

Workforce Diversity and Organizational Performance: A Study of Selected Manufacturing Firms in Akwa Ibom State

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Abstract

This study examined the effect of workforce diversity on organizational performance of selected manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom State. The major objective of the study was to examine the effect of workforce diversity on organizational performance of selected manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom State. Methodologically, the researcher adopted survey research design. The population of the study was one hundred and five (105). The study adopted census technique by making use of the total population of 105 as sample size. The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire administered to the respondents using simple random sampling techniques. The data collected were analyzed using simple linear regression analysis and at 0.05 level of significance, result from the analysis shows that age diversity has a positive and significance effect on organizational performance of selected manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom State ($R^2 = 0.571$), and gender diversity has a positive and significance effect on organizational performance of selected Manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom State ($R^2 = 0.551$). Based on the finding, it was concluded that workforce diversity has a positive and significance effect on organizational performance of selected Manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom State. The researcher recommended that management of the studied selected manufacturing firms should embrace age diversity for the potential impact that it has for creativity and innovativeness in the organization, and gender diversity must be appreciated for its growing significance in organization. As such, achieving gender balance in the organization workforce must be considered as a sustainable strategy for not only attaining a competitive advantage, but for establishing a distinctive organizational culture and reputation, which adds to the corporate external image as well.

Keywords: Workforce Diversity, Age Diversity, Gender Diversity, Manufacturing Firms

INTRODUCTION

The work environment is becoming more complex due to globalization and competition which as a result has necessitated the need for employees that are made up of people with varying ages, experience, knowledge and backgrounds to maximize competitive advantage (Akinnusi, Sonubi & Oyewunmi 2017). According to Akinnusi *et al.*, (2017), organizations that want to gain competitive advantage must widen their perspective on workplace diversity and diversity management, and the management must commit itself to ensuring that diversity management is part of its daily operations. Nigeria is known to be the giant of Africa with a population of over 200 million people and more than half the population consists of people of working age (Ohunakin, Adeniji, Oludayo, Osibanjo & Oduyoye 2019). Hence, there is a large pool of talent from which organizations draw to achieve their goals. However, Goswami & Goswami (2018) opined that some organizations in a bid to escape lawsuits or other legal actions and to also put on a public show that makes them gain a good corporate image, pretend to embrace diversity rather than show a genuine desire for it by demonstrating a true commitment to the principles of diversity and inclusion. Makhdoomi and Nika (2017) said so long as there are individuals with differences working in the same environment, diversity in the workplace will always be an issue.

The term "diversity in the workforce of the organization" refers to how widely spread and diverse the workforce is in terms of age, ethnicity, religion, and gender (Opstal, 2009). Workforce diversity, which is defined as the presence of more than one feature among employees, has become a hot topic for organizational academics and managers as a result of the advent of globalization (Cho, Kim, & Mor Barak, 2017). In an organization, diversity refers to the presence of both commonalities and differences among its members in respect of gender, age, color, culture, disability, and physical abilities (Saxena, 2014). However, some organization leaders have failed to understand how the workplace interacts with one another as individuals and as groups, and how the behaviour of the workplace can affect both employee and organizational performance (Makhdoomi & Nika, 2017; Ng & Sears, 2020). According to Udonde, Awah & Akpan (2022), performance is a decisive measure. Performance is affected when managers fail to understand diversity and are not skilled enough to manage issues of diversity (Ng & Sears, 2020). Organizations experience low performance in the course of their existence due to employee burnout and are sometimes forced to look for new knowledge, ideas and skills to remain competitive (Udo, Udonde & Udo, 2024). However, it is important to measure organizational performance on a regular basis. Accurate and efficient performance measurement not only form the basis of an accurate performance review (Udonde, Akpan & Awah, 2022) but also gives way to judging and measuring organizational potential.

