



Employees heterogeneity in ethnicity and religion as correlates of organizational performance in Nigeria (A study of united cement company, Calabar Nigeria)

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Abstract

The study investigated the relationship between employees heterogeneity and the performance of United Cement Company Limited, (UNICEM) Calabr, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to evaluate the extent to which proxies of workforce diversity such as; Religious, and ethnic diversities respectively affect the performance of UNICEM. Relevant conceptual and empirical reviews were conducted and the theoretical framework of the study was anchored on organizational theory by Mary Parkelfollet. Descriptive research design was used for the study. 400 employees of UNICEM constituted the population of the study, from which a sample of 196 was carved out with the aid of Krejcie and Morgan Table. A structured and validated Questionnaire was used to gather relevant data from the respondents and data was analysed and the null hypotheses tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis. The result revealed that UNICEM adopted the principle of Equal Employment Opportunity, devoid of ethnic discrimination. Results also revealed that employees of diverse religions in UNICEM perform their duties creditably in similar manner. Recommendations were also adduced, which included the fact that sensitive organizational activities should be organized in a manner that is all inclusive of employees of diverse ethnic divides and religions in UNICEM.

Keywords: heterogeneity, diversity, ethnicity, ethnic, religions, performance discrimination, inclusiveness, organizational and employees

Introduction

Managing diversity is focused on the assumption that diverse segments of an organization creates new methods of working together and that morale, profits and productivity will increase (Shaw, 2003) ^[35]. This author observed that managing diversity includes building specific skills and creating policies that increased the best work behavior and attitudes from each employee. Implementing workforce diversity has become a major focus in many human resource departments and therefore in order to meet the demands of modern technological society, corporations must rethink what diversity means and how the concepts of developing, valuing and managing a truly diverse corporation must go beyond traditional strategies (Urima, 2011).

Human resource management strategies are designed to allow human resource departments to strategically utilize personnel, in a fashion that will meet the heterogeneous demands of society, through improvements in the corporation's productivity and performance. Human resource managers in their role of managing diversity should be aware of problems and elements that may impact this role. Several elements are included in managing workforce diversity and one of the main elements is equal employment opportunity. Equal employment opportunity warrants the treatment of employees in a fair and impartial way in all aspects of employment. Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) regulations include legislation and policies that are responsible for enforcing legislation and policies in this context. In addition to EEO, affirmative action, and discrimination law are also elements that corporations use to manage and regulate workforce diversity. Almost everyone is now able to communicate and work with other people from different parts of the world due to the advancement in the outsourcing of many administrative jobs. For example, US companies can now hire their personnel from Nigeria or Ghana and have them do the human resource (HR) work in less than half the price they will pay workers in US. Because of this many people question the importance of diversity in the workforce, but studies have shown that having a diverse workforce proves to be beneficial asset in a company or in an organization. The world's increasing globalization requires more interaction among people from diverse background. People no longer live and work in an insular environment, they are now part of a worldwide economy competing within a global framework. For this reason, profit and non-profit organizations need to become more diversified to remain competitive. Maximizing and capitalizing on workplace diversity is an important issue for management.

Workplace diversity despite having numerous benefits also has its several dysfunctional consequences especially when not properly managed. Workplace diversity ought therefore to be one of the top things contemporary organizations should address. Organizations are therefore to prioritize hiring diverse employees because of the many great things associated with it. The main goal of workplace diversity management is the prohibition of

discrimination against individuals, which would cause them to be unfairly differentiated from co-workers. In addition to globalization, diversity has also increased as a result of an increase in women and people with disabilities entering the workforce. One of the tasks of managing workforce diversity is to recognize the differences among individuals and provide opportunities and means for individuals to contribute, hire talents to the organization. Supervisors and managers need to recognize the ways in which the workplace is changing and evolving. Managing diversity is a significant organizational challenge, so managerial skills must adapt to accommodate a multicultural work environment. Culturally, diverse population lives in all countries of the world. With increasing immigration, increasing number of people working abroad, and the presence of indigenous ethnic communities, employees who never even leave home often face a multicultural workforce in local companies and organizations. Each set of population exhibits a culturally unique life-style (Adler, 1997).

Diversity from a systemic globalized perspective thus requires a type of organizational culture in which each employee can pursue his or her career aspiration without being inhibited by gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, religion or other factors that are irrelevant to performance (Evans, 2007) ^[12]. Managing diversity in a globalized environment means enabling the diverse workforce perform its full potential in an equitable environment where no one group has an advantage or disadvantage (Wagge *et al.* 2012). It is the cultural background that creates differences (Barney, 2003) ^[5], furthermore Hambler (2015) ^[17] found highly significant differences in the behavior and attitudes of employees and managers from different countries. According to him, managers and employees vary on four primary cultural dimensions, that is, individualism/collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance and masculinity/femininity. Later Ekanade (2018), along with others identified a fifth dimension, that is confusion dynamism, measures employees' devotion to the work ethics and their respect to tradition (Kossek, Lobel & Brown, 2005) ^[20].

