ASSESSMENT OF WORKPLACE DIVERSITY ADOPTION IN ACADEMIC STAFF RECRUITMENT BY THE ENUGU STATE UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ENUGU, ENUGU STATE

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Keywords

Workplace diversity
Academic staff
Recruitment process
Ethnic diversity
Gender diversity
Religious diversity

Abstract

The focus of the study was on workplace diversity is implemented in the recruitment process for academic staff at Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu. The specific objectives were included to: evaluate the level of ethnic diversity in the recruitment of academic staff, examine the degree of gender diversity in the recruitment of academic staff and assess the extent of religious diversity in the recruitment of academic staff. A survey approach was adopted. Sample size was determined using Freund and Williams's formula, resulting in a sample of 462 out of a population of 712. Out of the distributed questionnaires, 366 staff members accurately completed and returned them, resulting in a response rate of 79 percent. Content analysis was employed to assess the validity of the instrument, yielding satisfactory results. The reliability of the instrument was assessed using the Pearson correlation coefficient (r), which indicated a good reliability coefficient of 0.76. For hypothesis testing, the data were analyzed using the Z-test, with the assistance of statistical software, specifically the Special Package for Statistical Software (SPSS). The findings revealed that the adoption of ethnic diversity in the recruitment of academic staff at Enugu State University of Science and Technology is not significantly low $(Z(95, n=366) = 4.011 < 5.101, p<.05)$, gender diversity is not significantly incorporated in the recruitment of academic staff at Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu $(Z(95, n=366) = 2.610 < 3.564, p<.05)$ and the recruitment of academic staff at Enugu State University of Science and Technology demonstrates significant adoption of religious diversity $(Z(95, n=366) = 4.353 < 5.233, p<.05)$. We concluded that workplace diversity, particularly in terms of ethnicity, gender, and religion, significantly influences the recruitment of academic staff at Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu. Embracing a diverse workforce enhances innovation, creativity, and overall

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performance. The study recommended that Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) should implement flexible and appropriate strategic planning practices to foster ethnic diversity in the recruitment of academic staff, which will contribute to enhancing the overall performance of the university

INTRODUCTION

Workforce diversity is now considered a fundamental strategic value that many organizations believe they have a responsibility to uphold in order to promote fairness and equality. The inclusion of diverse individuals in the workplace has become crucial for recruitment and retention. While skills are undoubtedly important, diversity is also prioritized because it provides a competitive advantage to companies. Embracing workplace diversity is more important than ever, as companies strive to attract candidates from different generations who are actively seeking organizations that value and celebrate their unique backgrounds. Companies that are intentional about fostering diversity understand that it requires consistent efforts to change company behaviors, processes, and policies.

Recruitment or employment is the process of appointing personnel or manpower resources, such as board members or directors, especially in public organizations. Recruitment aims to acquire the necessary personnel and build a strong organization with effective teamwork. The recruitment process for government agencies typically involves multiple stages, starting from identifying a vacancy and ending when the successful candidate is performing the job satisfactorily.

Numerous organizations are proactively incorporating diversity into their recruitment procedures to attract top talents globally. Predictions suggest that future workplaces will be characterized by diverse individuals from various regions, leading to significant socio-cultural transformations. However, this rapid diversification also poses challenges to conventional notions of demographic factors, including race, language, ethnicity, gender, age, physical disability, as well as other aspects such as sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religious beliefs, and political ideologies.

In light of the challenges presented by these factors, numerous organizations have made workplace diversity a top priority. Presently, organizations understand that embracing diversity promotes creativity and fosters an open work environment. Embracing workplace diversity has become a crucial corporate strategy for enhancing organizational management, gaining a competitive edge, making informed recruitment decisions, and maximizing profitability. Despite the increasing significance of diversity, there is a lack of understanding regarding its implementation in talent recruitment. Hence, the purpose of this study is to evaluate the adoption of workplace diversity in the recruitment practices of state universities in Nigeria.

