

WORKPLACE DIVERSITY AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT OF BANKS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The research examines the bond in workplace diversity and employee engagement in banks in rivers state. The study utilised cross-sectional research design, the data was collected from primary and secondary sources. The spearman rank Order Correlation coefficient analysed the hypothesis at 0.05 level. The study shows that, there is a correlation in the dimensions of workplace diversity and the measures of employee engagement. Based on the findings, it is recommended among others that the top manager must understand that there is unity in diversity and this can be done through orientation programs, seminars and workshops on a periodic interval and culture of organisations should be established in such a way that nepotism and favouritism is eliminated. The banking sector requires improved performance and productivity, and workforces with vigour, dedication and absorption exhibit positive attitude towards work and therefore effort should be made to make them engage at work.

***Keywords:** Workplace Diversity, Employee Engagement, Ethnicity, Age, Gender, Vigour, Dedication, Absorption, Organisational Culture*

1.1 Background to the Study

Fundamentally, employee engagement is generally empowered by the convictions, standards and values inside the organization (Brown, 2014). These convictions, standards and qualities are subsequently of diverse cultures (Richard & Johnson 2001). The idea of employee engagement is a subtle one, which remains a contested construct that has been conceptualized and measured in an unexpected way. To Kelvin (2012), an employee's engagement is the passionate responsibility that employee has to the organization and its objectives. This enthusiastic responsibility implies engaged employees really think about their work and their organization. They don't work only for a paycheck, or only for the following advancement, yet chip away at benefit of the association's objectives. Schaufeli & Bakker, (2003) characterized employee engagement as a blend of recognition including energy, devotion and retention advocate for the firm that affect conduct.

Macleod (2013) noticed that employee engagement is about how we make the conditions in which employees offer a greater amount of their abilities and devotion to their organization.

The significance of employees' engagement can't be overemphasized. This is on the grounds that current reviews have discovered its association with organizational workforce change. Schaufeli and Salanova (2007) recommend that the purposes behind employees' engagement are identified with enhancing human conduct, for example, breaking down, shortcoming and

pathology which are found among employees. They went further to express that, this is on the grounds that employee engagement comforts administration, make trust and improve execution. Along these lines, for workers of an organization to work successfully, the management (human resource professionals) needs to bargain adequately with issues, for example, correspondence, versatility and change (Richard and Johnson 2001). Thus, trying to make these employees connect with each other successfully at work, and consistently and effectively taking part in the hierarchical exercises, provoked the need to x-ray the bond of working environment assorted qualities and worker engagement (Richard and Johnson, 2001).

Hence, in this review, the idea of worker engagement might be portrayed into three intermediaries; vigour of employee, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003).

Vigour: This is employees' engagement resulted from the satisfaction derived from key drivers such as leadership style, organizational justice, work policies & procedures of the organization (Williams, 2010).

Dedication: This is the type of engagement in which the employee engages due to the feeling that his services are retained in the organization, and there will be no need to think of looking for job elsewhere (Williams, Maha & Zaki, 2010).

Absorption: is another indispensable antecedent to employee engagement. It involves both financial rewards, and non-financial such as recognition engagement.