As opined by Collins (2006) ^[8] and Fernandez (2009) ^[15] noted, diversity management is a perpetual process, with an ambitious goal, toward the creation of an organizational culture where the best people want to work, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, where people are promoted on their merits and where opportunities for success are available to all. Evans (2007) ^[12] concurs and argues that embedding the principles of diversity management in every organizational activity can be stepping in ensuring that organizations achieve their most ambitious business goals. In other words diversity management is ultimately about unleashing the rich and diverse potential of an entire workforce by facilitating the exchange of new perspectives, improving problems solving by inviting different ideas, and creating a respectful, acceptable work environment (Kandola and Fullerton, 2012) ^[19]. Grant and Osanlo (2014), submit that the key to employee and organizational performance is to make diversity an asset within the organization.

Business organizations are increasingly embracing the use of workgroup as a strategy–structure mix in the pursuit of organizational goals. This new trend in organizing work is predicated on flexibility, innovation, and quick decision making prospect inherent in a team-work setting. In a climate of increasing competitiveness, many organizations rely on workgroup to generate the innovation necessary for sustained business success (Mumford and Luciana, 2004; West and Anderson, 2012). In addition, the contemporary demographic changes, increasingly globalized markets and greater mobility, aimed at promoting fairness in recruitment practices, doubtlessly is precipitating diversity within work-team in today's organizations (Williams and O'Reilly, 2008) ^[40]. Richard (2006) ^[33] examines firm-wide business strategies as a variable in determining the relationship between diversity and performance, (Richard (2006; Richard & Johnson, (2001) ^[32].

The measurement of performance refers to the evaluation of the achievement of the fundamental organizational goals and further sets the scope and direction of possible improvements and action, (shorts and Palmer, 2003) ^[36]. As further noted by shorts and Palmer (2003: 100) ^[36], "what cannot be measured, cannot be managed".

There is no one acceptable parameter for measuring performance and therefore each organization must identify its own by which to measure its performance (Nwikali and Kyalo, 2014). The organizational performance constructs of financial and non- financial components is probably the most commonly used dependent variable measure utilized in organizational performance evaluation. The financial (quantitative) indicators, include; the level profit/financial performance, level of output/ productivity, the distribution of goods/services, state of the quality of goods and services, type of production methods and technology, and so on, (Oloyede 2014); the non-financial (qualitative) indicators of organizational performance include the following; labour turnover, goal attainment, staying competitive, labour unrest, stakeholders satisfaction, motivation level of employees and so on.

The primary duty of any organization is to harmonize the various departments in order to increase productivity, expand the business and stabilize cash flow. In spite of the glaring importance of workforce diversity in UNICEM, Calabar, most departments still face challenges due to differences in religion, culture, beliefs, gender, age, colour, physical ability, ethnicity and so on. It is against this background that the researcher seeks to study the impact of workplace diversity on the performance of UNICEM. The dimensions of workplace diversity to be considered are; religion, ethnicity, gender and age.

Statement of the Problem

In an organization such as UNICEM with a highly diversified workforce, if diversity in terms of ethnicity and religion is not properly managed, the diverse workforce will then become an inhibitor of organizational performance. This expression or observation concurs with the study of Anthony (2019) ^[3]. If ethnicity is not properly handled in any organization, as is the case with UNICEM with employees of multi-ethnic divides, the

organization is bound to experience a situation where the Igbo's could form and experience the dysfunctional consequences of informal group or cliques against the Yoruba's group and many other ethnic segregations may occur leading to decline in organization performance (UNICEM Communication Bulletin, 2021).

Evidence from a pilot study conducted in UNICEM in 2021, participants' observed that UNICEM has been experiencing a lot of unresolved conflicts which are traceable to multi-ethnic/religious components of its workforce which has not been strategically managed (UNICEM Human Resource Information Unit). The observations of the pilot study, aptly agrees with the position of the Group Managing Director of UNICEM, who recently raised the issue of incessant inter-personal crises and conflict. According to him, these crises are traceable to the ethnic and religious diversities (UNICEM monthly Communication Bulletin, 2021). Osaghae (2010) [29], in a survey of front-line supervisors found that low performing agencies failed to strive towards workforce diversity, thus these gives credence to the fact that if workplace diversity is not handled strategically, the formation of informal groups would occur, which would tend to power struggle, miscommunication, conflicts, high labour turnover and many other inhibitive consequences.

It is worthy of note that several studies (Aneoma 2019, Olayode 2019 & Anthony 2019) [2], have been conducted in UNICEM, but non was specifically on workforce diversity, even though there has been a myriad of diversity related challenges. It as in an attempt to solve the problem that this study became necessary.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to establish how employees heterogeneity relate to the performance of UNICEM, while the specific objectives are:

1. To investigate the extent to which religious heterogeneity relates to the performance of UNICEM, Calabar
2. To determine the extent to which ethnic heterogeneity relates to the performance of UNICEM, Calabar.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

1. To what extent does religious heterogeneity relate to the performance of UNICEM, Calabar?
2. How far does ethnic heterogeneity relate to the performance of UNICEM, Calabar?