Problem Statement

In recent years, workplace diversity has emerged as a prominent and ongoing topic in the realms of business and organizational management. The presence of diverse work teams has been found to contribute to enhanced innovation, creativity, and overall performance within companies. In response to the evolving global work landscape, organizations are adjusting their policies and strategies to effectively attract future talent. Consequently, workplace diversity has gained significant attention among companies aiming for global

expansion, profit maximization, and the ability to compete for limited talent, resources, and market share. Analysts emphasize that companies and organizations must develop effective strategies and allocate more resources to diversity programs to maintain their global competitiveness in the coming years. It is also predicted that organizations with robust workplace diversity initiatives will be able to attract a larger pool of talent, optimize their recruitment efforts, reduce operational costs, and reap various other benefits. However, the Nigerian university system has faced criticism due to its perceived lack of emphasis on diversity, prompting the need for further examination and improvement in this area.

Study Objectives

The main objective of this research is to assess how workplace diversity is implemented in the recruitment process for academic staff at Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu. The specific objectives are as follows:

i. Evaluate the level of ethnic diversity in the recruitment of academic staff.

ii. Examine the degree of gender diversity in the recruitment of academic staff.

iii. Assess the extent of religious diversity in the recruitment of academic staff.

Literature Review

Workplace Diversity

Workplace diversity, often referred to as WPD, encompasses the distinctions and variations among individuals who are part of an organization. It encompasses the multitude of characteristics and identities that individuals possess and how these attributes are acknowledged and valued within the organizational context. Workforce diversity, on the other hand, pertains to the degree or level of diversity present within a workforce. This includes the inclusion of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, age groups, personal histories, racial and ethnic identities, and various other factors that contribute to a rich and heterogeneous workforce.

Moorhead and Griffin (2016) highlight that workforce diversity encompasses a variety of attributes such as age, gender, ethnicity, heritage, physical abilities and disabilities, race, and sexual orientation among employees. In the modern era, workforce diversity has become a fundamental element of business. Companies have come to acknowledge that their employees are their most valuable resources in the age of information (Preeti, Poonam & Ekanshi, 2017). Consequently, diversity encompasses the complete range of human characteristics that distinguish individuals from each other (Gomez-Mejia, 2015).

Diversity is often linked to the varied demographic characteristics that define a company's workforce, including race, gender, culture, national origin, disability, age, and religion. Workforce diversity recognizes that individuals differ in both observable and non-observable ways, encompassing factors such as national origin, age, gender, race, color, marital status, social status, disability, education, language, sexual orientation, religion, physical appearance, ethnicity, and culture. Therefore, diversity encompasses a diverse group of individuals who acknowledge, comprehend, appreciate, and respect each other's differences in demographics, physical attributes, biology, social dynamics, and psychological aspects.

The significance of workplace diversity extends beyond its impact on business-related aspects such as brand management, client engagement, and corporate social responsibility. It also serves as a magnet for diverse professionals who stimulate innovation. Embracing diversity within an organization acknowledges the individuality of each employee and recognizes their potential to contribute distinct, creative, and innovative ideas and solutions. Employees with diverse backgrounds and experiences bring a range of perspectives to the table, leading to heightened productivity and improved outcomes. The amalgamation of different talents and skill sets fosters enhanced employee retention and productivity levels (Cheah, 2019).

Components of Workplace Diversity
Ethnicity/Race
Education
Gender
Religion
Recruitment
Selection
Theoretical Review

This study is based on Armstrong's (2016) human capital theory, which views individuals as valuable assets similar to machines. It emphasizes that individuals possess skills and abilities that incur costs but also generate profits for organizations. The theory highlights that organizations that invest in their employees will achieve worthwhile returns and gain a competitive advantage.

Empirical Review

Subhani and Azmat (2017) conducted a study on the impact of physical attractiveness on the recruitment process. Their findings indicated that hiring decisions are influenced by factors such as appearance, dressing style, and qualifications, rather than relying solely on physical attractiveness.

Koech and Cheboi (2018) explored the relationship between employee engagement and performance in technical institutions in Kenya. Their study revealed a positive and significant association between employee engagement and employee performance.

Okeke-Uzodike and Mogie (2015) examined the efficiency and effectiveness of public sector recruitment policies. Their research provided insights into strategies for enhancing human resource capacity in the Nigerian public sector.

