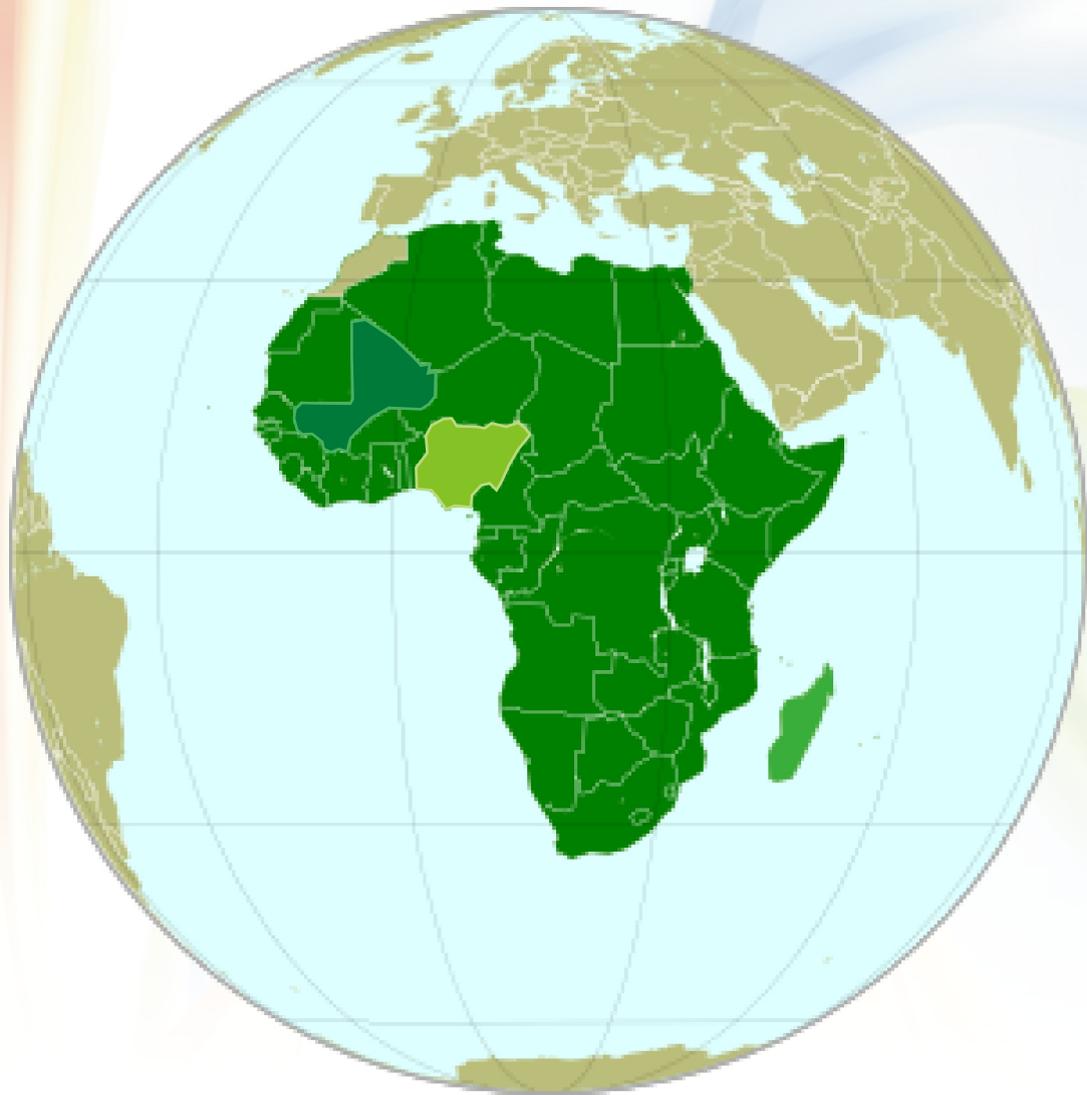


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**THE IMPACT OF WORKFORCE DIVERSITY ON
ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: (A CASE OF ABIA
STATE POLYTECHNIC (2012 - 2017))**

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ABSTRACT: Workforce diversity means similarities and differences among employees in terms of age, cultural background, educational background, physical abilities, and disabilities, race, religion, gender and sexual orientation. No two humans are alike, people are different in not only gender, culture, race social and psychological characterizes but also in their perspectives and prejudices. This paper therefore examines the impact of workforce diversity on organizational development: a study of Abia State Polytechnic, Aba. The empowerment theory of leadership as put forward by Rajotte (1996) was used as theoretical foundation for the study. The main objective of the study is to find out the benefits of workforce diversity on organizational development. Qualitative analysis was adopted with secondary data as the major source of data collection. It was revealed that a diverse workforce if well managed is a tool for organizational development. It is recommended that organizations should make employee diversity a priority concern during staff recruitment.

Keywords: Workforce Diversity, Organizational Development, Empowerment Theory of Leadership, Recruitment, Abia State Polytechnic.