Statement of Hypotheses

The following Null hypotheses were formulated for the study:

H_0^1 : There is no significant relationship between religious heterogeneity and the performance of UNICEM, Calabar.

H_0^2 : There is no significant relationship between ethnic heterogeneity and the performance of UNICEM, Calabar.

Literature Review

1. Concept of heterogeneity

heterogeneity is a subjective phenomenon; created by group members themselves who on the basis of their different social identities categorize others as similar or dissimilar: "A group is diverse if it is composed of individuals who differ on a characteristic on which they base their own social identity" (Ekanade, 2014:10). Diversity could be defined as that which differentiates one group of people from another along primary and secondary dimensions. Primary dimensions of diversity, those exerting primary influences on identities, are gender, ethnicity, race, religion, age and mental or physical abilities and characteristics. There is a finite trend towards definitions of a multiplicity of diversity dimensions; Cole (2016) adds culture, social class and language to the primary dimensions and healthcare beliefs and recreational interests to the secondary dimensions. She further adds a tertiary dimension, which encompasses historical moments experienced. Generally diversity acknowledges, understands, accepts, values and celebrates differences among people with respect to age, religion, ethnicity, gender, physical and language. People no longer live and work in an insular environment; they are now part of a worldwide economy competing within a global framework, for this reason, profit and non-profit organizations need to become more diversified to remain competitive, maximizing and capitalizing on workplace diversity as an important issue for management.

Other dimensions such as sexual orientation, disability and political orientation are less obvious, and could be said to constitute the secondary dimensions lying just below the surface, which may be revealed with time. The tertiary dimensions are often the core of individual identity and lie deeper below the surface. According to Dahm (2003), diversity within an organization can evoke an array of emotions. Many researches such as the foregoing, view diversity as something to be dealt with rather than a tool to be used to improve the organizations. Even though many researchers agree that the results of diversity are conscious, organizations add value to their performance. Research on the effects of within teams and small groups indicate that diversity can have both positive and negative effects (Saxena, 2022) [24].

1.1 The concept of religious heterogeneity

Religion has been traditionally seen as a private matter with little or no consideration given to religious diversity in the workplace. It is crucial for policymakers and employers to develop better understanding and management

of religious diversity. This is particularly important in the global marketplace, given that companies are increasingly interacting with diverse religions, cultures, and stakeholders.

Religious discrimination is an issue that continues to fester in Western workplaces, affecting people of diverse beliefs, such as Christians, Muslims, Sikhs and Jews (Grima, 2011) ^[16]. The problem often stems from lack of understanding of different religious and cultural values, which may lead to misunderstandings and resentment. As a result, employees may experience conflicts not only amongst themselves but also between their religious obligations and employment. Some of the discriminatory or non-inclusive practices or behaviors may not be deliberate and malicious, but may reflect a lack of diversity awareness in the workplace.

Religion in the workplace can bring up some of the most difficult issues employers have to face. Resolving these issues requires understanding the law and balancing the business's needs with an employee's desire to practice his or her religion. One of the most contentious conflicts is between an employee's desire to take time off and the potential reduction in productivity and profit ability, if it is not appropriately understood and managed, religious diversity can potentially trigger serious conflict in the workplace, for example, Christians may not be willing to work on their traditional religious or festive holidays, while practicing Muslims may require one to three short breaks per day to for obligatory prayers. Thus, it is not only an issue of diversity management but also organizational flexibility in accommodating religious diversity at work (Grima, 2011) ^[16].

Assuming there is no collective bargaining agreement that expressly delineates the rights of the employer and employee regarding this subject, if such an agreement exists, its provisions will govern dispute, for any discussion of religion in the workplace we look at Title VII of the Civil Right Act of 1964, in addition to prohibiting discrimination by private and public employers on the grounds of race, colour, gender, religion and national origin, Title VII s that an employer must provide "reasonable accommodation" of an employee's religion beliefs and practice. Under Title VII, "an employer can't refuse to reasonable accommodate an employee's religious observances, unless accommodation would constitute an undue hardship" for the business. Title VII accommodation cases often concern the extent to which an employer must alter work schedule to accommodate religious holidays or the Sabbath (Suberu, 2009) ^[37] As organization are becoming more diverse, religion is often an issue in the workplace. Problems usually arise due to conflicts between organizational policies and employees' religious practices, for example, some organizations may require their employees to dress in a certain way. However, this may not be acceptable to some men and women for religious reason, as may be the case with headgear such as the turban for Sikhs and the hirable/headscarf for some Muslim women. Similarly, some employees may struggle to work on particular days and time due to religious obligations such as Sabbath and Ramadan (Hamblen, 2015) ^[17].