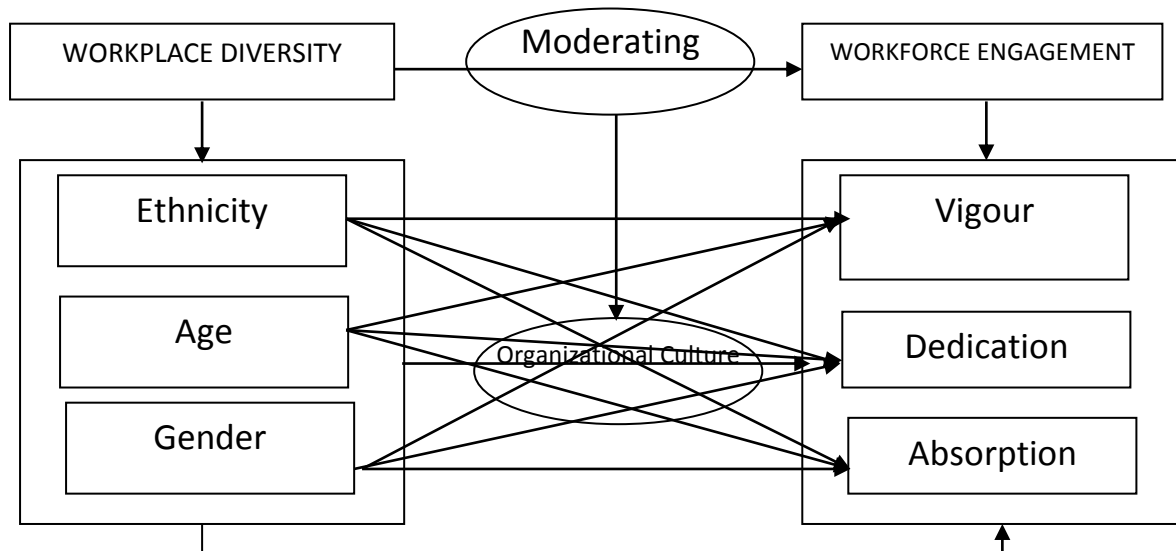
Workplace diversity essentially alludes to the differences among individuals in working associations. Workplace diversity along these lines, involves differences among employees which result from race, sex, ethnic gathering, age, identity, intellectual style, residency, hierarchical capacity, trainings foundation, and so on (Ehimare and Ogaga-Oghene, 2011). It doesn't just include how individuals see themselves yet how they see others. Also, these recognitions do influence their connection. What's more, the contemporary demography dynamism, progressively globalize markets, more noteworthy versatility, and laws gone for advancing fairness in enlistment rehearses, without a doubt is hastening diversity inside work-groups in today's association (Williams and O'Reilly, 1998).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The banking sector today is one of those sectors that have not really made use of the strength embodied in their diversity. There are still cases where certain tribes seem to claim ownership in certain banks without regard to performance per excellence. Most employees in certain banks who should be laid off are not laid off rather; those who are more competent are laid off just because of sentiments possessed by top managers. It has become a normal event each time we watch over the television or listen over the radio, we see and hear of workers being laid off and if we could dig deeper, we would realize that most of those being laid off are coming from a particular ethnic group. These issues reduce the level of commitment employees would put in their job and this have made organizations not to achieve the much needed performance level. The 35% gender affirmation that was established by the previous federal government which led to women handling sensitive issues in the economy has been discontinued as only a few women are found at the top echelon of banks. Today, it is almost believed that the leadership of banks belong to the masculine folks and this is a major problem. Jim (2012) affirmed that worldwide, only 15% of employees are engaged at work and that the vast majority of employed people around the globe are "not engaged" or "actively disengaged" at work, meaning they are emotionally disconnected from their

workplace and less likely to be productive. Most top managers today have not realized that these factors of diversity predict the vigour, dedication and absorption of their workers and that is what this study seeks to address.

1.3 Operational Framework



Source: Desk Research. 2016

Operational Framework showing the bond in dimensions of workplace diversity (Ehimare & Ogaga-Oghene, 2011) and the measures of employee engagement (Schanfelli & Baker, 2003).

1.4 Aim and Objectives

The main purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between workplace diversity and employee engagement in banks in Rivers State. Based on the statements of the problem and the main purpose of the study, the following specific objectives will be formulated for the study:

1. To investigate the nature of the relationship between ethnic group and vigour of employees in the banking sector.
2. To examine the way ethnicity relates to dedication in the banking sector.
3. To access the relationship between ethnicity and absorption in the banking sector.
4. To examine the relationship between age and vigour of employees in the banking sector.
5. To find out the relationship between age and dedication in the banking sector.
6. To evaluate the relationship between age and absorption in the banking sector.
7. To examine the relationship between gender and vigour of employees in the banking sector.
8. To find out the extent of relationship between gender and dedication in the banking sector.
9. To investigate the relationship between gender and absorption in the banking sector.

