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PERCEIVED WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND VOICE BEHAVIOURAL PERFORMANCE AMONG EMPLOYEES IN PUBLIC ORGANISATIONS IN ABUJA, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Diversity-conscious Human Resource (HR) strategies foster mutual respect and recognition among employees and the organisation. People in organisations act positively and operate more productively when organizations respect their existence and contributions, the main objective of this study is perceived workforce diversity and voice behavioural performance among employees in public organization. The data for this study was obtained from primary sources. They were gathered using questionnaire structured based on the research hypothesis. The researcher sampled employees in Lagos State Secretariat using simple random sampling. The researcher however made use of 200 respondents for this study. Following the major findings of this study, a correlation of .942 which showed a strong direct correlation between perceived workforce diversity and voice behavioural performance among employees in public organization, while p-value of 0.001 which is considered less than 0.05. On the backdrop of the analyses the null hypothesis at 5% level of significance is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Thus, the analysis inferred that there is significant relationship between perceived workforce diversity and voice behavioural performance among employees in public organization, Based on the findings of this research, the following conclusion and recommendations are made; it was concluded that perceived workforce diversity can effectively predict voice behavioural performance among employees in public organisation. Based on the statistical result it will be suggested that government encourage workforce diversity and employee should be allowed to voice their concerns in workplace because it would gain massive organisational benefits by channeling employee concerns through their voices. When employees are content with their employers, they are more productive, and they are also more likely to perform tasks that are not part of their job description, thereby, going above and beyond for the company.

Keywords: Perceived Workforce Diversity, Voice Behavioural Performance, Employees, Public Organisation.

Introduction

Managing workforce diversity has become a big difficulty for management, and it is one of the world's major challenges. Workforce diversity has evolved from a focus on constitutionally protected human characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, and age to a much broader definition that encompasses the entire spectrum of human variability. These similarities and differences can be recognised based on age, physical abilities, race, sex, and other factors. According to Kundu and Mor (2017), diversity encompasses not just how people define themselves but also how they see others. When an organisation's workforce are ethnically diverse, however, managing diversity becomes essential (Kundu and Mor, 2017).

It is critical for businesses to establish an environment in which a diverse workforce is integrated and feels part of the system. Inclusion is defined as an employee's perception of being welcomed as a member of the group and being treated equally by the organisation, thereby satisfying their demands for belonging and individuality (Shore et al., 2011). Employees are 3.5 times more likely to contribute their full innovative potential when they work in an inclusive atmosphere where "beyond the box" ideas are heard and a "speak up" culture is maintained (Hewlett et al., 2013).

Diversity-conscious HR strategies foster mutual respect and recognition among employees and the organisation as a whole. People in organisations act positively and operate more productively when organisations respect their existence and contributions, according to the social exchange theory (Cropanzano et al., 2017; Ratnasingam et al., 2012). (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Diversity-oriented approaches reduce bias and discrimination, resulting in increased innovation and productivity (Forbes, 2021); the term "employee voice" has received a lot of traction, particularly in the field of human resource management (HRM). Employee voice may address and contribute to solving each of these concerns when it comes to the betterment of the organisation, resolving organisational difficulties, and engaging in the decision-making process (Mowbray et al., 2015). The notion that having control over organisational decision-making is an employee's democratic right reinforces the idea of an employee's voice (Wilkinson et al., 2018). A novel concept that has recently attracted the interest of many researchers is an alternative meaning of voice. This alternative viewpoint views voice as a behaviour that engages in constructive conflict in order to achieve beneficial results.

Employee voice is a very powerful tool at the organisational level because it allows employees to voice their concerns and gain massive organisational benefits by channelling their concerns through their voices (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2018). Employee voice plays an important role in organisational decision-making; however, this idea has come to be regarded as archaic and useless, as this saying has either been forgotten or mingled with a variety of other issues, rendering it ineffective in having an impact on the organisation. Employee voice, according to Barry and Wilkinson (2016), is a strong example of prosocial conduct in which one employee looks out for other employees by sharing their concerns. The goal of all of this is to assist both the employees and the organisation in growing together as a strong society. When

employees are content with their employers, they are more productive, and they are also more likely to perform things that are not part of their job description, thereby going above and beyond for the company (Soch& Aggarwal, 2013).