The workplace can and should provide a forum for inclusion, lowing of prejudice, and the overcoming of identity-based differences, thus improving people's well-being and alleviating tension by bringing them together in pursuance of common work goals. Thus there is not only an ethical and social responsibility to manage religious diversity well, but also a performance rationale (Suberu, 2009) ^[37]. Suggested that the task of effective organizational leadership is to create an inclusive structure and culture in which leaders and followers can respectfully negotiate religious and spiritual diversity alongside other forms of differences such as ethnicity, gender, age, family obligations, and ability for instance, if there is no inherent conflict between religious doctrine and modern workplace, potential areas of friction between religious and contemporary Human Resource Management (HRM) practices can and should be managed effectively. There are possibilities of religious diversity bringing people together or pushing them apart. Faith-related identity development is an ongoing process, and religious identity may change several times throughout life. Religious attitude are becoming increasingly diverse worldwide, and this diversification is mirrored in the workplace (Rambler, 2015).

In recent decades, religion has become an important factor both in public debate and as a means of political mobilization. However, the rise of religion has not happened in and for itself. It is closely linked to wider materials and ideological developments that have affected global politics. One of these trends is the decline and collapse of socialism, which served important ideological and political functions outside the socialist world, including the offer of ideological and political alternatives. These alternatives included the provision of an alternative moral and political vision of the world, and on the whole, a consensus by ruling elites that social inequality needed to be limited. Since the 1980s, global and national polities have increasingly been dominated by ideological and practical responses to the ostensible victory of liberal capitalism. Reflecting a growing skepticism of alternative visions of the world, idealistic thinking has frequently been perceived as outdated and positive visions for the future of humanity have been limited to the functioning of the market and its institutions. Whether as a direct or indirect result of this, global inequality has increased drastically since the 1980s, both in the global North and in the South (Deloitte, 2004).

The Obasanjo administration in Nigeria presided over a constitution, which, despite the consideration experience of Nigerians with constitution-writing (the country has had nine constitution since the first (Clifford constitution in 1992), was somewhat ambiguous with regard to the role of religion in the. Thus, section 10 of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999) announces that, the government of the federation shall not adopt any religion as religion. However, section 38(1) holds that; every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including freedom to change his (sic) religion beliefs, and freedom (either alone or in community with others, and public or in private) to manifest and propagate its religion or belief in worship, leaching, practice and observance.

Mkoji and Sekalieh (2012) opined that organization that openly encourage their employees to express their spirituality are likely to be more successful, still, what if they are discriminated among them because of religious difference? This can affect both employers and employees. A limited number of scholarly publication focused on religious discrimination and/or religious diversity management within organizations. According to Morgan (2004), it is a common practice for individuals nowadays to express their personal religious view and to seek religious accommodation in workplace, this could cause some conflicts for managers, still, these issues merely scratch the surface of deeper issues at hand, and such as the behavioural outcomes that affects the organizational performance like employee commitment.

1.2 The concept of ethnic heterogeneity

The increase in ethnic diversity over the years resulted in a significant change in terms of ethnic workforce composition; almost all workers shared a similar ethnic background, were males, and worked for the same employer throughout their working lives. Nowadays, people work in organizations that are more diverse in terms of ethnicity, gender, age, Religion, organizational tenure, functional background, and educational background than ever before. Consequently, organizations develop different strategies towards managing ethnic diversity in their workforce (Osaghae, 2010) ^[29]. Some organizations incorporate ethnic minorities in their workforce in order to comply with the pressure exerted by national and local governments. Other organizations slate that ethnic diversity provides them with a competitive advantage, it is argued that ethnic diversity may bring along broader access lo informational, social and cultural networks, which in turn stimulates creativity, and problem solving capabilities within organizations, some organizations diversify their staff as a means to get access to and legitimize their presence on multicultural markets, for example, by matching their staff with the ethnic composition of clients, organizations argue that they are better able to address the needs of these customers (Barney, 2003) ^[5]. It is the coexistence of the diverse races that exist around the world that (Fearon, 2003) ^[14], conceptualized as the employment or mobilization of ethnic identity and difference lo gain advantage in situations of competition, conflict or Cooperation. This definition is preferred because it identifies two issues that arc central lo discussions on ethnicity. The first is that ethnicity is neither natural nor accidental, but is the product of a conscious effort by social actors. The second is that ethnicity is not only manifest in conflictive or competitive relations but also in the contexts of cooperation. A corollary to the second point is that ethnic conflicts manifest itself in various forms, including voting, community service and violence.

Thus, it needs not always have negative consequences. Ethnicity also encompasses the behavior of ethnic groups (Amaram, 2007) claims that ethnic groups are groups with ascribed membership, usually but not always based on claims or myths of common history, ancestry, language, race, religion, culture and territory. While all these variable need not be present before a group is so defined, the important thing is that such a group is classified or categorized as having a common identity that that distinguishes it from others. It is this classification by powerful agencies such as, religion institutions and the intelligentsia such as local ethnic historian that objectifies the ethnic group, often setting in motion processes of self-identification or affirmation and recognition by others. Issues on diversity and its consequences in terms of work-related outcomes shows that ethnic diversity harbours both opportunities and threat, looking at the opportunities, some studies demonstrate that ethnically diverse teams can outperform ethnically homogeneous teams, on the other hand, threat have also been reported. For instance, because of ethnic diversity, team processes may be impaired by conflict, poor team cohesion resulting in poor team performance and employee un-wellbeing. Because of these mixed findings, ethnic diversity is often referred to as a double edged sword (Amaram, 2005).