Another problem is the issue of organizations still depending on the old programs that they have been using over the years to manage the present issues of workplace diversity, minimize bias and increase diversity and inclusion in the workplace. It is important for management to know that the diversity plan that works or encouraged by one organization may not work in another as it may be challenged by the hierarchical structure that is present in such an organization. For this reason, some organizational leaders lack the knowledge on how to effectively manage diversity, create an

inclusive environment and what strategies to employ to assist them in dealing with issues of diversity in the organization.

Statement of the Problem

In recent years, the topic of workforce diversity has gained considerable attention in both academic and corporate spheres. Workforce diversity encompasses the range of differences among employees in an organization, including but not limited to gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, and socio-economic background. Despite the recognition of its importance, many organizations continue to grapple with challenges related to achieving and maintaining a diverse workforce. These challenges may stem from various sources, including ingrained biases, unequal access to opportunities, and a lack of inclusive policies and practices. Furthermore, organizational structures and cultures that do not prioritize diversity may inadvertently perpetuate homogeneity. These issues are further compounded by the persistent underrepresentation of certain demographic groups in various industries and leadership positions. For instance, women and minority groups continue to face barriers in accessing high-level roles, limiting their representation in decision-making processes.

Akwa Ibom State has unique social, cultural, and environmental characteristics that influence the manufacturing sector (Udo, 2023). These challenges surrounding the manufacturing sector have critical implications on its organizational performance. Research has suggested that diverse teams and leadership structures can lead to improved creativity, innovation, and problem-solving capabilities. A diverse workforce can enhance an organization's ability to connect with a broader customer base and respond effectively to a globalized marketplace (Uwa, 2014). However, the relationship between workforce diversity and organizational performance is complex and nuanced. It is important to acknowledge that the mere presence of diverse individuals within an organization does not automatically translate into improved performance. The effectiveness of diversity initiatives is contingent on the establishment of inclusive environments where all employees feel valued, heard, and empowered to contribute their unique perspectives. Therefore, understanding the multifaceted relationship between workforce diversity and organizational performance is of paramount importance for businesses and institutions aiming to foster inclusive environments and unlock the full potential of their workforce.

Objectives of the Study

The major objective of the study was to examine the effect of workforce diversity on organizational performance in manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom State. The specific objectives included to:

- i. Examine the effect of age diversity on organizational performance of selected manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom State.
- ii. Ascertain the effect of gender diversity on organizational performance of selected manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated from the objectives of the study as stated below:

- i. What is the effect of effect of age diversity on organizational performance of selected manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom State?

- ii. What is the effect of gender diversity on organizational performance of selected manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom State?

Hypotheses of the Study

The following research hypotheses were formulated by the researchers;

H₀₁: There is no significant effect of age diversity on organizational performance of selected manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom State.

H₀₂: There is no significant effect of gender diversity on organizational performance of selected manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom State.

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Concept of Workforce Diversity

Workforce diversity has become a major emphasis for many businesses. Individuals from various social categories, including age, gender, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, and disability, are included in an organization (Onwuzu & Nnamani, 2023). According to Barak (2013), diversity is the range or multiplicity of demographic characteristics, notably in terms of color, sex, culture, national origin, handicap, age, and religion that characterize a company's workforce. The disparities between persons based on their ethnicity, age, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and abilities/disabilities are further defined by Alesina and Ferrara (2005).

Employees' similarities and differences in terms of their age, race, cultural origin, religion, physical capabilities or impairments, sexual orientation, and gender are referred to as workforce diversity (Cole, 2004). Workforce diversity is defined by Pitts and Wise (2010) as the ways that people differ that may have an impact on a responsibility or allegiance within an organization, like religion, education, and culture. Workforce diversity recognizes that individuals differ in a wide range of visible and invisible characteristics, including age, gender, marital status, socioeconomic standing, handicap, sexual orientation, religion, personality, ethnicity, and culture. Nevertheless, each nation has its own top diversity concerns (Lawler, Chen, Wu, Bae & Bai, 2011).