Literature Review

Concept of Workforce Diversity

Age, sex, region, lifestyle, education, and experiences can all be used to define diversity" (Manoharan & Singal, 2017). Every organisation's diversity is ingrained, and it may be handled and transformed into a source of organisational capability and success. Treating employees as if they are all the same can limit the organisation because various people require different social treatment and have different concerns (Urick, 2017). Diversity is essential for employee development as well as the growth of the company. As a result, diversity in human resource management is critical for attracting, developing, retaining, and managing a diverse workforce (Corritore et al., 2020).

Individual diversity, according to Dijk et al. (2012), is defined as the tangible and intangible distinctions among individuals, whereas organisational inclusion comprises understanding and leveraging these individual differences for the benefit of individuals and organisations.

According to Daya (2014), diversity management entails a form of fair representation for various society demographic populations at various organisational levels. As a result, diversity management begins with a set of managerial activities and finishes with an individual feeling, whereas organisational inclusion begins with a managerial action and concludes with an individual feeling. According to Daya (2014), changing an organisation's vision, strategy, culture, communication policies, HR systems, leadership style, and moral beliefs can all be part of adopting organisational inclusion.

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attainment. It has chosen to concentrate on superficial differences because these are the most common sources of prejudice and bias. Furthermore, many anti-discrimination laws around the world are based on surface-level differences such as colour, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, and handicap.

Concept of Voice Behavioural Performance

Many studies in employment relations and organisational behaviour (OB) have renewed and developed interest in expanding the concept of employee's voice behavioural performance beyond employees' voicing of dissatisfaction experiences and expression of collective action in the form of unions since Hirschman introduced the concept of voice along with exit and loyalty as individual's reactions/responses to dissatisfying conditions in the workplace in 1970.One of the organisational behaviour (OB) studies that expanded the concept of voice behavioural performance defined it as a type of extra-role behavioural performance concerned with expression of constructive challenge with the goal of improving rather than merely criticizing work practices through making innovative suggestions for change and recommending modifications to standard procedure, even when other members of the organisation disagree (Van-Dyne & LePine, 1998).Many studies have defined employee voice behavioural performance from the perspective of organisational citizenship behaviours as self-initiated, spontaneous or discretionary communication of ideas, suggestions, concerns, or opinions about work-related issues with the goal of improving the functioning of organisations (Morrsion, 2014; Li, Liao,, Tangirala & Firth, 2017; Jada & Mukhopadhyay, 2019).

Employee voice behavioural performance is the informal and confidential communication of an employee's ideas, suggestions, concerns, information about problems, or opinions about work-related issues to persons who may be able to take appropriate action, with the goal of improving or changing the situation (Morrsion, 2014).Employee voice behavioural performance entails extra-role upward verbal communication with the goal of enhancing organisational performance (Fischer, Ferreira, Van Meurs, Gok, Jiang, Fontaine, & Hassan, 2019). Speaking out to improve the work performance of others and the team as a whole is discretionary (Podsak, Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Maynes, & Spoelm, 2014). It is a form of free-will verbal communication that frequently questions present work-related practices with the goal of improving the working environment (Wijaya, 2019).

Voice behavioural performance has been divided into two categories: encouraging and discouraging (Liang, Farh & Farh, 2012; Shepherd, Patzelt, & Berry, 2019). The expression of fresh ideas or suggestions for improving the overall functioning of the work unit or organisation is the promotive voice behavioural performance (Liang, Farh & Farh, 2012). Promotive voice is challenging because it provides solutions to change the status quo. However, such a voice is "promotive" in the sense that it is focused on a future ideal condition or what could be since it is accompanied with new solutions and suggestions for change. Employees' statements of worry about work procedures, occurrences, or employee behaviour that is harmful to the organisation are described in the prohibitive voice (Liang, Farh & Farh, 2012). Prohibitive voice performs a vital function for organisational health, largely because such warning statements bring previously unnoticed issues to the attention of the collective agenda, where they can be remedied or problematic projects avoided.

As a result, the promotive voice behavioural performance is suggestion focused (i.e., provide suggestions for improving present work processes), whereas the prohibitive voice behavioural performance is problem focused (i.e., address problems concerning inefficiencies or bad performance) (Starzyk, Sonnentag & Albrecht 2018).Promotive voice behavioural performances concern employees' voluntary and discretionary expressions of new ideas or suggestions for improving the overall functioning of their work unit or organisation, whereas prohibitive voice behavioural performances concern employees' voluntary and discretionary expressions of concern about poor work practices and unethical behaviours harming the organisation (Liang, Shu & Farh, 2019)

Empirical Review

(Al-Shamlan & P. Doblas, 2019) investigated the impact of workforce diversity on AlAhujan Group Company's organisational performance in Bahrain. It is a for-profit corporation that operates in the food, personal care, fashion, and real estate industries. According to the findings, the climate of workplace diversity has a considerable impact on organisational success. Organisational success is also influenced by top management support, co-workerbehaviour, and personal variety.