Thus, ethnicity is not so much a matter of “shared traits or cultural commonalities”, but the result of the interplay between and external categorization and self-identification.

Ehimare and Oghene (2011), submit that most analysts agree on the basic constitutive elements of ethnic group but disagree on how and why they were formed, why ethnicity occurs why it occasionally results in violent conflicts and what should be done to prevent its perverse manifestations. Also in most cases, members of ethnic minority groups are faced with structural forms of discrimination and exclusion. Despite all these negative trends and events, however, it is not the case that the increase in ethnic diversity can be considered as a fundamental challenge for the stability and cohesion of an organization. There are many people or ethnic groups throughout the world who have their own traditions, customs, languages, etc. According to Fernandez, (2005), ethnic diversity implies diversity in languages, religions, races, and cultures. They also added that there has been an increase in multicultural workforce in the organizations for utilizing greater participation and synergy to improve and increase both employee satisfaction and business performance. This increase is due to multicultural increase of our society. Ethnic diversity is highly relevant in an increasingly globalized world. It is a current fact of life. Moderate level of ethnic diversity has effect on team performance in terms of business outcomes i.e. sales, profit, and market share. However if at least the majority of team member are ethnically diverse, then more ethnic diversity has a positive impact on performance. Ehimare and Oghene (2011) empirically explored that ethnicity is insignificantly negative in its relationship to both employee and productivity and performance.

Ethnicity as a social signifier in the Nigeria context is associated generally with a sense of belonging based on the awareness of having a common language, culture, beliefs and history setbacks experienced in sub-Sahara Africa that hinder growth and development. These manifest in situation where strong loyalties for ethnic tribe tend, in some way to impact negatively on the growth and development of the “larger society”, which comprise various ethnic groups. In Nigeria, for instance, ethnic loyalties lead to conflicts when political allocations

apparently do not favour a particular ethnic tribe or region (Odiegwu et. al 2012) ^[26]. Likewise, budgets for the national income gained from natural resources have stirred up ethnic conflicts in Nigeria (Ekanade, 2012). Thus, some ethnic groups express concerns about inequality as they experience treatments they perceive to be unfair (Rhuku, 2012). Ethnic diversity would benefit team performance due to a more diverse pool of skills and knowledge that leads to complementary and mutual learning. For example, due to complementarities and learning opportunities, ethnically diverse teams are associated with more creativity and innovation (Fernandez, 2009) ^[15]. On the hand, the costs associated with more ethnic diversity would be related to more difficulty communication and coordination. All in all, ethnic diversity is an influential source of heterogeneity. Ethnically diverse teams working in relatively homogenous organizations experienced performance deficits relative to the more homogenous teams (Joshi and Jackson. 2003).

According to (Drabe *et al*, 2015), ethnicity can be used as a proxy for cultural background and diversity in ethnicity can be expected to be positive for innovative performance, since it broadens the viewpoint and perspective in the organization (Richard, 2000). Moreover, based on (Drabe *et al*, 2015) study, some level of diversity in ethnicity might be positively associated with innovation, high degree of diversity in ethnicity might be negative since it can create conflict and cliques due to social categorization (Deloitte, 2014). Ethnicity is used as a matter of cultural identity of a group, often based on shared ancestry, language and cultural traditions.

Ethnic and cultural conflicts in Nigeria are rooted in the 1914 merger of the Northern and Southern Protectorates by the colonial administration of Lord Fredrick Lugard. The amalgamation brought about the involuntary unification of culturally and historically diverse ethnic groups, some of which had been rivals and overlapping imperialists in the pre-colonial times (Ukiwo, 2012). For instance, Benin, at the height of US power from the 15th century, has established imperial control over some s in the fringes of present day Northern Nigeria, including Igala and Nupe-speaking areas, which, by virtue of their vassalage were compelled to pay tools and tributes as vassals to the Benin monarch. Benin had also extended to the South and enjoyed suzerainty over several Yoruba s, including Eko (now Lagos), Ondo, Ekiti. This overbearing influence of Benin over the Yoruba s had pitted Benin against the declining Oyo Empire before British colonization (Odiegwu *et al* 2012) ^[26]. Similarity, Oyo Empire, prior to its decline and fall, had wielded considerable amount of influence in the entire Western part of Nigeria and had also upturned the Benin hegemony to gain control of significant Benin province and former vassals. Oyo's influence also resonated in Ilorin, Eberaland, Igalaland, and Nupeland (Ekanade, 2012). Thus, the relationship between Yoruba and Edo-speaking people before colonialism had been that of the proverbial cat and mouse, which had led to cold war, mutual distrust and mounting tension. In the North, the fourteen Hausa (Hausa Bekwaiand, Hausa Banza) were embroiled in a prolonged and chaotic relationship of overlapping imperialism even the seven legitimate s (Bekwai) and no love lost between them, let alone cultural or political synergy between the Bekwai and the illegitimate (Banza). Kano rose power at the expense of Gobir's decline, while Kororofa and Kebbi besieged Kano and Kano rose power and fame;and it is on record that it was during the imperial reign of Kebbi under Kotal K Lanta that the Hausa reached their height of disunity (Oloyede, 2014). It however took the intervention several decades later of the Islamic jihadists led by Othman Danfodio to forcefully unite the Hausa-speaking s under the Islamic religion (Ukiwo, 2005) ^[38].

