ISSN: 4587 - 3350
Volume 8, Number 3, 2023
Sustainability, Management and Policy Journal

WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY IN COMMERCIAL BANKS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT
The study examined workforce diversity and employee productivity in deposit money banks in Rivers State, Nigeria. Ten objectives, ten research questions and ten hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. A quasi-experimental research design was adopted. The population of this study was made up of 1448 employees of 21 deposit money banks in Rivers State. The sample size was made up of 313 employees of this banks. This was obtained using the Taro Yamene's formula. Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was used in testing the hypothesis, while partial correlation was adopted in testing hypotheses. The findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between gender diversity on employee productivity. The study concluded that when work force diversity was promoted in any organization/company; it improves employee performance. The research has proven that gender diversity enhances performance among employees in organization/company. The researcher therefore recommended amongst others that; management of organizations should continue to promote equal employment and opportunity for career growth for all genders and should improve cultural awareness of the employees through social interaction.

Keywords: Workforce Diversity, Gender Diversity, Employee Productivity, Commercial Banks

INTRODUCTION
There are very few scholarly investigations that concurrently measure gender diversity against employee productivity in deposit money banks. Consequently, this study attempts to bridge such knowledge gap. Thus, this study offers a more all-inclusive framework of three dimensions of work force diversity and isolated the effect of each on the measures of employee performance. Dedication to work seems to be lacking among employees in organizations, which invariably will affect general performance of such employee and the organization at large. Ineffective communication of key objectives results in confusion, lack of team work and low performance. Fundamental value that contributes to a successfully diversified workplace was respect among workers and employees. When there was low performance among employees, diversification in work place may necessary be the remedy, which was diverse culture and beliefs among employees. When employees accept differences between each other, it results in a sharing of ideas and effective collaboration, subsequently results to effective employee performance. Acceptance fosters mutual respect and prevents conflicts from arising.
Furthermore, workforce diversity has not really received enough attention in examining the variables that may influence employee performance. Most studies about employee performance primarily focused on aspects such as commitment and financial resources as perceived variables that may influence employee performance. Hence, this study was aimed at investigating the effects of gender diversity on employee productivity in deposit money banks in Rivers State.

Workforce Diversity (Gender Diversity)
Although women work in organizations purporting to have policies that offers equality of pay and opportunities, and though they most of the time appear to be well qualified, the career ladder for

women in large organizations appear to be often shortened, while the male ladder extends to top of the career tree. Women are often hived off into specialist or gendered positions, such as human resources- known as the 'velvet ghetto' (Gatrell & Swan, 2008). These practices and processes do not only appear in large organizations and public service organizations but also in small and big firms, women are often absent at board level within family businesses, where sons continue to take precedence over daughters and where women's contribution was frequently marginalized. Men have thus become the 'somatic norm' in organizational roles involving management and decision making. One of the most prevailing metaphors used to describe women's absence in senior organizational positions has been that of the 'glass ceiling'. Mavin (2016) citing Morrinson & Von Glinow (1990) said the phrase 'Glass ceiling' was made up in the 1960s. This was used to describe a subtle obstacle that was so clear but yet very powerful that it can hinder women from climbing up the managerial ladder. Glass ceiling was coined to describe those organizational practices and processes which creates difficulties and limitations in which women encounter when trying to attain the highest position of their particular field. Here, women may be unable to reach the top of the management hierarchy even though they can see it (Gatrell & Swan, 2008).

Employee Productivity

Although several researches have emphasized about the significance of employee productivity in driving organizational performance and positive business outcomes, there are only few empirical evidences to support such claims (Saks, 2006). It was also noted that employee productivity should be considered as a key organizational strategy that involves all the levels of an organization (Frank et al., 2004). Saxena & Srivastava (2015) reported that employee productivity has become one of the main challenges/activities organizations face and that need to be well managed to fulfill organization objectives. They also demonstrated that there was a need to properly train employee to carry out their daily routine effectively and efficiently. The cost of training and development of a workforce will continue to be a cause of concern for this organizations. However organizations such as banks must continuously train its workers to keep abreast with the current trends in the economy. The necessity for higher levels of productivity was something no business can ignore (Collier, 2018). It was inevitable that certain factors will dampen productivity levels and motivation. However the knowledge of risk reductions strategies and successful measures can easily increase productivity even when they occur. According to Sharma & Sharma (2014), employee productivity is based on the amount of time that an employee was physically present at his/ her job, besides the extent to which he/ she was "mentally present" or efficiently working during the presence at the job. There are means of which organizations can improve on the productivity level of their employees. Employee participation and empowerment was one of the most effective techniques for increasing employee productivity and better use of the capacities and capabilities of their individual and collective organizational goals. it was a process through which individuals and teams develop the ability to continuously improve performance and help to improve it. Employee productivity can also be improved through training and development (Collier, 2018). Markos & Sridevi (2010) demonstrated that employers should consider investing in workforce through training and development, because recent researches on this topic have clearly indicated that there was a positive relationship between employee productivity and organizational performance.

