lead to unhealthy competition and rivalry among workers of different ethnic nationality	86	101	50	67	46	1177	3.36	Agreed
	Grand total of Mean Score							21.8	
	Overall Mean score							3.63	Agreed

Source: Usulor's field work,2021

The above table shows responses to statements related to organizational perception and interpretation of workforce diversity. The table has six statements to

which the respondents agreed to all the statements with a mean score of 3.1 and above. Respondents agreed that; There are negative perception and interpretation

of diversity among workers of Nigerian Public institutions (3.01); Wrong perception of diversity among workers of Nigerian public institutions affect employees' performance(3.80); Host community of Nigerian public institutions often see workers from other regions as an alien(3.41); There is often conflict between staff from host state/region and staff from

other regions over leadership of the institutions(3.82); Workers of Nigeria public institutions are often side line on the basis of ethnicity, religion and gender differences(4.40); and that wrong perception and interpretation of diversity often lead to unhealthy competition and rivalry among workers of different ethnic nationality(3.36)

Table3: Analysis of the Responses from the Respondents on the dependent variable, Employees' Performance

S/ N	Items	Rating and Weight Value					$\sum fx$	X	Decisions
		SA (5)	A (4)	N (1)	SD (3)	D (2)			
13	Employees' performance in Nigerian public institutions is undermined by poor workforce diversity management	110	95	42	50	53	1228	3.50	Agreed
14	Performance of employees' of Nigerian public institutions is facilitated by balanced recruitment	135	115	30	35	35	1340	3.82	Agreed
15	Poor employees' performance in the Nigerian public institutions can be attributed to discrimination amongst workers on ethnic and gender basis	86	98	53	67	46	1108	3.20	Agreed
16	Employees' performance is enhanced by Fair method of compensation	204	100	18	11	17	1505	4.30	Agreed
17	Employees performance in Nigerian public institutions can be enhanced by support to minority/vulnerable group of workers	218	102	3	15	12	1570	4.48	Agreed
18	Employees' performance can be promoted by good diversity management strategy that give all staff equal opportunity for optimal productivity	183	120	27	15	5	1477	4.22	Agreed
Grand total of Mean Score								23.5	
Overall Mean score								3.92	Agreed

Source: Usulor's field work,2021

The above table shows responses to dependent variable, performance. It shows that all the responses to the six statements on the dependent variable, performance, were positive as they all have means score of above 3.0. Respondents agreed that; Employees' performance in Nigerian public institutions is undermined by poor workforce diversity management (3.50); Performance of employees' of Nigerian public institutions is facilitated by balanced

recruitment (3.82); Poor employees' performance in the Nigerian public institutions can be attributed to discrimination amongst workers on ethnic and gender basis(3.20); Employees' performance is enhanced by Fair method of compensation(4.30); Employees performance in Nigerian public institutions can be enhanced by support to minority/vulnerable group of workers(4.48); and that Employees' performance can be promoted by good diversity management strategy

that give all staff equal opportunity for optimal productivity(4.22)

Test of Hypothesis:

This section focuses on the test of hypotheses formulated for the study. The Pearson Correlation was used to test the hypotheses with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20

Test of Hypothesis One:

H0: Genuine commitment to workforce diversity management has no effect on performance of employees’ of Nigerian public institutions

HI: Genuine commitment to workforce diversity management affects employees’ performance
Hypothesis one was tested using table 1 and 3 above

Pearson Correlation for Hypothesis One

Correlations

		Inadequate Employment Planning	Service Delivery
Genuine commitment to diversity management	Pearson Correlation	1	.492
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.026
	N	350	350
Performance	Pearson Correlation	.492	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.026	
	N	350	350

Source: Usulor’s field work,2021

From the computation above, the probability value at .026 is less than 0.05 significant level. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis which states that genuine commitment to workforce diversity management affects employees’ performance

H0: Organizational perception and interpretation of diversity has no effect on the performance of workers of Nigerian public institutions

HI: Organizational perception and interpretation of diversity affects employees’ performance in Nigerian public institutions
Hypothesis two was tested using table 2 and 3 above

Test of Hypothesis Two:

Pearson Correlation for Hypothesis Two

Correlations

		Employment by Executive Fiat	Service Delivery
Organizational perception and interpretation	Pearson Correlation	1	.795
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.033
	N	350	350
Performance	Pearson Correlation	.795	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.033	
	N	350	350

Source: Usulor’s field work,2021

From the computation above, the probability value at .033 is less than 0.05 significant level. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis which states that Organizational perception and interpretation of diversity affects the performance of workers of Nigerian public institutions.

Discussion of Findings:

1. Genuine commitment to workforce diversity management affects the performance of employees' of Nigerian public institutions:

The result of hypothesis one shows that genuine commitment to diversity management affects employees' performance in Nigerian public institutions. The result of the pearson correlation co-efficient is .492 which implies a positive relationship between lack of genuine commitment to diversity management and poor employees' performance. The test of significance of correlation co-efficient(t_c) shows the Probability value of .026 which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. The result indicated that genuine commitment to workforce diversity management affects the performance of employees' of Nigerian public institutions. This was affirmed by Aditiya (2017) that genuine commitment to diversity management is an appropriate strategy for getting the best out of diverse workforce

2. Organizational perception and interpretation of diversity affects the performance of workers of Nigerian public institutions:

Testing of hypothesis two show that Organizational perception and interpretation of diversity affects the performance of workers of Nigerian public institutions. The result of the pearson correlation co-efficient is .795 which implies a positive relationship between Organizational Perception/interpretation and employees' performance. The test of significance of correlation co-efficient(t_c) shows the Probability value of .033 which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. The result therefore indicates that Organizational perception and interpretation of diversity affects the performance of workers of Nigerian public institutions. This is true because organizational perceptions and interpretations of workforce diversity helps in choosing strategies to maximise gains and minimise losses associated with diverse workgroup

CONCLUSION:

Owing to the fact that an organization that discriminates either directly or indirectly curtails the potential of available talent, underutilizes the employees, or loses the financial benefits of retaining

them, Nigeria public institutions have no option other than introducing and managing workforce diversity in their organizations. This review clearly indicates that workforce diversity management is one of the important tools for organisational performance in today's business environment. Therefore, no organisation in this era of globalization would survive without workforce diversity management. By creating a diverse workforce, an organization is more capable in dealing with diversity within the organisation and in meeting the various demands of their diverse clients. Moreover, Effective Workforce diversity management leads toward a better decision making, higher creativity/innovation, retaining staff, better service delivery, equality, and encourage individual's commitment to the organizational performance. Therefore, in today's fast-paced work environment, a successful organization is one where diversity is seen and handles as a norm rather than exception (Lawrence, 2001).

Recommendations:

- Equal development opportunities for all staff members irrespective of race, gender, ethnic and social affiliations. This will enable staff members to give their very best in the service
- Fair method of compensation base on level of education and performance ability
- Good diversity management strategies such as balanced recruitment support to minority groups, diversity training, provision of equal employment opportunities, and creation of awareness, harnessing the differences in placements, appreciating and rewarding good performance.
- Good organizational culture that sees the existing challenges in diversity management as a spur to the search for better strategies rather than a stumbling block to organizations and Human Resource Managers in moving towards the trend of a more diverse workforce.
- Fair workforce diversity practice to attracts and retains technically competent and skilfully qualified workforce

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