In the South-South, as culturally and ethnically homogenous as they seemed, they were far from united. The Efik and Ibibio were constantly at loggerheads, while the Urhobo and Itsekiri had ceaseless confrontations. The divisiveness and fissiparous tendencies among the ethnic nationalities in the region were capitalized upon by the Europeans to "divide and rule" and in the process establishing their harmony and colonization. The 1914 amalgamation was therefore a marriage of convenience (Osaghae. 2010) ^[29], that is, it was to suit the sole purpose of ease of administration and exploitation of the colonial powers. The union if the over 250 ethnic nationalities was therefore "unity by a rope of sand" (Oloyede, 2014). Nigeria was not meant to work because it was not unification by natural evolution. The Nigeria project was a distant comparison to Italy, Germany and Spain whose unification from Middle Ages to the 19th century was by freewill or choice of the people under dynamic leadership. The act of merger by the European colonial powers merely forced the diverse ethnic of Northern and Southern Protectorates into a single entity consultation with the various ethnic groups or their leaders. This autocratic British colonial policy, therefore, marked the origin of ethnic conflicts in the country. It is pertinent to note that the primordial ethnic underpinnings in the creation of the Nigerian began to resonate before independence. For instance, in 1953 when nationalists representing Nigeria were offered the platform to come to terms with an agreed date of independence, ethnic sentiments and insecurity came to the fore as the Northern (Hausa-Fulani) delegates at the constitutional conference objected to a 1956 date proposed by the Southern delegate, among whom was late Chief Anthony Enahoro was moved the motion (Ukiwo, 2005) ^[38]. The Hausa-Fulani leaders had made it clear by their stout objection that they were not ready for independence as the fear of Southern dominance in a post-colonial Nigeria was rife.

It is also interesting to note that the study area (UNICEM, Calabar) is a big organization comprising of employees from different ethnic background, it is therefore hoped that these many workers from diverse ethnic groups should work in harmony in order to positively increase performance of the organization. To buttress this point, (Ukiwo, 2005) ^[38] remarked that ethnicity should be used as a means to bring peace in both the organization and the society at large (Osaghae, 2010).

2. Empirical Review

Tamunomiebi and John-Eke (2022) conducted a study which was focused on investigating emerging issues in workforce diversity and their impact on organizational performance. The main objective was to investigate the impact of age, gender, religions and ethnic diversity on the performance of organizations in Portharcourt, Nigeria. 450 employees of five selected companies were studied and a sample of 203 constituted the population and sample respectively. Questionnaire was utilized in data gathering with was analyzed with statistical package for social science (SPSS) and Spearman correlation analysis. Results revealed that there existed a significant impact of age, gender and religions diversities has on the performance of business organization. The researcher however considered the use of Spearman correlation test inappropriate because the study is not a relationship inclined study and also the large amount of data involve. Rather the use of multiple regression analysis would have been more suitable, especially because of the multi-variate nature of data involved.

Ozgur (2022) ^[30] carried out an empirical study whose main concern was to evaluate the relationship between global workforce diversity and the performance of multinational corporations in Turkey. The study indentified constructs of workforce diversities of gender, religion, lifestyle, age and educational levels. 800 employees of seven multinational companies in Turkey made up the population of the study, from which a sample of 390 was carved out. Data was collected through the use of questionnaire and interviews. Data was analyzed using SPSS and multiple regression analysis. Results showed that all the constructs tested in this study has a strong relationship with the performance of the multinationals. The researcher is of the opinion that the use of multiple regression in the study alone was inadequate rather the additional use of a correlation statistical tool, such as Pearson product moment correlation analysis would have shown more appropriately the varying extent of relatedness for which the objectives actually sought to find.

Qwesi and Kumasi (2022) conducted a study centered on workforce diversity in age, gender and religions affiliation among bank workers and its effects on the banking sector of Ghana. 420 employees of five leading banks constituted the population and a sample of 205 was carved and used for the study. Questionnaire was administered to collect data which was analyzed with the aid of multiple regression. Finding revealed that indeed the proxies of workforce diversity, test has a strong and positive effect on the performance of banks in Ghana. The researcher deems the statistical tool used in analysis fit for the study, but finds conclusion to be at variance with the broad objective of the study.

In another study carried out by Edewor and Aluko (2022) ^[10], whose central theme was on workforce diversity and performance of multinational organizations in Nigeria, utilized a population of 250 and sample of 120 made up of employees of six multinational companies in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Questionnaire was used in data collecting, which was analyzed with SPSS, Pearson product moment correlation analysis and the regression analysis. Results revealed a strong correlation between diversity of employees in terms of Age, gender, religion and ethnicity and their job performance and by extension the performance of the multinational companies. The researcher consider appropriate the use of both correlation and regression statistical tools in the analysis of data, as the study has different sets of objectives requiring differing out comes.