INTRODUCTION

The idea of an organization is as old as man. Man has always worked in organization which they spend a sizeable amount of time as stockholders. Such organization includes; school, workplace, churches and trade unions. The world's increasing globalization requires more interaction among people from diverse backgrounds. People no longer live and work in an insular environment. They are now part of a worldwide economy competing within global framework. For this reason, profit and non-profit organizations need to ensure more diversified to remain competitive. Educational institution need to embrace diversity and look for ways to become inclusive organization, because diversity has the potentials to yield greater work productivity and competitive advantage Robins *et al.* (2013).The organizational members as made up of diverse people from different cultural background, educational background, experiences, race, colours, gender, age, religions orientation, sexual orientation etc. as we enter the 21st century a fundamental shift is occurring in the world economy. We are moving towards a world in which barriers to cross borders trade and investment are tumbling, perceived distance is shrinking due to advances in technology and

the advent of a global economy bring the people of the world closer together than ever before. Given this fact, businesses, educational systems and other entities are investigating ways to better serve their constituents.

Abia State Polytechnic Aba, is an educational institution with diverse workforce. The workforce in Abia State polytechnic is made up people from diverse ethnic backgrounds, educational background, religion, gender, age etc. Hence, it can be suggested that its work force is diverse. Workforce diversity has important implications toward management practices and policies. Frequently, diversity is viewed in a limited fashion, primarily addressing issues of race, ethnicity, cultural or gender differences. With regard to this study, we used a very broad definition of diversity, to encompass most characteristics that individuals possess that seem to affect the way they think and do things.

There are many legally mandated actions that employers must take to minimize employment discrimination. In Nigeria, for example there is the Federal Character Law which stipulates that recruitments in Federal Government Agencies and Parastatals must reflect the Federal character. But many CEOs recruit to favour their own people to the detriments of other Nigerians from other places. This is unethical and tends to negatively affect the performance level of most organizations in Nigeria Ogbo, Kifordu and Wilfred (2014).

The 21st century managers are saddled with the responsibility of both leading employees and responding to the needs of customers who are more ethnically and culturally diverse from each other. Leaders in both the public and the private sectors are focusing more attention on the issue of diversity. Whether the goal is to make profit, to provide excellent customer service, or to maintain a competitive edge, diversity is increasingly recognized and utilized as an important organizational resource. Leaders and managers within organizations are primarily responsible for the success of diversity policies because they must ensure that the policies are effective (Odita & Egbule, 2015).

Problem Statement

Many organizations are suffering from skills shortages and increasing the diversity of their workforce will help to address these skills gaps. By improving their performance, grow their businesses and secure future success. Esty *et al* (cited in Green, *et al*, 2002) defined diversity as “acknowledging, understanding, accepting, valuing and celebrating differences among people with respect to age, class, ethnicity, gender and mental ability, race, sexual orientation spiritual practice and public assistance status”. Also Muston *et al* (2010) defined diversity as valuing everyone irrespective of their differences as individuals whether they are employee, customers or clients. The cry for diversity in the workplace has reached a boiling point, with organization across the world seeking increasing global relevance, embarking and managing diversity, gain tremendous importance. Workplace diversity is not just a moral issue, it is a business imperative. The new concept of workplace diversity goes well beyond the traditional Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO). It calls for recognition of contributions of the individuals, with diverse background. It calls for management of organizations to embrace differences and inclusiveness, not just tolerating those who are

different but celebrating those differences. It calls for opening of all opportunities to the men and women of different colours, races and religions. According to Robbins *et al* (2013) effective diversity management increases an organizational access to the widest possible pool of skills, abilities and ideas that can bring about organizational development.

Organizational development on the other hand, means a strategy which is planned and implemented from the top with a view to bring about changes in the organization for the purpose of increasing organizational effectiveness. It is also seen as a process of helping organizations improve through change in policies, power, leadership, control or job redesign. In order to achieve organizational development, managers also need to recognize that, differences among workers can lead to miscommunications, misunderstanding and conflict. There has been a general assumption that one of the difficult issues before organizational manager is on how to effectively manage the diverse work force to achieve a maximum outcomes or benefits with maximum cost. Individuals from diverse background can offer a selection of different talents, skills and experiences that may be of benefits to the organization and their work performance.

Workplace diversity has helped in creating heterogeneous workforce that helps to create innovative product, better services, better decision making, effective team work, increased adaptability and better problem solving due to the recruitment of best talent, but if the issue of diversity in an organization is not properly managed, it can lead to unfair discrimination, stereotyping, harassment, confusion, misunderstanding, conflict of different kinds which will bring about organization ineffectiveness and low productivity. Discriminations on the grounds of gender, age, ethnic background, educational background, religion, social status etc, is a serious challenge facing modern organizations such as Abia State polytechnic Aba.

As the economy becomes increasingly global, our workforce becomes increasingly diverse. Organizational development and competitiveness will depend on the ability to manage diversity in the workplace effectively. Today, many organizations are still attempting to understand the many cultural and programmatic issues associated with diversity. Some organizations seem content to do nothing, perhaps believing that the diversity issue will go away or resolve itself.

