

EFFECT OF WORKPLACE DIVERSITY ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF SELECTED PRIVATE TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined workplace diversity on organizational performance of private tertiary educational institutions in North Central Nigeria. The population comprises of 5, 424 permanent staff members of twenty (20) private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria and Taro Yamane (1973) sample size formula was used to arrive at 373 sampled sizes. The data were analyzed using tables, frequencies and percentages while hypotheses were tested using ordinary least square regression model. The results show that gender diversity (GD), age diversity (AD) and cultural diversity (CD) have significant positive effects on organizational performance of private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria for the period under review. The study recommends among others, that the private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria should actively implement gender diversity initiatives aimed at recruiting, retaining, and advancing both male and female employees. This could include targeted recruitment strategies, mentorship programs, leadership development opportunities, and policies that promote work-place. The private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria should also develop structured mentorship programs that pair younger employees with older, more experienced colleagues. This facilitates the transfer of knowledge and skills, fostering a culture of learning and development within the organization.

Key words: *workplace diversity, organizational performance, educational institutions*

INTRODUCTION

Workplace diversity has become a critical aspect of organizational success in the modern workplace. In the context of private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria, where diversity is inherent, effective management of diversity is important for organizational performance. Workplace diversity refers to the deliberate and systematic practices and policies aimed at creating an inclusive work environment that values and respects individual differences. In private tertiary institutions, diversity encompasses factors such as gender, race, age, among others. Recognizing and managing diversity can have numerous benefits, including improved employee satisfaction, increased creativity and innovation, enhanced problem-solving capabilities, and better decision-making processes.

A diverse workforce brings together individuals with unique perspectives, experiences and knowledge. This diversity of thought fosters creativity and innovation within tertiary institutions. When employees from various backgrounds collaborate, they are more likely to generate fresh ideas, challenge conventional wisdom, and develop innovative approaches to problem-solving. Workplace diversity enables tertiary institutions to tap into a wider talent pool. Recruiting employees from diverse backgrounds ensures a broader range of skills, competencies, and expertise. This diversity of skills enhances the institution's overall capabilities and allows for a more comprehensive approach to teaching, research, and administration.

Age diversity in the workplace brings together employees with varying levels of experience, skills, perspectives, and work styles. This diversity can have both positive and negative effects on organizational performance, depending on how it is managed and leveraged within the organization. One potential benefit of age diversity is the exchange of knowledge and ideas. When individuals from different age groups work together, they bring unique insights and experiences to the table. In tertiary institutions, where the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge are paramount, a diverse age range among employees can create a conducive, atmosphere for intellectual growth. Ng and Feldman (2013) asserted that younger employees may benefit from the mentorship and guidance of older colleagues, while older employees can learn from the fresh perspectives and enthusiasm of their younger counterparts. This intergenerational collaboration can lead to enhanced teaching and research outcomes, positively impacting the performance of tertiary institutions.

Gender diversity refers to the equitable representation of both males and females in the workplace. It has gained important attention due to its potential benefits, including improved decision-making processes, increased creativity, and enhanced organizational performance. Diverse teams are more likely to generate novel ideas, think outside the box, and solve complex problems effectively. Different perspectives, experiences, and approaches brought by individuals of diverse genders contribute to a broader range of ideas and solutions. Dutta (2018) and Fernández-Mateo et al., (2019) asserted that diversity of thought fuels creativity and innovation, leading to improved performance in tertiary institutions. Research indicates that gender diversity positively influences employee satisfaction, commitment, and job performance. This, in turn, leads to higher performance levels in tertiary institutions (Nishii, 2013; Herring et al., 2019).

The concept of cultural diversity refers to the presence of a variety of ethnic and cultural groups within a specific setting, such as a community, organization, or society. It encompasses the representation and inclusion of individuals from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds, including but not limited to Black, White, Asian, Hispanic, Indigenous, and other ethnic groups. Ethnic/cultural diversity recognizes and appreciates the unique characteristics, perspectives, and experiences that individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds bring to a particular context. Ethnic/cultural diversity plays a crucial role in fostering a more inclusive and equitable society. It promotes equal opportunities, challenges stereotypes and biases, and encourages cultural understanding and acceptance.