Dimensions of Workforce Diversity

Age Diversity

If the knowledge acquired by the older generation is not transferred to younger professionals, a workforce made up of persons in that age bracket runs the risk of becoming obsolete. A diverse workforce fosters an environment where each generation contributes a range of skill sets (Finn, 2015). Unsuccessfully managing the age variety of a workforce leads to dull and uninspired ideas, traditional views regarding strategies, resistance to change, (Barak, 2013). The younger generations contribute solid practical knowledge of modern business technology. They probably have a solid understanding of how to use hi-tech tools and platforms, like social networking and webcasting. Older generations contribute the organization's traditional business knowledge. They can mentor the more junior workers, sharing their knowledge and experiences in the process. In

several industrial tasks, there is a link between deteriorating job performance and aging (Suttle, 2016). There are both positive and negative age stereotypes for both older and younger workers.

According to Kunze *et al.* (2009), organizations must deal with the difficulty of age diversity because it is only natural for people to gravitate toward their own groups at the expense of other groups. Furthermore, they argued that other age groups would experience insecurity, emotional instability, and the emergence of discrimination inside the institutions if one age group advanced major criteria for differentiation. According to Gelner and Stephen (2009), age diversity may negatively affect workers' productivity since different age groups have different beliefs, values, and interests. In general, generational differences are the cause of low productivity, disagreements, and clashes. This is due to the idea that each generation's strengths are unrivaled (Rowe, 2010).

Gender Diversity

The term gender was introduced in 1970 in place of sex to define traits of women and men (Unger, 1979). Gender refers to one self-identity i.e. how much a person associates himself or herself with masculine or the feminine as prescribed by the society. Similarly, some expectations are linked with male or female due to their inborn tendencies, natural affiliation, beliefs about which type of behavior, attitude, cognitive skill or interest attracts one sex than the other. These gender differences influence the approach in which individual react in workplace. Sometime gender diversity adversely affects the behaviors like discrimination, prejudice and stereotyping. Eventually such attitude negatively influences the efficiency at workplace.

Singh and Vinnicombe (2004) asserted that it is a matter of concern, as the ability, skills and talent of women are not fully recognized and hence remained under-utilized. Usually firms preferred male over to female on the basis of perception that male could perform better on managerial positions. Similarly, Kochan *et al.*; (2002) stated that to enhance the overall efficiency of the enterprise it is necessary to involve female at all levels. Connel (2002) avowed that gender diversity is positively correlates with the performance of workers. But on the other hand, Williams and O'Reilly (1998) proposed that gender heterogeneity is source of curtailment in overall team performance. McMillan-Capehart (2003) asserted that gender heterogeneity provides competitive advantages to the firms.

Workforce Diversity and Organizational Performance

Practices for managing workforce diversity improve organizational performance, productivity, effectiveness, and long-term competitiveness (Munjuri & Maina, 2013). Workforce diversity management can be utilized to bring together individuals with various perspectives in order to boost productivity. When organizational policies are effectively put into practice it boost business performance, loyalty, competitive advantage, and employee happiness and linkages to multicultural communities (Imagha *et al.*; 2023). (Beauregard & Henry, 2009) have found that work force diversity management fosters creativity, inventive problem solving, and productivity through sharing of varied ideas and viewpoints. This in turn favorably affects organizational behavior and effectiveness. Healthy work environment fosters growth and productivity which may bring about commitment in the institution (Imagha, *et al.*; 2023). According to Opstal (2009) analysis into the relationship between workforce diversity management and performance, more innovative

businesses intentionally build heterogeneous teams to tackle problems, as seen by the employment rates of women and members of underrepresented groups.

Age Diversity and Organizational Performance

Almost all communities including households, higher schools, sport teams or working and group groups of people of various ages share age diversity. Age diversity is a shared phenomenon. Barak (2013) explained that the workers are special in their variety of generations that poses new challenges for companies that aim to recruit, maintain, handle and inspire quality personnel. Each generation claims that their strengths are exceptional and that they should not strengthen the strengths of others.