Each individual is different from each other because of their different religion, educational background to which they belong, age and their perception. When different type of people in terms of thinking, perception generation come together to work at the same place then definitely a situation may come where all these different types of people may not agree at the some point. At that point of time it is going to affect the interpersonal relationship among people which can result to a lot of harassment, unfair treatment, discrimination favouritism, stereotyping, prejudice, tribalism, personality conflict, lack of empathy, differences in perception decreasing group performance and decreasing group cohesiveness etc. The failure of management and organizational members to acknowledge, accept and celebrate each other strength and weakness and to work as team players is a big challenge to organizational success. The above scenario prompted the researcher to embark on this study, to find out the impact of workforce diversity on organizational development.

Research Questions

Given the unhealthy situation noted above and in order to study this issue comprehensively, one can justifiably ask some cogent and relevant questions like:

1. What are the benefits of workplace diversity on organizational development?
2. What are the factors accounting for the growth in workforce diversity?
3. How can workforce diversity be effectively managed by the organizational management?

Research Objectives

The general objective of this study was to investigate the impact of workforce diversity on organizational development.

The specific objectives of the study aimed to achieve the following specific objective;

1. To critically examine the benefits of workforce diversity on organizational development.
2. To find out the factors accounting for the growth in workplace diversity.
3. To examine the strategies for managing workplace diversity.

Theoretical Framework

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used the empowerment theory of leadership as put forward by Rajotte (1996). The theory of leadership is used to better illustrate the variables and give a more compelling view of the variables. Leadership can be seen as a process of influencing group behaviour towards. The achievement of a common goal empowerment means to give power or authority to someone to achieve a predetermine goal. Employees' empowerment according to Rajotte (1996) is a management strategy that aims to give employees the tool and resources necessary to make confident decisions in the workplace without supervision. Employees' empowerment is a catalyst to gate the best from the employees. Empowerment requires that local government officers trust their staff, trust that they will make the right decisions and that they will be effective in achieving higher goals. Employees' empowerment means handling authority to them to undertake their roles as they determine best. It involves giving the employees the responsibility one autonomy to manage their own job, set their own objectives and make decision about tasks priorities and deadline. The concept of leadership has been widely researched due to its relevance to organizational survival which is why Nirenberg (2001) viewed leadership as a social tool required for the attainment of organizational goals and objectives. This definition emphasized leadership to encompass the actions and attitude of the leader with respect to its subordinates. Leadership is about inspiration that drives positive outcome. The whole essence of leadership can be deduced to consist given others the opportunity to learn and grow and ensuring the right attitude and building commitment to organizational goals and objectives. Leadership should inspire creativity and development of inherent skills, thereby empowering employees towards future leadership positions.

The empowerment theory of leadership simply is focused on a leadership style that inspires employees by empowering them to take decisions and actions that affect the existence of the organization. The theory suggest that leaders should aside other human relation approach seek to empower employees to take actions that will enhance their growth and that of the organization. Empowerment theories inspire individuals to reach and acknowledge their potentials in life and in the society.

The essence of this theory to this study is that, it is an eye opener to local government officers to use the empowerment strategy to get the best out of the employees. When employees feel valued from day one, they will feel motivated to work well and be creative and innovative in solving organizational problems. It will also help the employees to learn new ways of carryout their jobs thereby serving as a tool for training and developing of the employees for future responsibility. It allows decisions to be made at the lower levels of an organization where employees have a unique view of the issues and problems facing the organization at a certain level.

Conceptualizing Diversity

There is no one definition of diversity. Diversity is a complex, multidimensional concept as a whole. It is a plural term with different perceptions in different organization, societies and national cultures without any unitary meaning. Cox (2001) attempts to define diversity as the variation of social and cultural identities among people existing together in a defined employment or market setting. Diversity makes the workforce heterogeneous. Robins at el (2013) defines diversity as the similarities and differences among people in respect to their age, gender, marital status, religion, sexual orientation, nationality, physical abilities and disabilities, ethnicity, cultural background, educational background.

Esty *et al* (cited in Green *et al*, 2002) defined diversity as “Acknowledge, understanding, accepting valuing and celebrating differences among people with respect to age, class, ethnicity, gender and mental ability, race, sexual orientation, spiritual practice and public assistance status”. Also Murton *et al* in Iheanacho (2015) defined diversity “as valuing everyone irrespective of their differences as individuals whether they are employees, customers or clients. Valuing diversity involves understanding how overlapping and multiple identities relate to patterns of socialization and affiliation. These patterns influences the way people understand and interpret the world. Diversity enhances the intellectual emotional, economic, moral and spiritual life of an organization.

Levels of Diversity

Griggs (1995) offers another classification of diversity. The author classified diversity into primary and secondary level. Primary level of diversity which are hard to change, are those human differences that are inborn and /or that exert an important impact on our socialization and have an ongoing impact, throughout our lives. The six primary levels of diversity includes: age, ethnicity, gender, physical abilities/qualities and race. Primary level of diversity shapes our basic self-image and has great influence on how we view the world.

The secondary level of diversity are those that can be change and include, but are not limited to educational background, geographic location, income, marital status, military experience, religious beliefs and work experience. Norton and fox (1997) argue that employee diversity and organizational development are inextricably linked, and that these two elements have rarely been integrated sufficiently to meet the demands of today's fast-paced economy. Robins at el (2013), classified the level of diversity as surface-level diversity and deep-level diversity. According to them, surface-level diversity are differences and similarities that are easily perceived such as gender, race, ethnicity, age or disability, that do not necessarily reflect the ways people think or feel but that may activate certain stereotypes. On the other hand, deep-level diversity means differences in values, personality, and work preferences that become progressively more important for determining similarity as people get to know one another better.