The study's goal is to learn about employees' attitudes about diversity, performance tactics, impediments to accepting diversity, inclusion strategies, and raising diversity awareness (Bamber, Bartram, & Stanton, 2012). It also highlights workplace discrimination and barriers such as prejudice, ethnocentrism, victim blaming, stereotypes, harassment, and retaliation. It goes on to discuss inclusivity strategies. The study looks at the disparities in gender and age when it comes to promoting workplace diversity awareness. The sample consists of 300 Indian IT workers. The findings suggest that if diversity is managed properly, it can lead to improved financial performance, results, and organisational commitment.

In their study, Kaur, Kaur, Sahay, & Saini (Kaur, Kaur, Sahay, & Saini, 2020) looked at the diversity management of Fortune 500 firms, focusing on the top 5 companies in the banking, telecom, and education sectors. It lists the benefits of workplace diversity, such as how it aids in organisational growth, development, innovation, culture development, and the retention of skills and talent. It goes on to discuss the obstacles of diversity, such as communication barriers, prejudice, biases based on nationality and culture, inefficient policy implementation, and so on. It also includes solutions for enhancing workplace diversity, such as clear policies, processes, employee incentive, training, and education, respect, and value for people of other cultures.

Theoretical Framework

This research builds on Turner's (1978) social identity theory, which states that people support and positively evaluate groups that represent important aspects of their social identities (age, ethnicity, religion) because it boosts their self-esteem and allows them to maintain a positive self-identity (Hogg, & Terry, 2000). Social identity theory, which is aligned with social categories and similarity theories, states that when individuals are similar in terms of demographic factors such as age, religion, ethnicity, and work ideals, their level of identification with that workgroup usually increases.Psychological connection to, identification with, and involvement in accomplishing the workgroup's goals is based on perceived congruence between demographics, including values adopted by the individual

and other members of his workgroup. However, loss of self-identity, which occurs when an individual's demographic features differ from those of others, prevents the individual from actively expressing views (Ng, Van-Dyne, & Ang, 2019). This is especially true when an organisation's management bases resource distributions, information sharing, promotion, and task assignment allocation on gender, religion, ethnicity, talents, and age (Li, Liang & Farh, 2018).

In this regard, the use of similarity and dissimilarity in identifying and categorizing members of an organisation as in group and out-group, according to social identity theory, promotes a work environment that is full of conflicts, stereotypes, prejudices, poor interactions, and low mutual trust (Barak, 2013; McClean, Burris, & Detert, 2013; Lam & Mayer, 2014; Frazier & Bowler, 2015; Chamberlin, Newton, & LePine, 2017). It causes distinct interpersonal treatment, resulting in a sense of psychological insecurity that employees experience when they choose to engage in prohibitive and promotional speech actions (Liang, Farh & Farh, 2012).Employees from traditionally disadvantaged groups frequently experience restrictions on the expression of dissenting views and power to effect change due to a perceived lack of psychological safety caused by inequity in resource allocations, conflicts of interests, and low trust, as well as disproportionate treatment associated with workforce diversity (Hatipoglu & Inelmen, 2017). Employees from traditionally disadvantaged groups may be afraid to speak up about detected errors, unethical practices, and preconceived ideas about existing work practices in organisations where work diversity creates a context of "we versus mindset," which many superiors in most organisations evoke in deciding who will rise to the top, receive certain financial incentives (grants), and receive recommendations for mentorship (career development) (Stevens & Burley, 2016; Ng, Van-Dyne, & Ang, 2019).

H_0 There is no significant relationship between perceived workforce diversity and voice behavioural performance among employees in public organization

Methodology

The descriptive research design has been chosen for this study. The population of the study consists of employees of Lagos State secretariat, their total population of 500 as at the time of distributing the questionnaires. The sample size for the study was determined by the statistical formula for selecting from finite population as formulated by Yamane (1964). Therefore, based on Taro Yamane's formula, the sample size for this study is approximately (222) respondents, two hundred and twenty two. The data for this research work was primarily sourced using questionnaire.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n= Sample size required for the study;

N= number of people in the population;

e= allowable error (%) which is 5% or 0.05

Using this formula, we can estimate the sample size of this study thus:

$$n = \frac{500}{1 + 500\,(0.05)^2} = \frac{500}{1 + 500(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{500}{2.25} = 222$$

Therefore, based on Taro Yamane's formula, the sample size for this study is approximately two hundred and twenty two.