Organizational performance is a critical concept in the field of management and is often used as a measure of an organization's success in achieving its goals and objectives. Smith and Johnson (2020) asserted that organizational performance encompasses a wide range of factors that reflect how well an organization is functioning and its ability to deliver value to its stakeholders. Organizational performance is a multifaceted concept, and it's important to recognize that different stakeholders may have different perspectives on what constitutes success. Therefore, organizations often use a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures to assess their performance comprehensively.

The study of workplace diversity and organizational performance in private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria is motivated by the need to understand the effects of diversity on organizational performance and develop strategies for effective management. By embracing diversity and creating inclusive environments, institutions can unlock the full potential of their employees and contribute to their overall success.

Statement of Hypotheses

Based on the specific objectives of this study, the following hypotheses are formulated thus:

HO₁: Gender diversity has no significant effect on organizational performance of private tertiary educational institutions in north central Nigeria

HO₂: Age diversity has no significant effect on organizational performance of private tertiary educational institutions in north central Nigeria

HO₃: Cultural diversity has no significant effect on organizational performance of private tertiary educational institutions in north central Nigeria

LITERATURE REVIEW

Diversity Management

Diversity management refers to the practice of creating and maintaining an inclusive work environment that values and respects individual differences. It involves the implementation of policies, programs, and initiatives to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within an organization. Effective diversity management has been recognized as a key driver of organizational success, as it fosters innovation, improves decision-making, and enhances employee engagement and productivity. Ely and Thomas (2001) asserted that a diverse workforce brings together individuals with different backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences.

Gender Diversity

Gender diversity refers to the presence of a wide range of gender identities and expressions within a particular group, organization, or society. Gender diversity promotes inclusivity and acknowledges that individuals may identify and experience gender in different ways. It's important to note that the definitions and understanding of gender diversity may evolve over time as societal attitudes and awareness change. However, the following definitions provide a general understanding of gender diversity: The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines gender diversity as "the inclusion of people of different gender identities, experiences, and expressions" (UNDP, n.d.). The UNDP promotes gender diversity as a means to challenge traditional gender norms, reduce discrimination, and achieve gender equality.

Age Diversity

Age diversity refers to the presence of individuals from various age groups within a particular setting or organization. It encompasses the inclusion of people from different generational cohorts, typically categorized as Traditionalists (born before 1946), Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964), Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980), Millennial or Generation Y (born between 1981 and 1996), and Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2012). Age diversity acknowledges the value and contribution of individuals from different age ranges and recognizes the unique perspectives, experiences, skills, and knowledge they bring to the table.

Cultural Diversity

Cultural diversity refers to the presence of a variety of ethnic and cultural groups within a specific setting, such as a community, organization, or society. It encompasses the representation and inclusion of individuals from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds, including but not limited to Black, White, Asian, Hispanic, Indigenous, and other ethnic groups. Ethnic/cultural diversity recognizes and appreciates the unique characteristics, perspectives, and experiences that individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds bring to a particular context. Ethnic/cultural diversity plays a crucial role in fostering a more inclusive and equitable society. It promotes equal opportunities, challenges stereotypes and biases, and encourages cultural understanding and acceptance. Management of cultural diversity Cultural abilities are strengthened to build a capacity to recognize and communicate with people through communities and to work efficiently together with them on dysfunctional cultural values and calendars (Raewf and Thabit, 2015).

Organizational Performance

Organizational performance refers to the overall effectiveness and efficiency of an organization in achieving its goals and objectives. It encompasses various dimensions, such as financial performance, operational efficiency, customer satisfaction, employee productivity, and innovation. Bettis (2019) defined organizational performance as the degree to which an organization achieves its stated objectives, which are typically defined in terms of financial success, customer satisfaction, and market share." This definition highlights the multifaceted nature of organizational performance, considering both financial and non-financial aspects, and emphasizes the alignment between an organization's objectives and its actual achievements. Another perspective on organizational performance is defined by Daft (2018) as "the accumulated end result of all the organization's work processes and activities." This definition emphasizes the holistic nature of organizational performance, suggesting that it is influenced by various factors, including the organization's structure, processes, and activities.