Backes *et al.*; (2019) summarized the heterogeneity of age and productivity issues, variations in beliefs and the inclination of diverse age groups will adversely affect profitability and productivity. Productivity and productivity minimizing tensions and disputes have been found to be primarily because of 'generation differences.' Because of incorrect expectations and misconceptions that they are wasteful, more oriented toward health problems, are not willing to cope with improvements in environments and emerging innovations, perform ineffectively with younger hires and contribute to fewer return on training expenses. Businesses may not properly leverage old specialist workers' skills. The analysis of easy industrial technologies has found that older groups are expressively less profitable and less active. This finding is aligned with the insights that retail stores have less viability with greater age disparity in their workers. It was, however, discovered that the association between age and success was not separate. Many tests have found that older workers are as active, profitable and skilled as young staff. Therefore, a more innovative, diverse and efficient heterogeneous age group will be more than a homogenous age group.

Gender Diversity and Organizational Performance

The disparities in the organization, depending on gender, are reinforced and explained by generalizations and preferences defining positive traits and thus greater apparent quality for men. In other terms, companies tend to hire males relative to women, since they require greater results and management capability. The beneficial interaction between group sexual preference and intra-band co-operative qualities and in certain places that are typically more sexually different has been discussed by (Jackson *et al.*, 2003). In the last day it was real and gigantic, only within locals organized by relatively higher sexual distinctions, that group sex identity had various attributes completely defined by group execution.

Theoretical Framework

Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964)

This theory was propounded by Becker (1964). The theory opined that an organization that houses diverse workplace (both old and young employees) can benefit from both human capitals. The younger employees have the physical resilience and the ability and willingness to learn new things. They also bring new ideas and skills on new technologies into the organization, and older

employees have a range of experiences in the organization. An organization invests in human capital via education, training, and health. Thomas (1999) advanced that “the component of human capital consisted of abilities, knowledge, skill, personal talent, behavior, and effort, when those three components plus time” (p 10), he extended that;

- i. The knowledge included IQ, intelligence, specific and general knowledge to work,
- ii. Skill is expertise used in working, including the physical body, and movement of the job,
- iii. Talent is a personal characteristic which is innate and can be improved by development. People need talent in order to fulfill their duties effectively. Through their immediate efforts, they improve organizational performance, and they have the potential to make a significant impact in the future (Okurebia & Udo, 2023),
- iv. Behavior is an expression and observable behavior, norm, ethics and personal belief, and;
- v. Effort is when people try to use their innate or personal resources including their talent, experience, knowledge and ability to work to be successful, and finally there is time.

Empirical Review

Ngalo, Ogohi & Ibrahim (2023) explored the impact of Workplace diversity proxied by Age diversity, Gender diversity, Ethnic diversity, Income diversity, Education diversity and Belief diversity as the dependent variable, employee performance proxied by employee effectiveness as the independent variable. The study adopted a survey research design. While the study population consisted of all twenty-two Commercial Banks in Nigeria. A sample size of three hundred (300) respondents were selected. Data collection was by use of a questionnaire through the internet MS survey link. Analysis was done by use of descriptive and inferential statistics in SPSS version 25.0. The Regression analysis coefficient indicated the strength and direction of the relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable and tested at a 5% significance level. The study, therefore, concluded that workplace diversity variables like Gender diversity, Income diversity, Ethnic diversity and Belief diversity have a significant impact on employee effectiveness thus their respective performance. However, Age and Educational diversity was found to be having no significant effect on the performance of employees in the organization. The study thus recommended that to leverage the existing and observed diversity impact on employee effectiveness, the organizations need to begin to get conscious of why it is needful that they deal with demographic characteristics to gain a competitive advantage over competitors and stay competitive and make certain that great effort is taken to ensure that workers are properly informed of the present or existing initiatives and programmes of diversity and ensure to educate or train existing and newly employed employees on issues of diversity and its importance.