Diversity not only involves how people perceived themselves, but how they perceive others. Those perceptions affect their interactions. Diversity is not just a moral issue, it is a business imperative.

The concept of diversity includes acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique and recognizing our individual differences. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained with each individual.

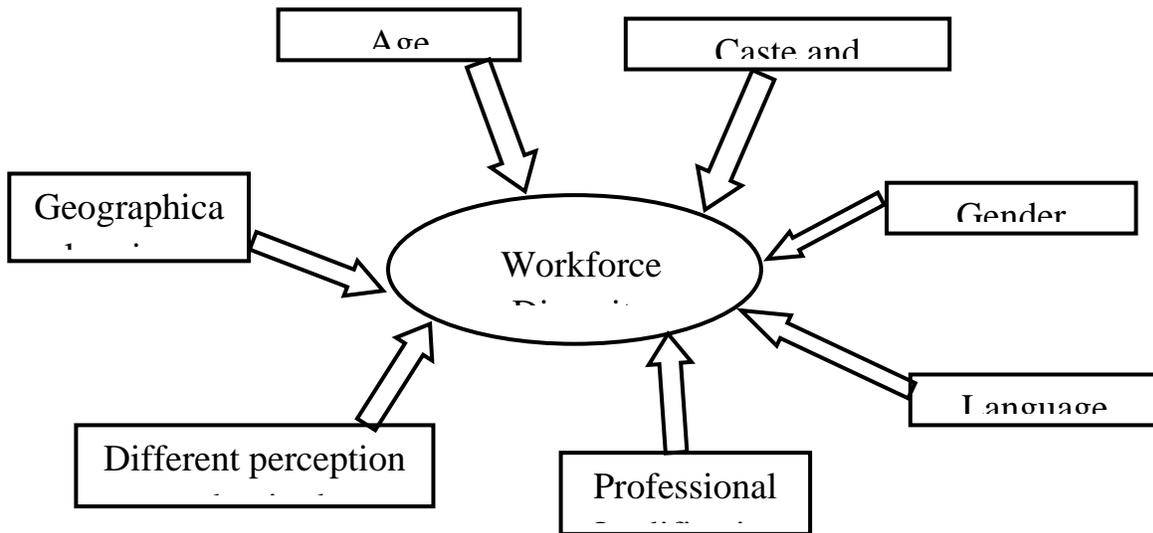
Concept of Workforce Diversity

Workforce diversity means similarities and differences among employees in term of age, cultural background, physical abilities and disabilities, race, religion, gender and sexual orientation, Ankita Saxena (2014), Griffin and Moorhead (2007) defined workforce diversity as, "the important similarities and differences among people of organization". In addition, we refer workforce diversity as those dimensions or factors that make workers different and similar from each other in an organization.

Asmita Jha, (2009) sees workforce, diversity as an important asset of any organization because diversified workforce is good at problem solving as they provide different and creative ideas and gives competitive advantages to the organization. According to Robbin's et al (2013) effective workforce diversity management increase organization is access to the widest possible pool of skills, abilities and ideas.

As the economy becomes increasing global, our workforce becomes increasing global, our workforce becomes increasing diverse. Organizational development and competitiveness will depend on the ability to manage diversity in the workplace effectively (Robbins et al 2013) workforce diversity encompasses complex differences and similarities in perspective identities and points of view among members of an institution as well as among individuals who make up the wider community. Coxt (2001).

Diagrammatical Representation of Workforce Diversity



Source: **Ankita Saxena (2014)**

JekobLauring, (2009) says that in today’s scenario, workforce diversity is a necessity for the development both in terms of economic growth and satisfactory, intellectual, emotional and moral existence.

As our world gets smaller, each workplace becomes more diverse. Understanding how to work with individuals from different backgrounds is important for a successful organization. Workforce diversity is a valuable asset for any business that seeks a competitive advantage in the global economy.

Dimensions of Diversity

Primary	Secondary	Tertiary dimension
Race	Religion	Beliefs
Ethnicity	Culture	Assumptions
Gender	Sexual orientation	Perceptions
Age	Thinking style	Attitudes
Disability	Family status	Feelings
	Life style	Values
	Economic status	Group norms
	Political orientation	
	Work experience	
	Education	
	Language	
	Nationality	

Source: Odita and Egbule (2015)

Age: Employers hold mixed feelings. They see a number of positive qualities older workers bring to their jobs, such as experience, judgment, a strong work ethic, and commitment to quality. But older workers are also perceived as lacking flexibility and resisting new technology. And when organizations are actively seeking individuals who are adaptable and open to change, the negatives associated with age clearly hinder the initial hiring of older workers and increase the likelihood they will be let go during cutbacks.