Empirical Review

Gender Diversity and Organizational Performance

Kwofie et al. (2023) examined the impact of gender diversity on institutional performance in public tertiary institutions located in the Western Region of Ghana. The study used a sample of 400 senior members, selected through purposive and convenience sampling methods, from a population of 592 individuals. Data collection involved the use of a self-developed closed-ended questionnaire, and the quantitative data were analyzed using IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Descriptive statistics, such as means, standard deviations, percentages, and Pearson correlation, were employed for data analysis. The study revealed that there were differences in gender diversity between Institution A and Institution B. The study also revealed a significant positive relationship between gender diversity and employee performance

in public tertiary institutions within the Western Region of Ghana. The study contributed to the existing literature on gender diversity and institutional performance in the context of public tertiary institutions in Ghana's Western Region.

Chepkemai et al. (2022) explored the association between gender diversity and employee performance in the County Government of Bomet, Kenya. The study adopted a co relational research design and applied the framework of social identity theory. The study target population consisted of 3,320 employees from different departments within the County Government of Bomet while Fisher's formula was utilized to determine the sample size, resulting in a sample of 91 participants. The data were collected using a structured questionnaire and assessed the reliability of the research instrument using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which yielded a coefficient of 0.850. Data analysis involved correlation and regression analysis. The study revealed a positive correlation between gender diversity and employee performance. The study's sample size of 91 participants may be considered small, which could limit the generalize-ability of the findings. A larger sample size would have provided more robust results. The study focused solely on the County Government of Bomet in Kenya, limiting the generalize-ability of the findings to other contexts or organizations. Factors unique to this specific setting could influence the relationship between gender diversity and employee performance differently in other regions or sectors.

Age Diversity and Organizational Performance

Ngalo et al. (2023) conducted a survey-based study to explore the influence of workplace diversity, encompassing age, gender, ethnicity, income, education, and belief diversity on employee performance, specifically measured by employee effectiveness. The study targeted all twenty-two Commercial Banks in Nigeria as the study population and collected data from a sample of 300 respondents using an internet mail survey. The response rate was high, at 90%. The survey questionnaire was administered through an internet MS survey link, and data analysis was performed using SPSS version 25.0, involving descriptive and inferential statistics. The study utilized regression analysis to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable, considering a significance level of 5%. The findings revealed that certain dimensions of workplace diversity, namely gender diversity, income diversity, ethnic diversity, and belief diversity, had a significant impact on employee effectiveness. However, age diversity and educational diversity were not found to have a significant effect on employee performance within the organization. The study focused on a specific set of workplace diversity variables, neglecting other important factors such as disability diversity and religious diversity. Considering a broader range of diversity dimensions could provide a more comprehensive understanding of their impact on employee performance.

Cultural Diversity and Organizational Performance

Chinyere (2022) conducted a study on the management of workforce diversity in public secondary schools in Rivers State, with a specific focus on effective human resource utilization. The study employed a descriptive survey research design. The target population for the study consisted of 7,690 individuals, including 270 principals and 7,425 teachers in senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The sample size was determined to be 650, comprising of 270 principals and 380 teachers. The principals were selected using the census sampling technique, while the teachers were chosen through simple random sampling from various schools in Rivers State. The data collection instrument utilized in the study was the Questionnaire on Management of Workforce Diversity for Effective Human Resource Utilization (QMWDEHRU), which employed a four-point Likert scale. The research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation, and the hypotheses were tested using the t-test at a specified significance level. The findings of the study revealed that both principals and teachers agreed on the importance of managing workforce diversity in public secondary schools as a comprehensive approach to minimizing the impact of diversity within the school setting. Additionally, both groups acknowledged the presence of challenges in effectively managing workforce diversity for optimal human resource utilization. However, these challenges were found to vary across different areas. While the study used the census sampling technique for principals, which ensures that every member of the population is included, the simple random sampling technique used for selecting teachers may introduce some bias. It's possible that certain schools or areas were

overrepresented or underrepresented in the sample. The study used mean and standard deviation for analyzing the research questions and t-tests for testing hypotheses. While these statistical methods are commonly used, they may not capture the full complexity of the data. Multivariate analyses or more sophisticated statistical techniques could have provided a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships between variables.

Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory was postulated by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s. Tajfel and Turner developed the theory to understand how individuals perceive and categorize themselves and others within social groups. They proposed that people strive for positive self-esteem and achieve it, in part, through their identification with particular social groups. There are several key assumptions, limitations, criticisms, strengths associated with this theory. Overall, Social Identity Theory offers valuable insights into the formation of group behavior, intergroup dynamics, and the impact of social categorization on individuals' self-concept. Its strengths lie in explaining group behavior, addressing self-esteem and personal identity, accounting for intergroup bias, supporting practical applications, and being empirically supported by research.

This study is anchored on Social Identity Theory because the theory emphasized that individuals categorize themselves and others into groups, and gender diversity can influence how cohesive and effective these groups are within the organization. In the context of gender diversity, this theory predicts that a diverse workforce experiences either positive effects (enhanced creativity and innovation) or negative effects (conflict and reduced cohesion) depending on how gender identities are perceived and managed within the organization. The study is also anchored on the Information/Decision-Making Theory because the theory suggested that diverse age groups bring different experiences, skills, and decision-making styles to the organization, which can lead to more comprehensive problem-solving and innovative solutions.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a survey research design. The focus of this method is to gather quantitative data through the administration of a questionnaire instrument. The purpose of this survey is to examine workplace diversity and organizational performance in private tertiary institutions located in north central Nigeria. The population of this study consists of permanent staff members of twenty private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria. Sample size for this study is determined using Taro Yamane (1973). This technique is applied when the population for the study is known. The formula for Yaro Yamane is applied. The twenty tertiary institutions were selected based on the following criteria: (i) 7 Private Universities from the six north central states and Abuja; (ii) 7 Private Polytechnics from the six north central states and Abuja and (iii) 6 Private Colleges of Education from the five north central states and Abuja. The samples of three hundred and seventy-three (373) respondents were arrived at based on the sample formula. The purposeful sampling technique was used to select the sample size and questionnaire was administered to the respondents' permanent staff. This is because the subject matter under study is directly related to them. Therefore, they stand a good chance of providing the required information needed to carry out this study. Primary data were basically used for this research study. The primary data used for this study were adopted questionnaire, by (Agbaeze et al., 2019,) because the study is survey in nature, i.e. to generate responses from the respondents. The instrument of data collection is questionnaire. The questionnaire has two parts. All the questions in part A provide demographic characteristics of the respondents while the remaining questions in part B addressed the research objectives. A five-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree were used. There are twenty-one (21) questions in the questionnaire to address the objectives. The validity of the research instrument is a process that helps the researcher to ensure the instrument measures all the necessary variables accordingly. The researcher, in a bid, to ensure the validity of the research instrument, ensured that the instrument measured the concept that it was meant to measure. Proper structuring of the questionnaire by the researcher and his supervisors was done. To ascertain the reliability of the instrument i. e. to consistently get the same information from the respondents, a pre-test of all the questions contained in the questionnaire were carried out using Cronbach's Alpha reliability test.

Data were presented using tables. The frequencies and percentages were used to interpret the respondents' responses. Responses to the questionnaire were ranked across a five (5) point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), undecided (UD), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0 was used to analyze the data while multiple regression analysis was used to estimate the model and test all the null hypotheses formulated. The dependent variable is organizational performance while the independent variable is workplace diversity proxies by gender diversity (GD), age diversity (AD) and cultural diversity (CD). To achieve all the hypotheses, multiple regression analysis was used to estimate the $OGP = f(GD, AD \text{ and } CD)$

$$OGP_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 GD_i + \beta_2 AD_i + \beta_3 CD_i + e_i \text{-----} (1)$$

Where: OGP = an indicator representing Organizational Performance (Dependent Variable);

β_0 = a constant and β_{1-3} = coefficients of independent variables;

GD = a predictor representing (Gender Diversity);

AD = a predictor representing (Age Diversity);

