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Effect of Workplace Diversity Management on Employee Commitment in the Nigerian Public Sector: A Conceptual Review

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Abstract

One of the current global concerns in many areas is the inconsistent application of workplace diversity management regulations across nations. The fact that only workers from a particular background are treated properly and justly raises the possibility of discrimination. This study examines how various academics have perceived the effect of workplace diversity management on employee engagement in the Nigerian public sector. Fairness, inclusion, equal opportunity, and policies and programs—all workplace diversity management constructs—were utilized to analyse their effects on employee commitment as seen by various experts. A conceptual review methodology was used in the study, which consulted a number of relevant bodies of literature from numerous respectable publications. However, only research that was published within the last five years was cited in this analysis in order to assure currency. The cited studies, show that fewer articles have been published in recent years. The scholars agreed that diversity management which entails the effort put in place by employers, to ensure unity in diversity was necessary to elicit employee commitment. The findings also revealed that workplace diversity management policies in multicultural nations like Nigeria were poorly implemented even though they existed, and this was reflected in lopsided appointments, promotions, and nominations at the top government level. From the foregoing conclusion, the review recommends that organizations assimilate minorities, integrate diversity and leverage on the variety. For the Nigerian public sector, the review recommends that regulatory bodies such as Federal Character Commission, National Salaries, Income and Wages Commission be made independent and empowered to monitor the government agencies for adherence to the framework of diversity management policies, with the aim of applying penalties for non-compliance while limiting inter-

ference in the public agencies. The implementation of this policy will ensure inclusiveness, fairness, and equal opportunity to all citizens.

Keywords

Workplace Diversity, Employee Commitment, Inclusion, Fairness, Equal Opportunity, Policies and Programs

1. Introduction

Every organization irrespective of sector, has a goal of maximising profit. In doing so, the organization needs to meet customer requirements who will in turn invest in its venture or buy its product and/or service for a fee. This can only be achieved through the organization's effective and efficient employees as they are expected to retain existing customers and attract prospective ones through excellent service delivery. For this purpose, the Management focus of many organizations is on recruiting and retaining talented employees with the right skills, knowledge, and attitudes irrespective of their educational, ethnic, political, and cultural background with the expectation that service delivery to customers will be boosted. The increase in migration of people in recent past especially from developing to developed countries to seek greener pastures, has made the available workforce very diverse, enabling employers to choose from and recruit the best of the lot.

Ali et al. (2021) opined that Dynamism and implementation of Diversity Management policies differs across countries and their public institutions because it is informed by their country specific historical legacies, labour market conditions and regulatory environment. This is reflected in the history of countries like the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and India, among others who have the highest immigrant population. The removal of barriers to equitable employment, increased representation of diverse groups at all levels, age discrimination in employment, physical disabilities, genetic information, and style of leadership all played a crucial role in understanding employer requirements and effective management of diversity.

While private organizations are not consciously diverse in their recruitment, and focus more on competence rather than background, the public sector can be said to be more deliberately diverse in their recruitment as it is required by law in the government of most countries. This is to avoid being viewed as a discriminatory government especially for countries that are multicultural. Poor implementation of Diversity Management policies is not uncommon in the public sector of Multicultural nations as the Top Management is viewed to be discriminatory in favour of employees whose background are like theirs. Furthermore, while organisations in western countries are well known for implementing diversity related mechanisms, they seem to focus more on retaining minorities which may fuel negative feelings in members of the majority group in the work-

place (Mousa, 2020).