Rafaqat, Rafaqat, Rafaqat and Rafaqat (2022) reviewed the literature on the effect of workforce diversity including, gender, culture/race, age and ethnicity on firm performance. Many empirical papers have been reviewed in which different statistical models have been applied to data of multiple types of organizations across the regions and continents to find the association between the selected variables. The review methodology was selected to survey the literature on the impact of workforce diversity on organizational performance between the year 2000 and 2021. The reviewed literature shows that workforce diversity was significantly related to organizational performance. Moreover, this paper concluded that the positive significant influence of workforce

diversity on organizational performance exceeds the negative significant impact. Also, workforce diversity is productive, if it is in appropriate balance. Whereas few studies reported no significant influence of workforce diversity on organizational performance.

METHODOLOGY

The survey research design was utilized for the study. Survey research design help to collect valuable information from members of a population concerning their opinions about variables of interest to the researcher and useful in designing the questionnaire (Etuk & Udonde, 2024). According to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry gazette (2023), there are 45 listed manufacturing enterprises in Akwa Ibom State, which made up the study's population. The five (5) Manufacturing enterprises were selected from the three senatorial district of Akwa Ibom state which constituted the study's target audience of 105 upper, middle, and lower level managers from the selected manufacturing companies in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 3.1 Population of the Study

	Organizations	No of Staff
1	Bunica Plastics, Okon Eket.	14
2	Victradeam Manufacturing Venture 95 Aka Nung Udoe Road	21
3	Jubilee syringe Manufacturing Co. Ltd, Onna Eket	27
4	Roywood Nigeria limited, Uyo	16
5	Alphastar Paints & Industries Ltd, Uyo	27
	Total	105

Source: Human Resource Department of the Selected Companies (2024.)

The sample size was determined using census/total sample size determination technique. Census/total sampling technique is a type of purposive sampling technique that involves examining the entire population or population that has the same characteristics. This study used the primary source of data. The levels of quantitative analysis included descriptive statistics. The Simple Linear Regression Analysis was employed to ascertain the influence of the variables. The decision rule for this study is stated Accept H_0 if $P_c < P_t$. Reject H_0 if $P_c > P_t$.

Presentation of Data:

Table 4.1:1 Copies of Questionnaire Administered and the Response Rate

S/N		Copies of questionnaire distributed	Copies of questionnaire retrieved useable	Copies of questionnaire Not retrieved
1	Bunica Plastics, Okon Eket.	14	13	1
2	Victradeam Manufacturing Venture 95 Aka Road	21	19	2
3	Jubilee syringe Manufacturing Co. Ltd, Onna Eket	27	26	1
4	Roywood Nigeria limited, Uyo	16	15	1
5	Alphastar Paints & Industries Ltd, Uyo	27	25	2
Total		105	98	7

Source: Compiled from Questionnaire Response (2024).

The total copies of questionnaire that were accurately filled and returned were out of the 105 administered, 98 were returned which constituted 93% of the total copies of questionnaire and was found relevant for use. Despite efforts by the researcher to ensure adequate and correct completion of the questionnaire by self-administering, 7 copies of questionnaire were returned incompletely filled, hence were discarded. The responses were then analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Table 4.1.2: Sex distribution of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Male	65	66.3
Female	33	33.7.
Total	98	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, (2024)

From table 4.1.2, out of the 98 respondents, 65 representing 66.3% were Male and 33 representing 33.7% were female. The above result shows a good mix of males and females since the issue affecting organization affect both sexes.

Table 4.1.3: Age Distribution of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Valid 20-25years	12	12.2
26-30years	13	13.2
31-35years	31	31.6
36-40years	26	26.5
41 and above years	16	16.3
Total	98	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, (2024)

From table 4.1.3, 12 respondents representing 12.2% were between 20 – 25 years of age, 13 respondents representing 13.2% were between 26 -30 years of age. Those between 31 – 35 years were 31 representing 31.6%. Those between 36 – 40 years were 26 representing 26.5% and those above 41 years of age were 16 representing 16.3% of the respondents. The above analysis shows that the respondents were mature enough to understand the subject matter and respond accordingly.