CD = a predictor representing (Cultural Diversity);

e = Stochastic error term;

i = Cross-sectional; and

f = Functional relationship

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter deals with the presentation and analysis of data collected in response to the questionnaire administered. The questionnaire was divided into two sections with the first section focused purely on questions that generate demographic data of the respondents while the second section was geared towards getting data for addressing the objectives and testing of the formulated hypotheses. Three hundred and seventy-three (373) copies of questionnaire were administered to staff members of twenty private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria and three hundred and sixty-eight (368) copies were correctly completed and returned for the purpose of this study. The conclusion was drawn on the hypotheses based on the three hundred and sixty-eight (368) copies of the questionnaire that were returned. Tables were used to present the data generated through the questionnaire instrument.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.738	21

Source: Researcher's Computation Using SPSS 21.0 Version

Table 4.2: Responses on employee diversity enhances participation in research and creative projects.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	67	18.2	18.2	18.2
Disagree	100	27.2	27.2	45.4
Undecided	14	3.8	3.8	49.2
Agree	82	22.3	22.3	71.5
Strongly Agree	105	28.5	28.5	100.0
Total	368	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher's Computation Using SPSS 21.0 Version

Table 4.2 above shows that 18.2% of the total respondents strongly disagreed that employee diversity enhances participation in research and creative projects, 27.2% of the total respondents disagreed, 3.8% of the total respondents were undecided, 22.3% of the total respondents agreed while 28.5% of the total respondents strongly agreed that employee diversity enhances participation in research and creative projects. This means that employee diversity enhances participation in research and creative projects.

Table 4.3: Responses on employee diversity enhances teaching quality

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	48	13.0	13.0	13.0
	Disagree	112	30.4	30.4	43.5
	Undecided	19	5.2	5.2	48.6
	Agree	85	23.1	23.1	71.7
	Strongly Agree	104	28.3	28.3	100.0
	Total	368	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher's Computation Using SPSS 21.0 Version

Table 4.3 above shows that 13% of the total respondents are of the view that employee diversity does not enhance teaching quality, 30.4% of the total respondents disagreed, 5.2% of the total respondents were undecided, 23.1% of the total respondents agreed while 28.3% of the total respondents strongly agreed that employee diversity enhances teaching quality. This means that employee diversity enhances teaching quality.

Table 4.4: Responses on the employee diversity enhances library services.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	51	13.9	13.9	13.9
	Disagree	98	26.6	26.6	40.5
	Undecided	31	8.4	8.4	48.9
	Agree	87	23.6	23.6	72.6
	Strongly Agree	101	27.4	27.4	100.0
	Total	368	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher's Computation Using SPSS 21.0 Version

Table 4.4 above shows that 13.9% of the total respondents are of the view that employee diversity does not enhance library services, 26.6% of the total respondents disagreed, 8.4% of the total respondents were undecided, 23.6% of the total respondents agreed while 27.4% of the total respondents strongly agreed that employee diversity enhances library services. This means that employee diversity enhances library services.

Table 4.5: Responses on the employee diversity enhances graduation rates.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	30	8.2	8.2	8.2
	Disagree	23	6.3	6.3	14.4
	Undecided	11	3.0	3.0	17.4
	Agree	154	41.8	41.8	59.2
	Strongly Agree	150	40.8	40.8	100.0
	Total	368	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher's Computation Using SPSS 21.0 Version

Table 4.5 above shows that 8.2% of the total respondents are of the view that employee diversity does not enhance graduation rates, 6.3% of the total respondents disagreed, 3% of the total respondents were undecided, 41.8% of the total respondents agreed while 40.8% of the total respondents strongly agreed that employee diversity enhances graduation rates. This means that employee diversity enhances graduation rates.

Table 4.6: Responses on the employee diversity enhances community service initiatives.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	15	4.1	4.1	4.1
	Disagree	53	14.4	14.4	18.5
	Undecided	14	3.8	3.8	22.3

Agree	132	35.9	35.9	58.2
Strongly Agree	154	41.8	41.8	100.0
Total	368	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher's Computation Using SPSS 21.0 Version

Table 4.6 above indicates that 4.1% of respondents strongly disagree, 14.4% disagree and 3.8% are undecided about whether employee diversity enhances community service initiatives. On the positive side, 35.9% of respondents agree, and 41.8% strongly agree with the statement. This shows a significant percentage (77.7%) of respondents supporting the view that employee diversity indeed enhances community service initiatives.