Descriptive Statistics was used to analyse the data generated from the socio–demographic variables. All the hypotheses for the study were subjected to statistical analysis and tested at 0.05 level of significance. Data were analysed using SPSS software version 20.0. This shows the frequency distribution and percentage of all important variables.

Findings

This chapter focuses on the analysis of data collected based on questionnaires administered to respondents. The responses were presented using frequency distribution table and percentage.

4.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 4.1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

S/N	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
	Age:		
	21-30	84	42.0
	31-40 years	52	26.0
	41-50 years	40	20.0
	51 and above	24	12.0
	Total	**200**	**100.0**
	Marital status:		
	Single	94	47.0
	Married	88	44.0
	Divorced	18	9.0
	Total	**200**	**100.0**
	Academic Qualification:		
	OND/NCE	28	14.0
	B.SC/HND	120	60.0
	M.SC/MBA	48	24.0
	OTHERS	4	2.0
	Total	**200**	**100.0**

Pearson correlation

	Value	Asymp. StdError[a]	Approx. T[b]	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Pearson's R	.850	.072	6.021	.001[c]
Interval Ordinal by Spearman Correlation	.942	.041	11.112	.001[c]
N of Valid Cases	200			

Table below gives a correlation of .942 which showed a strong direct correlation between perceived workforce diversity and voice behavioural performance among employees in public organisation while p-value of 0.001 which is considered less than 0.05. On the backdrop of the aforementioned analyses the null hypothesis is at 5% level of significance is rejected

while the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Thus, the analysis inferred that there is significant relationship between perceived workforce diversity and voice behavioural performance among employees in public organisation

Discussion

The seminar paper was on perceived workforce diversity and voice behavioural performance among employees in public organisation making use of a sample of two hundred (200) employees of Lagos State secretariat.

A correlation of .942 which showed a strong direct correlation between perceived workforce diversity and voice behavioural performance among employees in public organisation while p-value of 0.001 which is considered less than 0.05. On the backdrop of the aforementioned analyses the null hypothesis is at 5% level of significance is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Thus, the analysis inferred that there is significant relationship between perceived workforce diversity and voice behavioural performance among employees in public organization

Theoretical Contributions

This seminar paper sheds light on perceived workforce diversity and voice behavioural performance among employees by reviewing existing literature. Our contribution emphasizes the importance of understanding where perceived workforce diversity is best represented in voice behavioural performance among employees, as well as where academics in general are focusing their attention. We aimed to provide inductive insights into the current state of perceived workforce diversity on voice behavioural performance among employees through the use of a literature-driven and systematic methodology that can be replicated for future research opportunities for both academics and industry professionals.

Managerial Implications

The findings of this study may also aid academics and industry professionals in understanding perceived workforce diversity in voice behavioural performance among employees. This work sheds light on potential research areas in the effects of perceived workforce diversity on voice behavioural performance among employees, allowing academics and industry professionals to collaborate. Furthermore, these findings provide an opportunity for industry professionals to educate themselves on potential behaviours that may benefit the organization

Limitations

The research only addressed academics in public organisation without payingattention to private ones there. The second limitationis that finance and time were major limitation to the seminar paper. Furthermore, Lastly, we were limited on the access to databases.

Conclusions

Based on the statistical test used to analyse the completed questionnaire forms, it was found that there is significant relationship between perceived workforce diversity and voice behavioural performance among employees in public organisationi.e., whereas a significant positive association between perceived workforce diversity and voice behavioural performance among employees in public organisation has been discovered. Finally, it was

concluded that perceived workforce diversity can effectively predict voice behavioural performance among employees in public organisation**.**

Recommendations for future Research

Based on the statistical result it will be suggested that government encourage workforce diversity and employee should be allowed to voice their concerns in workplace because its gains massive organisational benefits by channelling their concerns through their voices. When employees are content with their employers, they are more productive, and they are also more likely to perform things that are not part of their job description, thereby going above and beyond for the company. It is suggested that other HR researchers test the same hypotheses in private organisations, which represent a completely different organisational context as explained earlier.

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