This article focuses on Workplace Diversity Management and employee commitment and its challenges in the public sector of various countries, with emphasis on the Nigerian Public sector. In societies with high level of religious and cultural diversity like Nigeria, a complex relationship is eminent between religion and corporate cultures. Parameters for filling vacant positions in public organizations are based on wrong recruitment practices such as ethnicity, religion, politics, etc. This practice disenfranchises candidates who may be qualified, as components such as fairness, Inclusion, equal opportunity, and effective policies and programs are not put in place for suitable candidates' selection prior to recruitment; and for post recruitment, such elements are absent to enhance affective commitment from employees. For this reason, public sector governance in the country has remained ineffective, unpopular, and counterproductive (Ndukwe et al., 2020). This article adapts constructs of diversity management from scholars: García-Rodríguez et al. (2020), Alshaabani et al. (2021) and Mousa (2020) to review their impact on employee commitment. These constructs include fairness, Inclusion, equal opportunities, policies and programs, well-structured organisational structure, leadership style, tolerance, and operational procedures. This study reviews four constructs namely: Fairness, Inclusion, Equal opportunities and Policies and Programs and their impact on employee commitment. The research questions emanating from the problem statement are therefore stated as follows:

- Does inclusion influence the affective commitment of employees in the Nigerian public sector?
- Does fairness influence the affective commitment of employees in the Nigerian public sector?
- How does equal opportunity influence the affective commitment of employees in the Nigerian public sector?
- To what extent does policies and programs influence the affective commitment of employees in the Nigerian public sector?

This article will be beneficial to the government and policymakers, who will ensure that beyond having a diverse workforce, diversity management policies should be made and adhered to; for the employers of different sectors, it will aid them to enhance commitment from their diverse employees; and for the Academics and Researchers, the article will guide them to further explore on deficient areas, as effective management of diversity has the potential to deliver positive changes in the near future. The remaining parts of the review are divided into the literature review section; where the constructs of both the Independent and dependent variables are discussed, the methodology section, and finally, the conclusion and recommendation sections.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

Several Scholars have examined studies relating to workplace diversity Manage-

ment and employee commitment. This section reviews the concept of Diversity Management and its proxies. It further reviews the concept of employee commitment and its proxy as viewed from different scholars' perspectives.

2.2. Workplace Diversity Management

García-Rodríguez et al. (2020) views Workplace Diversity Management as the extent to which every employee is treated equally in an organization irrespective of their demography or differences and this ultimately strengthens inclusiveness. García-Rodríguez et al. (2020) also opined that Workplace Diversity Management is relevant in the tourism and hospitality sector due to high representation of minorities in such tasks as they incorporate ethnic, culture and gender in their workforce. Diversity is the existing differences in individual attributes such as gender, age, race etc among employees of same workgroup while Workplace Diversity Management is the strategy adopted to improve the performance of a heterogenous workforce through inclusion (Alshaabani et al., 2021). Batmomolin et al. (2022) opined Workplace Diversity Management as the conscious action taken by an organization to create an inclusive workforce comprising skilled and competent employees through planned policies and programs. According to Mousa (2020), while Diversity is the coexistence of people affiliated with different social classes, Workplace Diversity Management refers to accepting individual career aspirations without seeing their differences in religion, family status, race, ethnicity, and other related factors as obstacles. Diversity is all about differences and dissimilarities in individuals as employees will almost always vary along the lines of social identity features such as gender, age race, beliefs, values even though the organization may claim a relatively homogeneous workforce (Yadav & Lenka, 2020). Workplace Diversity Management is also perceived as the style of managing differences among the workforce (Ali et al., 2021).

The poor implementation of workplace diversity management policies in the Nigerian public sector such as lopsided application of policies like the quota system, catchment area and federal character principles have threatened the country's corporate existence (Owolabi & Tijani-Adenle, 2022).

Inclusion

Workplace Diversity Management and Inclusion are like two sides of the same coin. However, the mere presence of a diverse workforce is not a guarantee that there is an inclusive Management or leadership style in the organization. Kuknor and Bhattacharya (2020) perceived "Inclusion" as people development and opined that it is a Human resource development initiative and the goal of leaders of organizations. Several scholars have also defined "Inclusion" in similar terms. Some view it as the degree individuals are enabled to get involved and participate in the day-to-day business of the organisations; others perceive it as the benefits derived from nurturing and integrating a heterogenous group, so they fit together. The fair treatment of gender diverse employees and the participative decision-making process in the promotion of equitable employment are factors that encourage a climate for inclusion in organizations (Le et al., 2020). In general,

the perception of employees on inclusive leadership or organizational inclusion, predicts their commitment which may transform to loyalty in the long run.