Table 4.7: Responses on women tend to be good listeners and men tend to be aggressive, a balanced workforce of both sexes offers the best solutions that enhance performance in an organization

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	23	6.3	6.3	6.3
Disagree	61	16.6	16.6	22.8
Undecided	17	4.6	4.6	27.4
Agree	114	31.0	31.0	58.4
Strongly Agree	153	41.6	41.6	100.0
Total	368	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher's Computation Using SPSS 21.0 Version

Table 4.7 above illustrates that 6.3% of respondents strongly disagree, 16.6% disagree, and 4.6% are undecided about the statement that women are good listeners and men are aggressive, but a balanced workforce is optimal for organizational performance. On the supportive side, 31.0% of respondents agree, and 41.6% strongly agree. This suggests that a majority (72.6%) of respondents believe in the benefits of a balanced workforce for enhancing organizational performance.

Table 4.8: Responses on the leadership style of the female employee contributed to the performance of the organization.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	4	1.1	1.1	1.1
Disagree	27	7.3	7.3	8.4
Undecided	6	1.6	1.6	10.1
Agree	156	42.4	42.4	52.4
Strongly Agree	175	47.6	47.6	100.0
Total	368	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher's Computation Using SPSS 21.0 Version

Table 4.8 above shows that 1.1% of the total respondents strongly disagreed with the view that leadership style of the female employee contributed to the performance of the organization, 7.3% of the total respondents disagreed, 1.6% of the total res

Results of Regression

Table 4.9: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.776 ^a	0.602	0.521	2.61700

a. Predictors: (Constant) Age Diversity, Gender Diversity, Cultural Diversity,

The R-square value of .602 in table 4.9 indicated that the components of independent variable have a combined effect of 60% on the dependent variable while the adjusted R square value of .521 also indicated the accurate influence of the combined effect of age diversity, gender diversity and cultural diversity of 52% on organizational performance

Table 4.10: ANOVA Result

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2230.422	6	371.737	91.134	.000 ^b
	Residual	1472.380	361	4.079		
	Total	3702.802	367			

a. Dependent Variable: organizational performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Age Diversity, Gender Diversity, Cultural Diversity

The F-Statistics value of 91.134 and the corresponding sig. level of .000 in table 4.10 signified that the model is fit and significant at 5% level. This means that the model is fit and admissible for decision making.

Table 4.11: Coefficients

Model		Un-standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	27.845	1.522		18.299	.000
	Gender Diversity	.253	.126	.258	2.005	.046
	Age Diversity	.464	.107	.486	4.347	.000
	Cultural Diversity	.343	.056	.375	6.135	.000

a. Dependent Variable: organizational performance

Test of Hypotheses

To examine workplace diversity and organizational performance of private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria, the formulated hypotheses were tested using multiple regressions.

H₀₁: Age diversity has no significant effect on organizational performance of private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria

Table 4.11 also shows that the result of t statistic value of 4.347 and the corresponding sig. level of 0.000 which is significant at 5% level of significance, indicating that age diversity has a significant effect on organizational performance of private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria. Based on this, the null hypothesis two, which says, age diversity has no significant effect on organizational performance of private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria, is rejected.

H₀₂: Gender diversity has no significant effect on organizational performance of private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria

Table 4.11 shows that the result of t statistic value of 2.005 and the corresponding sig. level of 0.046 which is significant at 5% level of significance indicating that gender diversity has a significant effect on organizational performance of private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria. Based on this, the null hypothesis one, which says, gender diversity has no significant effect on organizational performance of private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria, is rejected.