Now let's take a look at the evidence. What effect does age actually have on turnover, absenteeism, productivity, and satisfaction? The older you get, the less likely you are to quit your job. That conclusion is based on studies of the age turnover relationship. Of course, this shouldn't be too surprising. As workers get older, they have fewer alternative job opportunities as their skills have become more specialized to certain types of work. Their long tenure also tend to provide them with higher wage rates, longer paid vacations, and more attractive pension benefits.

It's tempting to assume that age is also inversely related to absenteeism. After all, if older workers are less likely to quit, won't they also demonstrate higher stability by coming to work more regularly? Not necessarily. Most studies do show an inverse relationship, but close examination finds it is partially a function of whether the absence is avoidable absence than do younger employees. However, they have equal rates of unavoidable absence, such as sickness absences.

How does age affect productivity? Many believe productivity declines with age. It is often assumed that skills like speed, agility, strength, and coordination decay over time and that prolonged job boredom and lack of intellectual stimulation contribute to reduced productivity.

Sex: Few issues initiate more debates, misconceptions, and unsupported opinions than whether women perform as well on jobs as men do.

The best place to begin to consider this is with the recognition that few, if any, importance differences importance differences between men and women affect job performance. There are no consistent male-female differences in problem-solving ability, analytical skills, competitive drive, motivation, sociability, or learning ability. Psychological studies have found women are more agreeable and willing to conform to authority, whereas male are more aggressive and more likely to have expectations of success, but those differences are minor. Given the significantly increased female participation in the workforce over the past 40 years and the rethinking of what constitute male and female roles, we can assume no significant difference in job productivity between men and women.

Unfortunately, sex role still affect our perceptions. For example, women who succeed in traditionally male domains are perceived as less likable, more hostile, and less desirable as supervisors. Interestingly, research also suggests that women believe sex-based discrimination is more prevalent than do male employees, and these beliefs are especially pronounced among women who work with a large proportion of men.

One issue that does seem to differ between men and women, especially when the employee has preschool-age children, is preference for work schedules. Working mothers are more likely to prefer part-time work, flexible work schedules, and telecommuting in order to accommodate their family responsibilities. Women also prefer jobs that encourage work-life balance, which has the effect of limiting their options for career advancement.

Again, it is worth asking what the implications of sex discrimination are for individuals. Research has shown that workers who experienced sexual harassment have higher levels of psychological stress, and these feelings in turn are related to lower levels of organizational commitment and job satisfaction, and higher intentions to turn over. As with age discrimination, the evidence suggest that combating sex discrimination may be associated with better performance for the organization as a whole.

The Concept of Organizational Development

Organizations are established to achieve some predetermined goals. These goals can only be achieved through a process of planned organizational change. In the light of the above, organizational development is necessary for the achievement of organizational goals.

Gibson *et al* (1996) sees organizational development as a planned, systematic program initiated by an organization's management with the aim of making the organization more effective through the use of variety of methods designed to change environmental behaviour and based upon the assumption that organizational effectiveness is enhanced to the extent that the program facilitates the integration of individual and organizational objectives.

On the other hand, Beer M. and Walton E. in Iheanacho (2015), defines organizational development as concerned with helping management plan change in organizing and managing people that will develop requisite commitment, coordination and competences. Its purpose is to enhance both the effectiveness of organizations and the well-being of their members through planned interventions in the organizations human processes structures and systems using knowledge of behavioural science and its intervention methods.

Organizational development is technique of planned change. It seeks to change beliefs, attitudes, values and structures, in fact the entire culture of the organization so that the organization may better adopt to technology and live with the pace of change. It can also be seen as a comprehensive strategy for organization improvement Beer and Walton (1990). Organizational development includes the development of the human capital so as to enhance their skills and capacities for innovations.

The ultimate goal of organizational development (OD), from the above definitions may be the creation of a new team, changing the attitudes of organization members and developing new values and the improvement in the ability of the organization to adopt to its environment and the improvement in inter-personal and intergroup behaviour. These can only be achieved through the proper management of the diverse workforce in an organization

In conclusion, organizational development is meant to elevate the organization to a higher level of functioning by improving the performance and satisfaction of organizational members. Therefore workforce diversity is one of the strategies for achieving organization development.

Factors Accounting for the Growth or Increase in Workforce Diversity

The rate of diversity in organization is really increasing as a result of certain factors. These factors that leads to growth of diversity according to Iheanacho (2015)

1. **Globalization:** As a result of the interconnectedness, interdependence between nations makes big companies to establish their companies abroad. So, diverse workforce has to be supported because the host countries have to do with workers from different race, ethnicity, gender, culture etc in order to get ideas on how to formulate strategies, plans and take decisions on possible ways to maximum outcomes and minimize lost. And these decisions and strategies must be peculiar with the needs and interest of the localities. Also, a worker or a manager in a multinational company can be sent to other countries to work. This incidence leads to increase in workforce diversity.
2. **Legislation and Legal Sanction:** The increase in legislation and legal sanction against any discriminatory practices has made organization to encourage more diverse workforce. There have been several legislations that support equal opportunities of people from different background, or characteristics for the success of organization. There has been establishment of various laws that fight against discriminatory practices against other groups in USA. Also in Nigeria, the constitutions and laws are in support of federal character principles to avoid domination of one group over others and discriminations and also to ensure equal representation.
3. **Desire for Competitive Advantage:** There has been an increase in awareness by organizations that attracting a large pool of employees from different background will bring the best talent which is necessary for achievement of high competitive advantage. So, this high desire for competitive advantage makes organization to look for large diverse workforce. According to Denisi and Griffin (2005, p. 510) “by casting a broader net in recruiting and looking beyond traditional sources for new employees, organizations are finding more broadly qualified and better qualified employees from many different segment of society”.
4. **Mobility of Labour:** The increase in migration or movement of labour force from one geographical area to another contributed to an increase in workforce diversity. People now find it easier to migrate from one area to another for search of greener pasture. This incidence leads to much diverse workforce mainly in area of race, ethnicity etc.