Table 4.1.4: Marital Status distribution of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Single	44	44.9
Married	54	55.1
Divorced	-	-
Total	180	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, (2024)

From table 4.1.4, 44 respondents representing 44.9% were single, 54 respondents representing 55.1% were married. None were divorced. The above analysis shows that the respondents were mature enough to understand the subject matter and respond accordingly.

Table 4.1.5: Respondents' Years of Service in the Organization

	Frequency	Percent
Valid 1-5years	18	18.3
6-10years	47	48.0
11-15years	33	33.7
Total	98	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, (2024)

From table 4.1.5, 18 respondents representing 18.3% of the respondents have spent between 1 - 5 years working in the organization, 47 representing 48% respondents have spent between 6 - 10 years, and 33 representing 33.7% respondents have spent between 11-15 years. The analysis shows

that the respondents have spent some reasonable years working in the organization to understand the intricacies and factors affecting the organization.

Table 4.1.6: Respondents' Highest Educational Level

	Frequency	Percent
FSLC/WAEC/GCE	0	0
OND/ND/NCE	13	13.3
Valid HND/BS.c/B,ed/B.A	71	72.4
MBA/M.Sc/MA	14	14.23
Total	98	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, (2024).

From the analysis on table 4.1.6, none respondents were holders of FLSC/WAEC/GCE, 13 representing 13.2% of the respondents were OND/NCE holders. 71 representing 72.4% of the respondents were holders of B.Sc/B.A/HND, 14 representing 14.2% were holders of Masters.

Tables 4.1.7: Responses on Age Diversity

Age Diversity	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Total (n) (%)
Employees from different age groups often have diverse life experiences, attitudes, and approaches to problem-solving	34 (38.8)	44 (44.8)	2 (2)	8 (8.2)	10 (10.2)	98 (100)
Older employees typically bring years of industry experience and institutional knowledge to the organization.	45 (45.9)	33 (33.7)	1 (1)	11 (11.2)	8 (8.2)	98 (100)
Older workers, offer stability, wisdom, and a long-term perspective.	63 (64.3)	20 (20.4)	3 (3)	7 (7.1)	5 (5.1)	98 (100)
Organizations should create inclusive environments where employees of all ages feel respected, valued, and empowered to contribute their unique perspectives.	52 (53.1)	23 (23.5)	6 (6.1)	4 (4.1)	13 (13.3)	98 (100)

Source: Field Survey, (2024)

For the question on employees from different age groups often have diverse life experiences, attitudes, and approaches to problem-solving, Table 4.1.7 showed that 34 respondents, representing 38.8% agreed on decreases downtime. While 2% of respondents were undecided, 18 respondents representing 18.4% disagreed respectively.

For the question on older employees typically bring years of industry experience and institutional knowledge to the organization, 87 respondents representing 72.5% agreed that the company had extend asset lifetime. While 5.4% were undecided on whether this practically took place at the company, 57 respondents representing 22% disagreed.

When respondents were asked on older workers, offer stability, wisdom, and a long-term perspective, 76 respondents representing 82.9% agreed that this applied to the company. While 3.8% were undecided, 34 respondents representing 13.1% disagreed.

Responding to the question organizations should create inclusive environments where employees of all ages feel respected, valued, and empowered to contribute their unique perspectives, 55 respondents representing 87.2% of respondents agreed that reduce service interruption to them were well defined. While 2.3% respondents were undecided, 27 respondents representing 10.4% of respondents disagreed.