H₀₃: Cultural diversity has no significant effect on organizational performance of Private tertiary Educational Institutions in North Central Nigeria

Table 4.11 shows that the result of t statistic of 6.135 and the corresponding sig. level of .000 which is significant at 5% level of significance, indicating that ethnic diversity has a significant effect on organizational performance of private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria. Based on this, the null hypothesis three, which says, cultural diversity has no significant effect on organizational performance of private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria, is rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The study also revealed that age diversity has a significant positive effect on organizational performance of private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria. This includes beliefs that young employees' change readiness boosts organizational performance, while older employees contribute through knowledge transfer and experience. Additionally, age-diverse teams are seen as beneficial for their diverse knowledge, values,

preferences, and the overall enhancement of organizational performance. This finding is in line with the a-priori expectation of the researcher because age diversity enhances organizational performance of private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria. The finding is also in line with the Information/Decision-Making Theory because the theory suggested that diverse age groups bring different experiences, skills, and decision-making styles to the organization, which can lead to more comprehensive problem-solving and innovative solutions. The age diversity has a significant positive effect on organizational performance of private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria. This finding is supported by the findings of Chrine et al. (2021), Ezeanyim and Ezeanolue (2020) and Roy (2022). However, it is not in line with the findings of Abdel (2012) Jakaria and Nusrat (2021) and Ngalo et al. (2023).

This study revealed that gender diversity has a significant positive effect on organizational performance of private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria. This means that balanced workforces, female leadership styles, and gender-diverse teams are associated with enhanced problem-solving, decision-making, target achievement, effective communication, good relationships, and strong support. This finding is in line with the a-priori expectation of the researcher because gender diversity enhances organizational performance of private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria. The finding is also in line with the Social Identity Theory because the theory emphasized that individuals categorize themselves and others into groups, and gender diversity can influence how cohesive and effective these groups are within the organization. In the context of gender diversity, this theory predicts that a diverse workforce experiences either positive effects (enhanced creativity and innovation) or negative effects (conflict and reduced cohesion) depending on how gender identities are perceived and managed within the organization. The gender diversity has a significant positive effect on organizational performance of private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria. This finding is supported by the findings of Abdullahi and Shimelis (2021), Chrine et al. (2021), Ezeanyim and Ezeanolue (2020) and Kwofie et al. (2023). However, it is not in line with the finding of Obinna (2020).

The study further revealed that cultural diversity has a significant positive effect on performance of private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria. This means that fair and equal treatment of employees from diverse cultural or ethnic backgrounds enhances performance, provides equal opportunities for career advancement, boosts morale and job satisfaction, fosters creativity and innovation, contributes to problem-solving, and makes culturally diverse teams more productive and efficient. This finding is in line with the a-priori expectation of the researcher because cultural diversity enhances performance of private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria. The finding is also in line with the Social Exchange Theory because the theory posited that individuals engage in social exchanges where they give and receive resources, such as information, support, and opportunities. Cultural diversity can enhance performance by fostering a climate of inclusivity and equitable resource distribution, leading to increased trust, cooperation, and collaboration among employees. The cultural diversity has a significant positive effect on performance of private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria. This finding is supported by the findings of Abdullahi & Shimelis (2021), Ezeanyim & Ezeanolue (2020) and Ngalo et al. (2023). However, it is not in line with the finding of Akinwunmi et al. (2018).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Age diversity plays a crucial role in enhancing the organizational performance of private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria. The synergy between younger and older employees is highlighted, with each group contributing uniquely to the organization's success. The younger employees are identified as catalysts for change readiness, bringing fresh perspectives and innovative ideas that stimulate growth and adaptability within the organization. Their dynamism and willingness to embrace change can lead to increased efficiency and competitiveness. Conversely, older employees are recognized for their invaluable contributions in knowledge transfer and experience sharing. Their wealth of experience accumulated over the years serves as a reservoir of wisdom, guiding decision-making processes and providing mentorship to younger colleagues. This transfer of knowledge helps in avoiding repetitive mistakes and fostering continuous improvement.