5. **Improvement in Technology/Communication Technology:** The growth of diverse workforce can be as a result of improvement in information technology. With advancement in technology, people from different location can easily assess or discover employment opportunities at far distance areas. Based on this, people can apply for jobs at different geographical areas through online or internet. So, the online or internet applications by people from different areas lead to more possibility of recruitment and selection of much diverse workforce. For example, an Ibo youth looking for a job can easily apply for a job in Yoruba land through internet or online but it will very difficult if not impossible for an Ibo youth residing at Ibo land to apply for a job at Yoruba land without the use of internet. So, the improvement in technology creates more opportunities for people from different geographical location, race and ethnicity to apply for a job, get recruited and selected, therefore widen the diversity.

The Positive Impact of Workforce Diversity on Organizational Development

Research have shown that the existence of diverse workforce bring some benefits in organization. So, the importance of valuing diversity in organization is:

1. **Achievement of Organizational Goals:** The presence or adequate management of diversity helps to ensure achievements of organizational goal leading to organizational success. The diverse workforce in organization helps to ensure organizational efficiency and effectiveness (productivity) Iheanacho (2015). This is because the workers with different educational background, qualification, specialization, abilities, experiences, age, gender etc. that come together will be able to bring out different approaches on how to achieve organizational goals.
2. **Competitive Advantage:** An organization that emphasis more in diversity will tend to outperform its business rivals that are less diverse. The appointment of diverse workforce has the high tendency to bring more qualified workforce that can aid any organization to outperform its rivals.
3. **Better Problem Solving:** The existence diverse workforce is more likely to bring workers with different good ideas or approaches in order to solve a particular problem than an organization with less diverse workforce (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2004). Findings on team-groups that varied in educational background, values, attitudes and experience supported these claims that existence of diverse workforce encourages better problem solving and performance.
4. **Increase in Innovation and Creativity:** Research has shown that organizations with diverse workforce are more likely to bring innovation and creativity of ideas than organization with less diverse workforce Green, et al, (2012). According to Denisi and Griffin (2015, p. 521) “the diverse organization in contrast will be characterized by multiple perspective and ways of thinking and therefore more likely to generate new ideas and ways of doing things.” For example, if an organization that is

composed of workers with different educational background or specialization, it encourages more or different approaches or ideas, innovation than organization that comprises of people with the same educational background and specialization. Also, organization that comprises of members with different ethnic groups, geographical location, and gender will bring creativity and innovation than organization with same gender, ethnicity, race, geographical location etc.

A management expert called Rosabeth Moss-Karnter was the first to investigate the relationship between diversity and increased creativity and innovation and discovered high innovative companies use more heterogeneous teams to solve problems than less innovative companies. (Keritner & Kinicki, 2004).

5. **Recruitment of Best Talent:** An organization that manages or values diverse workforce has high tendency to attract more qualified employees. Encouragement of recruitment of diverse workers will make a manager or organization to select qualified and talented employees in the organization. It has been identified that organization that comprises of high diverse workforce is more likely to recruit and select the best talents or qualified employees (DeNisi & Griffin, 2005). An organization with high diverse workforce will found it easy to get best employees to handle issues concerning different fields and situations.
6. **Increase in Market Opportunity:** Organization with more diverse workforce will effectively understand different market segments than with less diverse organization. Mathis and Jackson (2006) observed that diversity helps to increase market share of an organization because customers tend to prefer to buy from employees from the same race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, religious affiliation etc. for examples, an organization that sells its product to youth will get most market opportunities if it has youths that will help to provide ideas on how to design, package and advertise such product to attract customers.
7. **Resolution of Conflict:** Proper management or valuing of workforce diversity goes a long way to reduce conflict among employees. This is because, if an organization takes into consideration, the diversity status of workers in terms of giving opportunities like promotion, rights and privileges, conflict will reduce in the organization.
8. **Diverse Experience:** Co-workers with diverse cultural backgrounds bring unique experiences and perceptions to the table in groups and work teams. Pooling the diverse knowledge and skills of culturally distinct workers together can benefit companies by strengthening teams' productivity and responsiveness to changing conditions. Each employee in a diverse workplace possesses unique strengths and weaknesses derived from their culture in addition to their individuality. When managed properly, diversity in the workplace can leverage the strengths and complement the weaknesses of each worker to make the impact of the workforce greater than the sum of its parts.