Tables 4.1.8: Responses on Gender Diversity

Gender Diversity	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Total (n) (%)
Gender-diverse teams bring together a range of perspectives, experiences and approaches to problem-solving leading to increased innovation and creativity.	45 (45.9)	33 (33.7)	1 (1)	11 (11.2)	8 (8.2)	98 (100)
Organizations that prioritize gender diversity are more attractive to top talent.	63 (64.3)	20 (20.4)	3 (3)	7 (7.1)	5 (5.1)	98 (100)
Gender diversity in leadership and decision-making roles can lead to more balanced and effective decision-making processes.	52 (53.1)	23 (23.5)	6 (6.1)	4 (4.1)	13 (13.3)	98 (100)
Implementing inclusive hiring and promotion practices that focus on skills, qualifications, and potential rather than gender.	34 (38.8)	44 (44.8)	2 (2)	8 (8.2)	10 (10.2)	98 (100)

Source: Field Survey (2024)

For the question on gender-diverse teams bring together a range of perspectives, experiences, and approaches to problem-solving, leading to increased innovation and creativity. Table 4.1.8 showed that, when respondents were asked on organizations that prioritize gender diversity are more attractive to top talent, 98 respondents representing 82.9% agreed that this applied to the company. While 3.8% were undecided, 34 respondents representing 13.1% disagreed.

When respondents were asked if they conduct online research, 98 respondents representing 87.2% of respondents agreed that detail inspection checklist to them were well defined. While 2.3% respondents were undecided, 27 respondents representing 10.4% of respondents disagreed.

For the question on Gender diversity in leadership and decision-making roles can lead to more balanced and effective decision-making processes, shows that 66 respondents, representing 19.8% agreed on decreases downtime. While 7.3% of respondents were undecided, 73 respondents representing 28.3% disagreed respectively.

For the question on implementing inclusive hiring and promotion practices that focus on skills, qualifications, and potential rather than gender, 68 respondents representing 72.5% agreed that the company had predictive maintenance diagnostics such as vibration analysis, oil sample analysis and infrared heat monitor. While 5.4% were undecided on whether this practically took place at the company, 57 respondents representing 22% disagreed

Table 4.1.9: Responses on Organizational performance

Organizational performance	SA (%)	A (%)	UD (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Total (n) (%)
A strong value proposition is essential for organizational competitiveness.	52 (53.1)	23 (23.5)	6 (6.1)	4 (4.1)	13 (13.3)	98 (100)
Embracing new technologies, processes, and ideas can lead to improved products and services.	45 (45.9)	33 (33.7)	1 (1)	11 (11.2)	8 (8.2)	98 (100)
Efficient operations and processes contribute to cost savings and enhanced customer satisfaction	63 (64.3)	20 (20.4)	3 (3)	7 (7.1)	5 (5.1)	98 (100)
A positive brand reputation built on trust, reliability, and customer satisfaction can attract and retain customers even in a competitive market.	34 (38.8)	44 (44.8)	2 (2)	8 (8.2)	10 (10.2)	98 (100)

Source: Field Survey (2024)

Table 4.1:9 shows that out of 98 respondents, 51 (28%) strongly agreed to questions, that a strong value proposition is essential for organizational competitiveness, 82 (46%) agreed, 19(11%) were undecided, 20(11%) disagreed and 8 (4%) strongly disagreed.

Embracing new technologies, processes, and ideas can lead to improved products and services. Out of 98 respondents, 16 (9%) strongly agreed to questions, 93 (52%) agreed, 14(8%) were undecided, 42(23%) disagreed and 15 (8%) strongly disagreed.

Efficient operations and processes contribute to cost savings and enhanced customer satisfaction. Out of 180 respondents, 72 (40%) strongly agreed to questions, 75 (42%) agreed, 6(3%) were undecided, 21(12%) disagreed and 6 (3%) strongly disagreed.

A positive brand reputation built on trust, reliability, and customer satisfaction can attract and retain customers even in a competitive market. Out of 180 respondents, 74 (41%) strongly agreed to questions, 73 (41%) agreed, 6(3%) were undecided, 21(12%) disagreed and 6(3%) strongly disagreed.