10. To evaluate the influence of organizational culture on the relationship between workplace diversity and employee engagement.

1.5 Research Hypotheses

In order to proffer useful answers to the research questions and realize the study objectives, the following hypotheses are stated in their null form, such as:

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between ethnicity and vigour of employees in the banking sector.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between ethnicity and dedication in the banking sector.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between ethnicity and absorption in the banking sector.

Ho₄: There is no significant relationship between age and vigour of employees in the banking sector.

Ho₅: There is no significant relationship between age and dedication in the banking sector.

Ho₆: There is no significant relationship between age and absorption in the banking sector.

Ho₇: There is no significant relationship between gender and vigour of employees in the banking sector.

Ho₈: There is no significant relationship between gender and dedication in the banking sector.

Ho₉: There is no significant relationship between gender and absorption in the banking sector.

Ho₁₀: There is no influence of organizational culture on the relationship between workplace diversity and employee engagement in the banking sector.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Workplace diversity has not been given due attention by Nigerian organizations, largely due to a seeming corporate culture resulted from lack of patronage by people in authority, particularly in human resource procurement and administration (Ehimare & Ogaga-Oghene, 2011). This is due to the vast number of works that have found that workplace diversity contrasts dual implication on employee engagement. Schaufeli & Salanova (2007) suggest that the reason for studying employee engagement is related to improving human behaviour such as malfunctioning, weakness and pathology which are found among employees. They went further to state that, this is because employee engagement helps put management at ease, create trust and enhance performance.

2.2 The Concept of Workplace Diversity

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, New 8th edition (2004), diversity is a range of many people or things that are very different from each other. Ehimare and Ogaga-Oghene (2011) suggest that workplace diversity has been called a multi-ethnic demographic because it represents the way the workforce of an organization differs from one another. According to Janssens & Staymert (2003), workplace diversity is a complex, controversial and political phenomena. It has been conceptualized by researchers from several viewpoints.

2.3 Dimensions of Diversity

As earlier mentioned, ethnicity, age, and gender were dimensional variables of diversity used for this study (Elimare & Ogaga-Oghene, 2011). These variables are discussed below.

2.3.1 Ethnicity

The growth of a multicultural workforce was the focus of the 90's and is gaining more momentum into the new era (Zgourides, Johnson & Watson (2002). Along with the increase in diversity has been an increase in the use of work teams in general, with intention of utilizing greater participation and synergy to improve and increase both employee satisfaction and business performance. Even though the nature of workforce composition is rapidly becoming more mixed in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, parallel interest has been increasing about the impact of such diversity in our educational institutions.

2.3.2 Age

Growing age in workplace diversity has become part of many organizations. Recent studies have classified age in terms of generational dimensions: baby boomer 1945- 1964; Gen X 1961 -1979; Gen Y 1980-1995 and Gen Z; 1996-2010. There are two major theories which explain this relationship; the social identity and self-categorization. Individuals are suggested to classify themselves into certain groups on the basis of dimensions that are personally relevant for them according to social identity and self-categorization theory (Kunze, Boehm & Bruch, 2009). As a result, individuals tend to favour members of their own group at the expenses of the other groups, against which they may discriminate.

2.2.3 Gender

Gender-based inequities in organizations are reinforced and justified by stereotypes and biases that describe positive characteristics and therefore a higher status to the males (Leonard & Levine, 2003). In other words, organizations prefer to hire male workers compared with women because they are perceived to have better performance and ability to manage their jobs. Besides, according to Emiki & Eunmi (2009), significant amount of workforce diversity remains ineffective if gender issues are not first recognized and managed.

2.4 The Concept of Employee Engagement

Various definitions of employee engagement have been given by different scholars in the field, but the study will consider the following definitions:

According to Khan (1990), work engagement is harnessing of organizational members' selves to their work roles where people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performances.

Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalaex – Roma, & Baker (2002) defined employee engagement as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour dedication and absorption. According to them, work engaged individuals are full of vitality, they feel they are glued to their work, and are better able to deal with job demands. Engagement is neither a momentary nor a specific state, but refers to a more persistent and pervasive effective cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behaviour (Shimazu, et al., 2008).

2.5 Measures of Employee Engagement

In this study, employee engagement was measured by vigour, dedication and absorption. This is in accordance to the views of Shirom (2004) and Schaufell & Baker (2003). These variables are further discussed below:

2.5.1 Vigour

The term vigour simply refers to employees' engagement resulted from the satisfaction derived from key drivers such as leadership style, organizational justice, work policies & procedures of the organization (Williams, 2010).

2.5.2 Dedication

The term dedication has no one distinct definition accepted by scholars in the field. But then, dedication simply refers to the type of engagement in which the employee engaged due to the feeling that his services are retained in the organization, and there will be no need to think of looking for job elsewhere (Williams, Maha & Zaki, 2010).

2.5.3 Absorption

The concept of absorption simply advocates the use of bonus, benefits and incentives to arouse employees' interest at work. This is another indispensable antecedent to employee engagement. It involves both financial rewards, and non-financial benefits such as recognition and other perks exemplified by on-site day care, employee assistance programs, subsidized cafeterias, travel discounts, extra holidays and others. It simply refers to being fully concentrated and happily engulfed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with separating oneself from work (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

2.6 Relationship between Workplace Diversity and Employee Engagement.

The relationship between workplace diversity and employee engagement has been examined in some many countries including Nigeria but the overall evidence is not strong enough especially in the context of banks. According to Baig (2006), there is high agreement among researchers that social science research in developing countries including Nigeria is ignored and neglected. Keeping in view of this literature gap, the objective of the study is to examine the extent of relationship between workplace diversity and employee engagement. More specifically, the study aims at exploring and analyzing the employees' perception about workplace diversity and whether or not it has effect on their work engagement. Although, the problem managers in Africa generally hold is that workers' attitude is poor (Peterside, 2015).

Psychological research has mainly treated employee engagement as self-engagement within the emotional involvement construct. The foundation of this can be seen in the work of Shimazu (2008), who researched the idea of employee engagement. The emphasis has is that employee engagement is motivated by the presence of the conducive environment surrounding him.

More so, unsatisfied employees are less likely to be involved in work burnout. This therefore, allows banks to provide more consistent service and by this, customers get the employees to serve them and the employees have more experience and better skill to serve clients. Ehimare & Ogaga-Oghene (2011) states that demographic components of workplace diversity allow management to organize work, predicated on flexibility, innovation, and quick decision making prospects inherent in a team-work setting. Therefore, workplace diversity suggests to

the management, more ability to understand the motion of employees with organizations (Daniel, 2002).

2.7 The Role of Organizational Culture

The term culture of an organization encompasses all the life experience each worker brings to the organization (Peter and Waterman, 1982). Culture arrived on the management scene in the 80s like a typhoon blowing in from Far East. It suddenly became fashionable in consulting articles to sell culture like some article of organizational clothing much as “management by objectives” or “total information system” was once sold (Harold, Koontz & Heinz Wehrich, 2004). What gave this subject most impetus is water Peter and Waterman’s book in search of Excellence in 1982. This depicted successful organization as being rich in culture- permeated with strong and sustaining systems of beliefs. To them, culture is not an article of fashion, but an intrinsic part of a deeper organizational “character”, as Selznick described it. According to Oxford Advanced Learner’s English Dictionary, 8th edition (2010), culture refers to customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group. Organizational culture has also been defined as the way in which members of an organization relate to each other at work and outside world in comparison to other organization. The Dimensions enable a tangible alignment of organizational culture and workplace diversity. Likewise, organizational culture encompasses values and behaviours that contribute to the unique.