Fairness

This construct of Workplace Diversity Management is the impartial and just treatment of employees without favouritism. It is people's perception about the outcomes of distributive justice (Chen et al., 2022). This component directly affects employee commitment as employees compare themselves with individuals with similar traits, qualifications, etc and if they perceive any form of imbalance or inequity, their behaviours are likely to change and is likely to lead to an increase in turnover intention and non-commitment to the employer and organization. Fairness is a vital construct of diversity management especially in competitive sectors such as the medical sector. Chen et al. (2022) opined that China has a high turnover of medical staff when compared to the United States and Australia. The government of China is expected to highlight the urgent need to alleviate the challenges faced by medical personnel due to deficiencies in compensation or work environment. Fairness is also viewed as the imperative given to leaders to ensure their followers are being treated justly to achieve organizational goals (Rhodes, 2023). It can be separated into three dimensions of distributive justice (fairness in resource allocation); procedural justice (feeling of employees that processes are administered fairly) and interactional justice (employees' perception of how fairly they are treated in interpersonal interaction).

Equal Opportunities

This construct refers to the offer of employment, pay, training or promotion equally to all prospective and existing employees without discrimination of race, sex, colour, or disability. This concept is often associated with the slogan "level playing ground" (Gargelwar, 2020). Gargelwar (2020) further opined that equal opportunity can be justified as an enhancement of individual life chances. This is because an organization where equal opportunity exists, is associated with meritocracy. Employees of such organizations are therefore more likely to be more committed than organizations where equal opportunity is non-existent.

Policies and Programs

Policy borders around thoughts and understanding of diverse tasks in an organization while program is perceived as activities in the organization that reflect inclusion such as recruitment, non-exclusion, leadership development (Majczyk, 2022). These policies and programs some of which include anti-discrimination, diversity, tolerance, equality, cognition, acceptance, and equal opportunity are critical for employee engagement and commitment as they are expected to pledge the organization's dedication to ensure equity and inclusion in a diverse workforce. Chakraborty and Chatterjee (2020) opined in their study that policies and programs by organizations such as gender diversity management policies and practices in India are not only implemented because the organisations are compelled by the laws of the land but also because of perceived economic benefit. Enhanced commitment of the employees is one of them.

2.3. Employee Commitment

This index measures an employee's attachment and dedication to the organization. Several Scholars have separated employee commitment into three components of affection, continuance and normative. Haque et al. (2020) views all three components as a reflection of an employee's psychological state. While the affective commitment according to the authors, is the sentimental attachment of an employee to the organisation because of the passion or love for his work, the continuance and normative commitment are retaining the job for fear of loss of the job and as a sense of obligation respectively. This article adopts the affective kind of commitment as the outcome of proper diversity management.

Affective Commitment

Affective Commitment according to Haque et al. (2020) defines the degree to which employees are psychologically embedded with their organisations through feelings like warmth, belongingness, fondness, happiness, loyalty, and affection. Employees will generally have affective commitment to their organizations or employers if their individual careers align with the organizational goals (Yogalakshmi & Suganthi, 2018). Furthermore, Affective Commitment of employees increases when there is less organizational discontinuity and more of diversity Management measures as listed above.

Figure 1 below shows the theoretical constructs of Workplace Diversity Management and their relationships with Employee commitment.