Testing of Hypotheses

H₀: There is no significant effect of age diversity on organizational performance of selected manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 4.2.1 Regression analysis age diversity and organizational performance

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.861 ^a	.575	.571	.44520

a. Predictors: (Constant), age diversity

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	49.445	1	49.445	62.587	.000 ^b
1 Residual	50.576	149	.790		
Total	100.021	150			

a. Dependent Variable: organizational performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), age diversity

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.470	.089		6.430	.000

age diversity	.666	.021	.861	12.827	.000
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a. Dependent Variable: organizational performance

The model summary in table 4.2.1 shows an R- value of 0.861. The result shows a positive influence of age diversity on organizational performance of selected manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom State. The R square- value of 0.575 shows that 57.5% variation in age diversity was accounted for by variations in organizational performance. The ANOVA table indicates that the regression model significantly predicts the dependents variable given the F- value of 62.587 and its corresponding P- value of 0.00. This implies that there is a positive influence of age diversity on organizational performance. Also, the B-coefficient of 0.666 with a t value of 12.827 and $P < 0.000$ implies that holding every other thing constant, the model predicts 0.666 units increase in age diversity given a unit increase in organizational performance. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted.

Ho₂: There is no significant effect of gender diversity on organizational performance of selected manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 4.2.2 Regression analysis showing result for gender diversity on organizational performance

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.752 ^a	.555	.551	.43222

a. Predictors: (Constant), gender diversity

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	49.445	1	49.445	55.117	.000 ^b
	Residual	50.576	149	.790		
	Total	100.021	150			

a. Dependent Variable: organizational performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), gender diversity

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.570	.089		5.130	.000
	gender diversity	.766	.021	.752	11.117	.000

a. Dependent Variable: organizational performance

The model summary in table 4.2.2 shows an R- value of 0.752. This result shows a positive effect of gender diversity on organizational performance of selected manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom State. The R square- value of 0.551 shows that 55.1% variation in gender diversity on organizational performance. The ANOVA table indicates that the regression model significantly predicts the dependents variable given the F- value of 55.117 and its corresponding P- value of 0.00. This implies that there is significant effect of gender diversity on organizational performance. Also, the B-coefficient of 0.766 implies that holding every other thing constant, the model predicts 0.766 unit increase in gender diversity on organizational performance. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted.

Discussion of findings

Age diversity and organizational performance

The model summary in table 4.2.1 shows an R- value of 0.861. The result shows a positive effect of age diversity on organizational performance of selected manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom State. The R square- value of 0.571 shows that 57.1% variation in age diversity was accounted for by variations in organizational performance. This was in line with the work done by Razaqat *et al*; (2022). The impact of workforce diversity on organizational performance: a review. The paper aims to review the literature on the effect of workforce diversity including, gender, culture/race, age, and ethnicity, on firm performance. The reviewed literature showed that workforce diversity is significantly related to organizational performance. Moreover, this paper concluded that the positive significant influence of workforce diversity on organizational performance exceeds the negative significant impact.

Gender diversity and organizational performance

This result shows a positive effect of gender diversity on organizational performance of selected manufacturing firms in Akwa Ibom State. The R square- value of 0.551 shows that 55.1% variation in gender diversity on organizational performance. The ANOVA table indicates that the regression model significantly predicts the dependents variable given the F- value of 55.117 and its corresponding P- value of 0.00. This implies that there is significant effect of gender diversity on organizational performance. This study is in support of Krishnan (2020) that workplace diversity (especially ethnicity, age and gender) as having a positive effect on teams as it increases the opportunity for creativity among members. Though, on the other hand, the study also states that it negatively affected team members as it increases the likelihood that team members would be dissatisfied and fail to identify with the group.

Conclusions

Age diversity and gender diversity are relational aspects that can affect organizational performance in particular industrial enterprises in Akwa Ibom State, according to the study's findings.

Recommendations

- i. The study recommended that organizations should perceive age diversity as a source of a competitive advantage within the organization. They should embrace age diversity for the potential impact that it has for creativity and innovativeness in the organization.
- ii. It was recommended that gender diversity must be appreciated for its growing significance in organization. As such, achieving gender balance in the organization workforce must be considered as a sustainable strategy for not only attaining a competitive advantage, but for establishing a distinctive organizational culture and reputation, which add to the corporate external image as well.

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