3.1 Research Design

This study employs the cross-sectional research design. The cross-sectional survey according to Baridam (2001) “relies on a sample of elements from the population of interests which are measured at a single point in time”. For the fact that there are several banks in Rivers State, a survey that will cover all will entail a lot of finance and time; so, for this purpose, a survey approach made up of 14 banks in Olu Obasanjo Axis is appropriate. This approach is chosen because it is believed to be the most suitable for this purpose. In order words, it is designed to measure the strength of respondents’ feeling and opinion on the topic.

3.2 Population

For this study the accessible population is 250 employees in fourteen (14) banks in the Olu Obasanjo Axis purposively selected out of twenty-one (21) banks registered with the Rivers State Ministry of Commerce and Industry (Rivers State Yellow Pages Directory, 2013-2014).

3.3 Sample Size Determination/Sampling Procedure.

A total of two hundred and fifty staff make up the population size. The sample size is determined using Taro Yemen’s formula cited in Baridam (2001). The population allocation for each of the firms was estimated using Bowley’s (1964) proportional allocation technique cited in Dike, Ehikwe and Onwuka (2013).

3.4 Data Collection Method

The primary and secondary data collection technique was adopted to get an empirical data that was used to achieve the proposed aims and objectives. The primary data was obtained through structured questionnaire, personal interviews and observations.

3.5 Operational Measures of the Variables

The researcher took the basic rules of the Likert type scales into consideration in structuring the items. The items used for ethnic-group, age and gender diversity were adapted from the works of Abbas, Hameed and Waheed (2011). The items for vigour, dedication and absorption were adapted from Schaufeli and Baker (2003). The items used for organizational culture was adapted from Harrison (1972) and Handy (1993) Organizational Culture Questionnaire

3.6 Data Analysis Technique

The data collected with the various mentioned instruments was represented in tabular form; it was further analyzed using simple percentage and Spearman Rank Order (Rho).

4.1 Hypotheses Testing Results

	Hypotheses	Outcome	Decision	Extent of Relationship
Ho ₁	There is no significant relationship between ethnicity and vigour of employees in the banking sector.	sig. = 0.013 rho = 0.200	Reject null hypothesis	Weak positive relationship
Ho ₂	There is no significant relationship between ethnicity and dedication in the banking sector.	sig. = 0.000 rho = 0.712	Reject null hypothesis	Strong positive relationship
Ho ₃	There is no significant relationship between ethnicity and absorption in the banking sector.	sig. = 0.000 rho = 0.732	Reject null hypothesis	Strong positive relationship
Ho ₄	There is no significant relationship between age and vigour of employees in the banking sector.	sig. = 0.000 rho = 0.444	Reject null hypothesis	Moderate positive relationship
Ho ₅	There is no significant relationship between age and dedication in the banking sector.	sig. = 0.000 rho = 0.781	Reject null hypothesis	Strong positive relationship
Ho ₆	There is no significant relationship between age and absorption in the banking sector.	sig. = 0.000 rho = 0.796	Reject null hypothesis	Strong positive relationship
Ho ₇	There is no significant relationship between gender and vigour of employees in the banking sector.	sig. = 0.000 rho = 0.501	Reject null hypothesis	Strong positive relationship
Ho ₈	There is no significant relationship between gender and dedication in the banking sector.	sig. = 0.000 rho = 0.953	Reject null hypothesis	Strong positive relationship
Ho ₉	There is no significant relationship between gender and absorption in the	sig. = 0.000	Reject null hypothesis	Strong positive

Ho ₁₀	banking sector. There is no influence of organizational culture on the relationship between workplace diversity and employee engagement in the banking sector	rho = 0.952 sig. = 0.049 rho = 0.325	Reject null hypothesis	relationship Moderate positive relationship
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Source: SPSS Data, 2017

4.2 Discussions of findings

In relation to hypothesis one which sought to know if there is any significant relationship existing between ethnicity and vigour, the result of the analysis shows that ethnicity has a weak but significant relationship with vigour. This result is supported by the viewpoint of Timmermans et al., (2011), as he empirically found in his study that ethnicity can be used as a proxy for workplace (cultural background) and that diversity in ethnicity can be expected to be positive for employee's vigour, since it broadens the viewpoints and perspectives in the firm.