Social Identity Theory

This study was guided by the social identity theory proposed by Trajfel & Turner (1979) as it considers attributes such as age, gender, ethnicity and education, which is being investigated in this study. The social identity theory explains that employees have a tendency of classifying themselves based on groups in which they fit in. Such group maybe based on age, gender, ethnicity and education, amongst others. According to the authors, these groups are the basis of egotism and self-confidence or agony and low self-confidence. In most instances, a group will develop high self-confidence through discriminating and prejudging members of other groups, what the Trajfel &

Turner (1979) describe as in group and out group classification. These discriminatory practices and biased perceptions, for example on race may result into racism which can further lead to constant political and economic battles like the case of whites and blacks in South Africa and Zimbabwe. This theory further explained that an employee work behaviour is defined by the inside principles of the group to which they belong. In consequence, this directly influences the performance of the employee. This theory opens up the need for this study to investigate how the phenomenon of gender diversity and ethnicity diversity contribute towards employee performance at commercial banks through identifying their effects.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the Quasi- Experimental Research Design, specifically the cross sectional survey design. The population of this study consisted of all twenty one (21) deposit money banks in Rivers State. This was made up of 1448 employees in these twenty one banks The fact that there are several deposit money banks in Nigeria, not all the banks are operational in Rivers State. The sample size of the population is 313 employees of the 21 deposit money banks derived using the Taro Yamene's formula (Baridam, 2001; Ituma, 2009). The instrument used for the collection of the data was questionnaire. Spearman rank order correlation coefficient was used in testing the hypotheses.
Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between gender diversity and employee productivity in deposit money banks in Rivers State, Nigeria

Spearman Order Correlation between gender diversity and employee productivity in deposit money banks in Rivers State, Nigeria

Correlations

			GENDER DIVERSITY	EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY
Spearman's rho	GENDER DIVERSITY	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.852**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	302	302
	EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY	Correlation Coefficient	.852**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	302	302

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From table 1 above, the correlation coefficient (r = 0.852) between gender diversity and employee productivity in deposit money banks in Rivers State, Nigeria is strong and positive. The coefficient of determination (r^2 = 0.726) indicates that 72.6% change in employee productivity in deposit money banks can be explained by gender diversity. The significant value of 0.000 ($p< 0.01$) reveals a significant relationship. Based on that, the null hypotheses rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between gender diversity and employee productivity in depisit money banks in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Discussion of Finding

Hypotheses 1: There is no significant relationship between Gender diversity and employee productivity in deposit money banks in Rivers State

The findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between gender diversity and employee productivity. This was validated by the fact that there is equal opportunity for career growth and advancement for both men women in the organization, there is no gender discrimination when it comes to assigning task or promotion, teams are formed with the combination of both male

and female, training for workers is not discriminatory and so make the work encouraging for the employee. The employees comply with instructions even when supervisors are not present, cooperate with others in the team, persist in overcoming obstacles to complete a task, they usually volunteer for additional duty and they follow proper procedures and avoid unauthorized shortcuts.
This study was in line with the study of Abbas, et al. (2010) who examined the effect of gender discrimination on employee performance/productivity. The study looked at gender discrimination in hiring, gender discrimination in promotion and gender discrimination in facilities. Data was collected form 200 front line managers of telecom sector of Pakistan. The finding of the study revealed that employee performance is highly affected by gender discrimination; hence a significant relationship. The study recommended that the human resource managers should be careful while hiring and promoting employees and providing facilities to employee in order to avoid any gender discrimination because it has a direct negative relationship on employee productivity.

CONCLUSION

It is obvious that Employee Productivity and Gender diversity is not related because the diversity that was studied in this research has no significant effect on the productivity of the employees. Hence, employees can work in the organization with numerous people that comes from diverse backgrounds and with different attributes and characteristics, without having any effect on their performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusion of this study, the following were recommended;
There was need for management of organizations to create awareness as well as conducting training on workplace diversity since it promotes employee performance.

Gender Diversity and Employee productivity findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between them. Hence, there was need for routine training, to ensure service delivery.

Gender Diversity and service delivery, the findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between gender diversity and service delivery. Hence, the organisations should treat customers with empathy, employees should learn to work without supervision, and treat customers as their most important asset.

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