In a study conducted by Oguegbulam, Onuoha, and Nwede (2017), the focus was on examining the connection between workforce diversity and employee retention within deposit money banks. The findings of their research indicated a significant correlation between workforce diversity and employee retention, with the organizational culture playing a moderating role.

Another study conducted by Akpakip (2017) aimed to investigate the influence of workforce diversity on employee performance in a Nigerian bank. The results revealed a significant relationship between workforce diversity (excluding ethnic diversity) and employee performance, with gender, age, and educational diversity exerting a strong impact on performance levels.

Gap in Empirical Review

While existing research has investigated the correlation between workforce diversity and employee retention or performance, there is a scarcity of studies that specifically examine the integration of workplace diversity in university recruitment processes. Furthermore, it is unclear whether any empirical research has explored the adoption of workplace diversity in the recruitment of academic staff at Enugu State University of Science and Technology. Additionally, the impact of workplace diversity on variables such as ethnicity, gender, and religion in the recruitment of academic staff at the university has not been thoroughly investigated. This study aims to fill these research gaps by addressing these specific areas of inquiry.

Methodology

In this study, a survey approach was adopted, focusing on five faculties of the university: Faculty of Management Sciences, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences, and Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources Management. The participants included academic staff members from these faculties. Data collection involved the administration of questionnaires and personal interviews. Two primary sources of data were used: personal interviews and questionnaire responses. The sample size was determined using Freund and Williams's formula, resulting in a sample of 462 out of a population of 712. Out of the distributed questionnaires, 366 staff members accurately completed and returned them, resulting in a response rate of 79 percent. Content analysis was employed to assess the validity of the instrument, yielding satisfactory results. The reliability of the instrument was assessed using the Pearson correlation coefficient (r), which indicated a good reliability coefficient of 0.76. For hypothesis testing, the data were analyzed using the Z-test, with the assistance of statistical software, specifically the Special Package for Statistical Software (SPSS).

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: The level of ethnic diversity incorporated into the recruitment of academic staff at Enugu State University of Science and Technology is notably insufficient.

Test of the kolmogorov-smirnov on a single sample

	There is no segregation on ethnicity on recruitment.	Language from a particular area is not a grantee for recruitment	National origin is not a barrier for lecturer's recruitment	Shared physical qualities does not grantee for recruitment	social qualities make no differences in recruitment of staff
N	366	366	366	366	366
Poisson Parameter[a,b] Mean	3.74	3.69	3.63	3.95	3.96
Most Extreme Absolute Differences	.221	.210	.261	.234	.267
Positive	.176	.168	.160	.207	.208
Negative	-.221	-.210	-.261	-.234	-.267
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	4.223	4.011	4.985	4.478	5.101
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

a. Test distribution is Poisson.

b. Calculated from data.

Decision Rule: If the calculated Z-value exceeds the critical Z-value (Zcal > Zcritical), it indicates that the null hypothesis should be rejected and the alternative hypothesis should be accepted.

Result: The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test produced a Z-value of 4.011, within the range of 0.000 to 5.101 (with an asymptotic significance of 0.000). This suggests that the participants' responses, as presented in the table, adhere to a normal distribution. Consequently, this validates the viewpoint of the majority of respondents, who believe that there is a notable deficiency in ethnic diversity within the recruitment of academic staff at Enugu State University of Science and Technology.

Decision: Moreover, when comparing the calculated Z-value of 4.011 to the critical Z-value of 0.000 (for a two-tailed test at a 97% confidence level), the null hypothesis is rejected. Consequently, the alternative hypothesis is accepted, indicating that the level of ethnic diversity in the recruitment of academic staff at Enugu State University of Science and Technology is not significantly low.

Hypothesis Two: states that the extent to which gender diversity is integrated into the recruitment of academic staff at Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu, is not significant.