With regards to hypothesis two which attend to find out if there is any significant relationship existing between ethnicity and dedication, the result of the analysis shows that a strong relationship exists between ethnicity and dedication. This result conforms with the words of Michael, Deanne, Paul and Janique (2003) as they affirm that organizations where discrimination is not found among the managements, or where the employees are given equal opportunities irrespective of the diversity factors, employees exhibit high level of competitiveness, energy and are enthusiastic about their work. In this situation, employees are often fully immersed in their work so that time flies.

With respect to hypothesis three which investigates if there is any significant relationship existing between ethnicity and absorption, the result of the analysis shows that there is a strong significant relationship between ethnicity and absorption.

The analysis of hypothesis four shows that there is a moderate significant relationship between age and vigour of employee. This result conforms to the standpoint of Barrington and Troske (2001), as they assert that age heterogeneity may be placed in proximity with its potential benefits such as engendering vigour on employees.

Similarly, the analysis of hypothesis five shows that there is a strong significant relationship between age and dedication. This result is supported by the postulation of Ehimare & Ogaga-Oghene (2011), as they state that demographic components of workplace diversity (ethnicity, age and gender) allow management to organize work, predicated on flexibility, innovation, and quick decision making prospects inherent in a team-work setting.

More so, the analysis of hypothesis six shows that there is a strong significant relationship between age and absorption. This result is also support with the standpoint of Ehimare & Ogaga-Oghene (2011), as they state that demographic components of workplace diversity (ethnicity, age and gender) allow management to organize work, predicated on flexibility, innovation, and quick decision making prospects inherent in a team-work setting.

In the same vein, the analysis of hypothesis seven shows that there is a moderate significant relationship between gender and vigour of employee. This result is also supported by the

view of Kochan et al., (2002), as he asserts that providing an equal job opportunity to women is vital to improve employees' engagement in an organization.

In addition, the analysis of hypothesis eight shows that there is a very strong significant relationship between gender and dedication. This result is also supported by the view of Kochan et al., (2002), as he asserts that providing an equal job opportunity to women is vital to improve employees' engagement in an organization.

Furthermore, the analysis of hypothesis nine shows that there is a very strong significant relationship between gender and absorption. This result is supported by the view of Inmyxai and Takahashi (2010) as they presented that there are different effects on employee engagement when different gender; male or female headed a firm in different countries. The studies tested the result of employee engagement on different gender.

Finally, investigating the relationship between workplace diversity and employee engagement when moderated by organizational culture, the partial correlation analysis reveals a significant level of moderation by organizational culture on the association between the two variables. This signifies that banks organizational culture significantly moderates the relationship between workplace diversity and employee engagement.

5.1 Conclusion

This study has extensively looked at the relationship that exists between work place diversity and employee engagement. It has significantly showed that the diversity of workers within the banking sector accounts for the vigour, dedication and absorption possessed by each top manager. This implies that managers who have different backgrounds in terms of age, ethnicity and gender interact with each other to form a formidable and sustainable team within the work place which is very essential for effective performance.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on our findings, the researcher would therefore recommend the following;

- i. Top managers must understand, first of all, that there is unity in diversity and this can be done through orientation programs, seminars and workshops on a periodic interval.
- ii. The culture of organisations should be established in such a way that nepotism and favouritism is eliminated.
- iii. Organizations should lay emphasis on the best man for the best job rather than job assignments based on ethnics and other social factors.
- iv. In setting up teams in the workplace, personnel department in line with top managers must ensure that there is a proper representation of members of various ethnic groups, age and gender so as to create room for effective succession planning.
- v. Top managers should start increasing engagement and watch productivity and profitability soar.
- vi. Finally, government through parliament must ensure that policies and bills are supported and implemented which support diversity in organizations.

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