Mulu and Zewdie (2021) ^[22] in a survey examined the effect of diversity management on Ethio-Telecom South West region of Ethiopia. The main objective was to determine how Age, gender and religions diversities relate to organizational performance. Data collected from 120 respondents was analyzed with the aid of path analysis. Findings revealed that organizational management constructs (gender, ethnicity and religion) are positively related to organizational performance. Thus the study concludes that diversity management can positively influence both organizational and employee productivity, output and innovation. The study further recommended better or enhanced diversity management options for even higher results. The researcher considers the use of path analysis to analyze data inappropriate since it was a relationship study and rather recommend correlation test such as person product moment correlation analysis.

Nwahanye and Dze (2021) ^[25] conducted a survey to examine the mediating role of workforce diversity on organizational performance of small and medium scale enterprises. Data was gathered from 1200 respondents who are employees of 306 small and medium scale enterprises operating in the Burea municipality of southwest Cameroon. Data collected with questionnaire was analyzed using The Baron and Kenny (1986) approach of mediation. Findings showed that the mediating the effects of gender, age, ethnic and religious background diversities impacts adversely on organizational performance. It was recommended amongst others, that SMEs should therefore develop the practice of properly managing workforce diversity in terms of gender, age and educational background to enhance organization performance. The researcher considers the method of data analysis faulty and rather recommend multiple regression since it involves large data from several respondent.

In a study conducted by Fadhili, Kiflemeriam and Mwanzia (2021) ^[13], which was centered on determining the effects of diversity management on the job performance of Maua Methodist Hospital employees. The target population comprised of 317 employee of the Hospital, from which a sample of 170 was carved as respondents for the study. The main objective was determined how gender and age diversities affect the performance of the hospital. Data was analyzed using SPSS and Pearson Correlation Analysis. Results showed that decision making process was more effective and that the Human resource practices were more inclusive. Conclusively, the level of gender, religious and ethnicity discrimination is very low. It was recommended that the recruitment and promotion process should be done without discrimination to boost job performance.

Inegbedion, Sunday, Asaleye, Lawal and Adebajji (2020) ^[18] also conducted an empirical study. The study was meant to find out the extent to which diversity management influences organizational efficiency through the management of conflict. A sample of 178 was drawn from a population of 345, made up of employees of a multinational companies operating in the south-south Nigeria. Data collected with the aid of structured questionnaire was analysed using structured equation modeling, with diversity management and organizational efficiency serving as latent variables. Results showed that the management of cultural diversity, employees' perception of marginalization and conflict significantly influences diversity management. Furthermore, results indicated that diversity management and teamwork significantly influence organizational efficiency.

In a related study focused on effects of workplace Diversity on the performance of workers in an open University in Pakistan, Ahmad and Rahman (2019) ^[1], A sample of 105 was drawn from 545 population of Academic and non-academic staff of Allama Iqbal Open University. Data collected with questionnaire was analyzed with Pearson Correlation Test and multiple Regression Analysis. Results showed that age diversity, religious diversity and ethnicity diversity have negative relationship with employee performance. It was recommended that appropriate diversity management and inclusive strategies be employed in managing university workers.

The empirical research was also conducted in the food and Beverages industry. Olusegun, Abdulraheem and Nassir (2019) ^[28] carried out a study which was focused on using workforce diversity management strategies as a driving force to gain competitive advantage in food and beverage industry in Nigeria. The study utilized a population of 540 comprising employees of 3 multinational companies in the food and beverage industry located in Lagos island 210 respondents were administered with questionnaire. Data collected was analyzed with multiple regression and Pearson product moment correlation analysis. Results revealed that workforce diversity represents both a challenge and an opportunity for business and corporate entity; hence no organization can survive in this dispensation of globalization without workforce diversity. It was recommended that organizations should accord due priority to the utilization of the advantages of workforce diversity.

Aneoma (2019) ^[2] in a study examined the effect of employee socio-ethnic differences on organizational growth. 900 employees drawn from six companies on the Lagos Island made up the population of the study, from which a sample of 580 was drawn with the aid of Taro Yamane technique. Data was collected with Questionnaires and analysed with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science software and linear regression. Findings revealed that social interaction in the workplace was highly determined by ethnic affiliations and this has led to segregation among the employees and the formation of informal groups and cabals within the organization.

Olayode (2019) investigated the influence of ethnic diversity on four (4) medium scale industries in Benin City, Edo state. Descriptive survey design and stratified sampling technique was used to sample 165 employees from a population of 350. Data was analysed with SPSS and hypotheses tested with Spearman correlation analysis. The study found out that ethnic diversity influences all groups of employees at all levels in the organizations and called for such type of organizational culture where all members can pursue desires without being inhibited by ethnic background, gender, race, nationality or other conditions and factors that are relevant to service delivery. The researcher recommends that ethnic diversity should be seen as the varied perspective and approach to work which helps the individuals of different identity groups to improve in service delivery.