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Employees irrespective of gender are engaged as academic staff of the university	Only qualified candidates are engaged as academic staff of the university.	The gender of the staff is not consider as factor in assigning responsibilities in the university.	Only valuable staff are recruited to teach, irrespective of where you are from.	Diversity in gender does not hinder recruitment of academic staff of the university
N		366	366	366	366	366
Poisson Mean Parameter[a,b]		3.44	3.51	3.33	3.31	3.25
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.186	.158	.136	.196	.148
	Positive	.135	.143	.121	.118	.112
	Negative	-.186	-.158	-.136	-.196	-.148
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		3.564	3.019	2.610	3.759	2.829
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

a. Test distribution is Poisson.

b. Calculated from data.

Decision Rule: If the computed Z-value is greater than the critical Z-value (Zcal > Zcritical), the null hypothesis is disproved, and the alternative hypothesis is supported.

Result: The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test yielded a Z-value of 2.610, falling within the range of 0.000 to 3.564 (with an asymptotic significance of 0.000). This indicates that the participants' responses, as displayed in the table, follow a normal distribution. This supports the majority of respondents' belief that there is a lack of significant adoption of gender diversity in the recruitment of academic staff at Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu.

Decision: Moreover, when the computed Z-value of 2.610 is compared to the critical Z-value of 0.000 (for a two-tailed test with a 95% confidence level), the null hypothesis is refuted. Hence, the alternative hypothesis is

supported, indicating that there is a significant adoption of gender diversity in the recruitment of academic staff at Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu.

Hypothesis Three: The level of adoption of religious diversity in the recruitment of academic staff at Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu, is not significant

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

	The religious practice is not considered while employing a staff	One's religion does not shake the confidence of the employees	There is tolerance of religious views in the instutition	People with special needs that are dedicated by their religion preference are considered	There is room sanctified places of worship by different religion.
N	366	366	366	366	366
Poisson Parametera,b Mean	3.74	3.69	3.63	3.95	3.96
Most Extreme Absolute Differences	.221	.210	.261	.234	.267
Positive	.176	.168	.160	.207	.208
Negative	-.221	-.210	-.261	-.234	-.267
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	4.223	4.011	4.985	4.478	5.101
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Test distribution is Poisson.
b. Calculated from data

Regarding Hypothesis Three, the calculated Z-value of 4.353 falls within the range of 0.000 to 5.233, compared to the critical Z-value of 0.000, demonstrating that religious diversity is significantly adopted in academic staff recruitment at Enugu State University of Science and Technology. This finding is supported by a study conducted by Henry, Eze, Abiola, Adedoyin, and Ayeni (2020) on managing diversity for organizational efficiency, which revealed significant impacts of diversity management on organizational efficiency through conflict management, cultural diversity, employees' perception of marginalization, teamwork, and employee work attitude. The findings indicated a significant influence of diversity management on various factors, including the management of cultural diversity, employees' perception of marginalization, and conflict. Furthermore, diversity management and teamwork were found to have a significant impact on organizational efficiency

Summary of Findings

The analysis of the data yielded the following significant findings:

i. The adoption of ethnic diversity in the recruitment of academic staff at Enugu State University of Science and Technology is not significantly low ($Z(95, n=366) = 4.011 < 5.101$, $p<.05$).

ii. Gender diversity is not significantly incorporated in the recruitment of academic staff at Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu ($Z(95, n=366) = 2.610 < 3.564$, $p<.05$).

iii. The recruitment of academic staff at Enugu State University of Science and Technology demonstrates significant adoption of religious diversity ($Z(95, n=366) = 4.353 < 5.233$, $p<.05$).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study reveals that workplace diversity, particularly in terms of ethnicity, gender, and religion, significantly influences the recruitment of academic staff at Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu. Embracing a diverse workforce enhances innovation, creativity, and overall performance. To remain competitive and attract top talent, the university should prioritize strategic planning practices that promote ethnic diversity and review existing policies to ensure the incorporation of gender diversity in line with global best practices.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

i) Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) should implement flexible and appropriate strategic planning practices to foster ethnic diversity in the recruitment of academic staff, which will contribute to enhancing the overall performance of the university.

ii) ESUT should prioritize the inclusion of gender diversity in the recruitment of academic staff by conducting a comprehensive review and updating of existing policies to align with current realities and global standards.

iii) The university should prioritize the adoption and implementation of workplace diversity practices across all levels, ensuring the alignment of individual knowledge with the demands of the job market to minimize instances of incompetence within the institution.

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