9. **Learning and Growth:** Another advantage of workplace diversity is the opportunity for employees' personal growth. Being exposed to new ideas, cultures and perspectives can help individuals to reach out intellectually and gain a clearer view of their surroundings and their place in the world. Spending time with culturally diverse co-workers can slowly break down the subconscious barriers of ethnocentrism and xenophobia, encouraging employees to be more well-rounded members of society.

Problems/Negative Effect of Diversity in Organization

If the issue of diversity in organization is not properly managed, or if there is lack of diversity awareness, it can lead to certain problems that can affect the success of an organization. These problems or negative impacts are:

1. **Harassment:** This is usually defined in terms of being any conduct related to gender, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation or religious beliefs, with the purpose of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment (Murton *et al.*, 2010). The problem of valuing diversity of workforce mainly tends to breed a lot of harassment and intimidation by dominant group against other weaker groups. One of the most observed and popular harassment is the aspect of sexual harassment.
2. **Stereotypes:** This involves the perception people have on a particular group of people that possess similar characteristics. In other words, stereotype is a generalization about a person or group of persons based on certain similar characteristics or traits (Griffin & Moorhead, 2007). The presence of diverse workforce or (problem of valuing diversity) can bring a stereotype. And this stereotype can lead to discriminatory policies or practices, victimization etc. for example, a manager that stereotype or have biased perception on workers from Hausa ethnic group as being incompetent will find it very easy to prevent employment opportunities or prevent advancement of higher position of the Hausa's workers.
3. **Conflict:** The presence of diverse workforce can lead to conflict in organization if not well managed. Conflict can be as a result of discriminatory practices done against one party to favour another party. For instance a male worker that was denied promotion because the position is reserved for women without regard to his performance will be aggrieved and do everything possible to fight the working of the organization to earn justice. Another case for conflict can be as result of misunderstanding or misinterpretation of actions between workers of different groups. Also the issue of mistrust, fear and prejudice by one group or others can amount to conflict. For example, some group of workers that have similar identity may find it very insecure to see new employees that differ from them, because they feel threaten that such new employees can take over their position or dominate them

in future, so they will do everything possible to frustrate their efforts or become hostile to them.

4. **Prejudice:** This involves those judgments about others that reinforce beliefs about superiority and inferiority (Griffin & Moorhead, 2007) if diversity of workforce is not valued or managed, it can make workers that share the same characteristics to make assumption about other groups and see their own group as more superior. This situation leads to a desire for discrimination, marginalization, hostile behaviour, hatred towards other groups.
5. **Increase in Lawsuits:** The problem of diversity can lead to increase cases of lawsuit against discrimination or unfair treatment in terms of promotion, employment, opportunities, privileges etc based on diversity status of an employee.
6. **Low Commitment and High Rate of Turnover Intention:** The problem of management of diversity can lead to low rate of commitment or attachment leading to high rate of turnover intention (or turnover) in organization. Employees that experiences unfair treatment as a result of their diversity status will show low commitment and the intention to quit such organization. Robbins et al (2013) identified that women are more likely to turnover from predominantly male work group and vice versa. And non-white are more likely to turnover from predominantly white work groups and vice versa.
7. **Unfair Discrimination:** Discrimination occurs when someone is denied opportunities on the basis of a personal characteristic that has no bearing on job performance. Discrimination causes great harm and is illegal in most cases. Discrimination can cause personality conflict and lower organizational development it's natural that tensions will arise among individuals in a diverse workforce, so it's important for employers to have diversity management policies in place. Most large organizations have taken steps to promote diversity awareness and understanding. These diversity initiatives contribute to a positive work environment that is free from discrimination.

Strategies for Managing Work Diversity in Organization

Managing work diversity is one of the most difficult and pressing challenge of modern organization. Managing diversity means enabling the diverse workforce to perform its full potential in an equitable work environment where no one group has an advantages or disadvantages workplace diversity management is a comprehensive managerial process for developing an environment that works for all employees.

According to Ignore and Agolla (2007) diversity management is a process intended to create and maintain a positive work environment where the similar has and difference of individual are virtually workforce diversity is a primary concern for most of the businesses. Today's

organization need to recognize and manage workforce diversity effectively. Below are some major strategies for managing workforce diversity.

- 1) **Diversity Training:** Here, diversity training is conducted to make employees to function effectively in a diverse workforce (Onah, 2014). The diversity training enables employees to show understanding on the similarities and differences of workers and be able to tolerate it for effective cooperation. Also diversity training help to ensure acceptance between people of different background. Mathis and Jackson (2006) identified three component of diversity training as:
 - a) **Legal Awareness:** training based on legal implication of discrimination.
 - b) **Cultural Awareness:** making employees to accept the differences in cultural background of people
 - c) **Sensitivity Training:** it includes sensitizing workers on the behaviour they must show in dealing with different people. It talks about how their words and actions are interpreted or perceived by others.

Another way of diversity training can be through language training by teaching foreign employees, the language of their host country or host organization for proper understanding, communication and cooperation.