Gender diversity plays a pivotal role in enhancing the organizational performance of private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria. This outcome underscores the importance of embracing and promoting gender diversity initiatives within private tertiary institutions in the region. By actively encouraging diverse representation and inclusive practices, organizations can harness the full spectrum of talents, perspectives, and experiences that both male and female employees bring to the table. Such efforts not only contribute to the advancement of gender equality but also yield tangible benefits in terms of organizational performance and overall success. The study further revealed that cultural diversity has a significant positive effect on performance of private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria. This means that fair and equal treatment of employees from diverse cultural or ethnic backgrounds enhances performance, provides equal opportunities for career advancement, boosts morale and job satisfaction, fosters creativity and innovation, contributes to problem-solving, and makes culturally diverse teams more productive and efficient. This finding is in line with the a-priori expectation of the researcher because cultural diversity enhances performance of private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria. The finding is also in line with the Social Exchange Theory because the theory posited that individuals engage in social exchanges where they give and receive resources, such as information, support, and opportunities.

Based on the above conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

- (i) Private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria should develop structured mentorship programs that pair younger employees with older, more experienced colleagues. This facilitates the transfer of knowledge and skills, fostering a culture of learning and development within the organization. Also, private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria should create platforms and spaces for employees of different age groups to collaborate, exchange ideas, and share experiences. This can be facilitated through team projects, workshops, or regular meetings aimed at fostering a sense of camaraderie and mutual respect among colleagues.
- (ii) Private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria should actively implement gender diversity initiatives aimed at recruiting, retaining, and advancing both male and female employees. This could include targeted recruitment strategies, mentorship programs, leadership development opportunities, and policies that promote diversity effect at workplace.
- (iii) The private tertiary institutions in North Central Nigeria should develop and implement diversity training programs for employees at all levels to foster awareness, understanding, and appreciation of cultural diversity. While acknowledging the corporate social responsibility by individual institution, recognizing and appreciating the culture of the host community is the key to institutional success. This institution should learn to incorporate policies formulated to ensure all interest is protected; Programs should focus on promoting cultural competence, empathy, and inclusive behaviors. Also, create formal policies that ensure diversity and inclusion within the institution. These policies should emphasize fair and equal treatment for employees from diverse ethnic backgrounds in all aspects of institutional functioning, including recruitment, hiring, promotion, and retention.

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Appendix: Questionnaire Instrument

Performance	SA 5	A 4	UD 3	D 2	SD 1
(1) I consider my performance is better than the average in this organization.					
(2) I always reach my performance target.					
(3) Overall, I am a very good performer.					
(4) I feel that my performance is reflective of my abilities.					
(5) I often expend extra effort in carrying out my job.					
Gender Diversity					
(1) Women tend to be good listeners and men tend to be aggressive, a balanced workforce of both sexes offers the best solutions that enhance performance in an organization.					
(2) The transformational leadership style of the female employee contributed to the performance of the organization.					
(3) Gender diverse team showed better problem solving and decision making skills than gender homogenous teams in an organization					
(4) Gender diverse teams achieved targets due to the good relationship and effective communication in an organization.					
(5) Gender balance improves the performance of an organization.					
Age Diversity					
(6) Young employees portray an attitude of more change readiness as opposed to older employees which enhance performance in an organization.					
(7) Old employees are considered as reservoirs of knowledge carrying the organizational memory of an organization thus enabling effective transfer of skill and enhance performance.					
(8) Age-diverse workforces display a host of different knowledge that is prerequisites for organizational performance.					
(9) Age-diverse workforces display a host of different values that are prerequisites for organizational performance.					
(10) Age-diverse workforces display a host of different preferences that are prerequisites for organizational performance.					
(11) A combination of both young and old cohorts of workers with different knowledge pools increases organizational performance as compared to having homogeneous workers.					
(12) Older people have more experiences and possess better problem-solving skills and enhance performance.					
Cultural Diversity					
(13) Fairly and equally treatment of employees from different racial backgrounds enhances performance.					
(14) Employees from different racial backgrounds have equal opportunities for career advancement.					
(15) Racial diversity in the workplace positively impacts employee morale and job satisfaction.					
(16) Racial diversity leads to increased creativity and innovation within the institution.					
(17) Employees from different racial backgrounds bring diverse perspectives that contribute to problem-solving.					
(18) Racially diverse teams are more productive and efficient in accomplishing tasks.					