Figure 1 explains the relationships between Workplace diversity Management and Employee commitment through its proxies of inclusion, fairness, equal opportunity, and policies and programs. It also reveals that these proxies are influenced by Workplace diversity Management. The effective inclusion, fairness, equal opportunity, and policies and programs provided for employees is dependent on Workplace diversity Management while employee commitment being measured by affective commitment is dependent on these four dimensions.
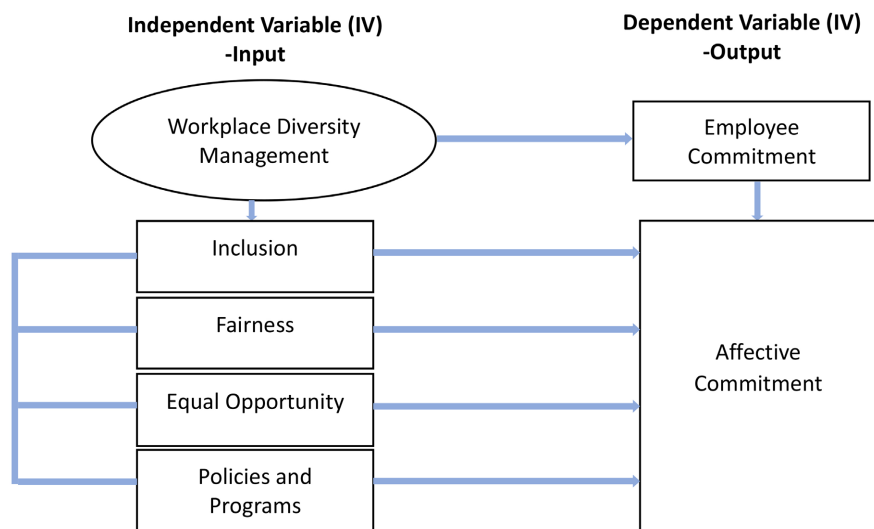

Figure 1. Schematic representation of variables.

3. Methodology

The Objective of this review is to examine workplace diversity management and employee commitment in both private and public sectors across countries. The proxies used for analysis were adopted from literature of various prominent scholars; however, the analysis must be validated using the results of self-administered questionnaire electronically distributed to employees of a Nigerian public agency. Several bodies of relevant literature from reputable journals were consulted and incorporated by using keywords from the independent and dependent variables, as well as their respective proxies, to search for related bodies of literature; however, to ensure currency only bodies of literature published within the last five years were cited in this study.

Table 1 below shows a summary of the articles cited in this study and the years they were published while Table 2 shows their authors and number of respective applicable citations listed in this study, related to the dimensions of Workplace Diversity Management and Employee Commitment.

Table 1. Number of articles on workplace diversity management between 2018 and 2023 cited in the study.

Year	No. of articles cited
2018	1
2020	9
2021	2
2022	4
2023	1

Table 2. Dimensions of workplace diversity and employee commitment.

S/N	Proxies	Authors	No. of Citations
1.	Inclusion	Kuknor and Bhattacharya (2020); Le et al. (2020)	2
2.	Fairness	Chen et al. (2022); Rhodes (2023)	3
3.	Equal Opportunity	Gargelwar (2020)	2
4.	Policies and Programs	Majczyk (2022); Chakraborty and Chatterjee (2020)	2
5.	Affective Commitment	Haque et al. (2020); Yogalakshmi and Suganthi (2018)	2

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

This review has identified that several scholars' views and perception of Diversity and Diversity Management have similarities. They all agree that Diversity is concerned with the heterogeneity of the workforce while Diversity Management is the effort put in place by the Management of respective organizations to ensure unity in diversity. This is done by implementing policies and programs that encourage inclusion, equal opportunity, justice, and fairness to achieve the organization's goals. The purpose, therefore, is to encourage optimal performance from the workforce.

However, the gap remains poor implementation of some or all these diversity management policies especially by multicultural nations like the Nigerian public sector where there are a lot of interferences by the Government in the recruitment processes of agencies as well as lopsided appointments, promotions, and nominations.

Organizations are therefore advised to embrace diversity management in three stages which are:
- Assimilate minorities: this refers to ensuring that every race, religion, ethnicity is fairly represented.
- Integrate diversity: deliberately forming a pool of employees with individual differences.
- Leverage on variety: organizational weaknesses can be overcome by Individual differences who may have certain competencies that can be used as comparative advantage for their organization with respect to achieving their goals.

For multicultural nations like Nigeria, the regulatory bodies such as Federal Character Commission, National Salaries and Wages Commission should be made independent and empowered to monitor government agencies for adherence to the framework of diversity management policies with the aim of applying penalties for non-compliance, while limiting interferences in these agencies.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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