- 2) **Fair Treatment of Diverse Employee:** To effectively manage diversity, the organization managers or leaders must ensure fair practices to all employees. This can be done by ensuring fairness in promotion, privileges, response, punishment etc.
- 3) **Organizational Culture:** To properly manage diversity in organization, there is need to inculcate value of respect for diversity in organization. The management of diverse workforce will be very difficult if support for diversity is not part of the culture of organization. So, support for diversity should be in the beliefs, assumptions, values etc employees shared in organization.
- 4) **Assimilation:** This is a way of making diverse workforce to fit in and become like the dominant group (Kneitner & Kinicki, 2004). This practice helps to ensure homogeneity among workers.
- 5) **Understanding:** For effective management of diversity required proper understanding. That is, managers or workers must show the high level of understanding on the diversity status in their organization. Managers or workers need to understand the differences between workers in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, income level of position, educational background etc in order to ensure fair and equitable treatment of employees.
- 6) **Tolerance:** Here, employees or managers must endeavour to acknowledge some certain behaviours or action of other workers that are different from theirs even though they may not enjoy such differences. This is referred as live-and-let-live

approach that allows organization to give lip services to the issues of managing diversity (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004).

- 7) **Affirmative Action:** Diversity can be effectively managed through affirmative action. The organization can use this to increase the members of diverse workforce in organization. Organization should encourage employment of minority groups or disadvantage groups; and also entrance into the managerial positions. Here, the organization can give quotas or opportunities to some groups to be admitted or gain a managerial/ leadership position. This practice helps to ensure more inclusion of more diverse workforce, like inclusion of women, ethnic minorities etc into the organization. This strategy helps to stop or reduce discriminatory practices in organization.
- 8) **Ensuring of Mutual Adaptation:** Diversity can be valued if the organization ensures that employees are able to adapt to changes in order to create a positive relationship with others. If employees are ready for changes, there is a high tendency that they can easily accept differences in the organization.
- 9) **Formation of Team Work:** The problem associated with diversity can be solved through team work; managers should encourage team work between different groups to accomplish a task. The formation of teams will ensure interdependence, interactions among different groups. Therefore, organization must ensure that teams formed involved workers with diverse background because they will go a long way to bring understanding, tolerance, togetherness, sharing of diverse ideas. According to Denisi and Griffin (2005).

Organization can also facilitate diversity by making sure that diversity exist in its key committees and teams. Even if diversity exists between the broader organizational context, an organization that does not reflect diversity in groups like committees and teams implies that diversity is not fully ingrained element of its culture.

- 10) **Organizational Policies:** To effectively manage diverse workforce, the plan or support for diversity must be part of the organizational strategic plans or policies. That is, the policy or broad plan of an organization must include support or value for diversity in organization. According to Denisi and Griffin (2005).

Managing diversity starts with the policies that an organization adopts because they directly affect how people are treated. Obviously, the extent to which an organization embraces the premise of equal employment opportunities determines to a large extent the potential diversity within an organization.

Therefore, organization needs to put the support for diversity in the organization policies so that it can serve as a guide to the activities or behaviours of employees and managers in any diversity issues.

Conclusion

Diversity has been an evolving concept. The extent to which managers recognize diversity and its potential advantages and disadvantages defines an organization's approach to managing the diversity. No organization in this world of globalization would survive without workforce diversity. Hence, with workforce diversity, the organization would be internally and externally competitive. Diverse work teams brings high value to organization, respecting, accepting, valuing and celebrating the similarities and differences among employees will increase their ability to work as a team for the overall achievement of organizational goals.

Organizations with diverse employees are better suited to serve diverse external customers in an increasing global market. Each employee in a diverse workplace possesses unique strengths and weaknesses derived from their diverse culture, ethnicity, and diverse educational background. Workforce diversity if not well managed, has a negative impact on organizational effectiveness. Workforce diversity if left unchecked can create problem such as unfair discrimination, harassment, personality conflict stereotyping etc. on the other hand, if workforce diversity is well managed it will increase the organization competitive advantage, better problem solving, increase in innovation and creativity, increase in best talent, increase in market opportunity etc. globalization, desire for competitive advantage, mobility of labour, improvement in technology has account for the growth in workforce diversity.

Recommendations

In this study, some recommendations have been made to increase the importance and benefits of employee's participation in decision making.

In order to effectively managed diverse workforce, organizational management should use strategies such as diversity training, fair treatment of diverse employees, tolerance and understanding. So, organization needs to put the support for diversity in the organization policies so that it can serve as a guide to the activities or behaviours of employees and managers in any diversity issues

- 1) We recommended that organizational managers should put more effort in encouraging their employees to come up with suggestions and useful decisions and endeavour to incorporate them into the organizations' decision so as to increase the level of motivation of workers in the local government areas in Nigeria.
- 2) Managers should have trust and confidence on the ability of their employees in decision making activities so as to increase employees' morale and commitment in the achievement of organizational goals.

- 3) Considering the importance and benefits of employees participation especially in the growth and stability of on organization time and money investment on it should be made properly and wisely to avoid regrets.

Finally, the researchable aspects of the concept of employee's participation in decision making have not been exhausted in this work. Therefore suggestion is being put forward in the area of problems that limit or Jeopardize employee's participation in decision making at the local government. Organizations that can recruit and retain a diverse workforce will maintain a competitive advantage among their counterparts and increase their effectiveness.

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