Buckingham (2019) conducted a study titled "exploring the impact of managing workplace diversity on diversity awareness and employee job satisfaction". The study focus was on decreasing homogeneity in the workforce and equal opportunity practice. A structured questionnaire was utilized in collecting data from 165 respondents and data was analyzed with Pearson Product Moment Correlation Tool. Findings revealed that in decreasing homogeneity in the workforce, employments have turned out to be segregative rather than inclusive. The study concludes that it has become imperative for organization to develop equal opportunity and diversity management approaches that could maintain the skills of employees with diverse backgrounds in order to protect their competitive position in the market place.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Organizational theory

Mary Parker Follet in 1993 propounded the organizational theory which is a human relation approach to management. This theory which concentrates on the tenet of task specialization, orderliness, stability and control with total neglect and understanding of the human factor in administration. The focus of human relations approach was people and their relationship in organization. She argued that while money is an important motivating factor, most people are willing to take part of their reward in form of humane treatment, personal attention and chance to feel important. This group recognized the fact that although work must be done according to established standards, rules and regulations, the man that does the job is even more important than the job itself because without the man, there will be no work done, given the importance of man as far as work is concerned, man should be given opportunity for development and self-actualizations, and everything possible must be done by the organization to keep man satisfied and comfortable in his work place. The organization should make sure it harmonizes the various segments of the workers in order to reduce religious intolerance, gender inequality, cultural and ethnic crisis. Specifically, this theory is based on the following assumptions:

1. Management treats staff as human beings and acknowledges their need,
2. Management provides comfortable and secured physical facilities,

3. Management treats staff with respect and makes them feel important by giving attention to their complaints and differences.
4. Management involves staff in making decisions concerning working conditions.

The relevance of the theory to this study has its area of emphasis on group dynamics as well as inter-personal relationship in small groups alongside the emphasis on the psychological needs of workers apart from the economic needs. The major concern of Follet in an organization is the development and maintaining of group and harmonious relationship. The management of workers at work is an integral part of management and organization should understand the critical importance of involving an employee in administration and participative decision making to achieve the goals of the organization is synonymous in the organization. Follet revealed that human element and organization are synonymous. In the organization, the administrator should see workers and other resource persons as the root source of quality and productivity gained. For proper goal achievement in organization the administrator must engage strong and effective motivational strategies at the various levels and departments of the organization. The theory also emphasizes on the development of informal the organization. The theory also emphasizes on the development of informal communication channels and the need for the use of line of communication established outside formal structure. With the above discussions on the Human Relations Theory (HRT) the researcher decided to anchor the research on this theory.

Methodology

1. Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive research design, adopting the survey approach. This research design is deemed appropriate by the researcher because it facilitates the identification of characteristics, frequencies, trends and correlations between variables.

2. Area of the Study

This research work is carried out in UNICEM, Mfamosing in Akamkpa which is close to Calabar. Akamkpa is located in the southern senatorial district of Cross River State. The administrative headquarters of UNICEM is in Calabar which is the capital of Cross River State.

3. Population of the Study

In this study, the population includes all workers in UNICEM, Calabar. The population of the study is made up of 400 employees, in the following categories; Top management, middle management, supervisors and specialists and junior staff.

4. Sample size Determination

The study utilized a sample size of 196 determined with the aid of Krejcie and Morgan table (1970).

5. Research Instrument

Questionnaire is a data-collecting instrument or tool, consisting of a set of written questions the respondents are required to complete. The questionnaire that was used for data collection for this research consisted of 20 questions. The questionnaire was designed with closed-ended questions with options of choice left for the respondents to either; Agree, Strongly Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. Questions in the questionnaire were framed to revolve around the four research objectives and research question crafted for the study.

Section A of the questionnaire is to elicit personal data from respondent, relating to such basic information such as religion, and ethnic group. On the other hand, section B of the questionnaire contained specific questions meant to investigate the relationship between employees' diversity and the performance of UNICEM. Therefore, the variables of the objectives of the study were measure with interval scale on a five point Likert scale.

6. Administration of Questionnaire

In administering the questionnaire, the researcher obtained approval of his supervisor before visiting UNICEM for familiarization. The researcher personally administered the instrument on the respondents, on one-at-a-time basis, with the assistance of their respective Heads of Departments/Units. Intermittently the researcher interacted with the respondents and that interaction clarified areas of ambiguity throughout the course of administering the questionnaire.

The filled out questionnaires were collected from respondents after a period of 14 days. A total of one hundred and ninety-six (196) questionnaire was administered, however, one hundred and eighty-eight (188) were filled and returned representing 95.9%, whereas seven (7) were not returned, representing 3.6% and one (1) was however returned, but not properly filled and therefore invalidated, representing 0.5%.

7. Validity and Reliability of Research Instrument

Validity is defined as the extent to which an instrument for research measures what it was set out for (Kolhari, 2004). It is therefore centered on accuracy and appropriateness of the inferences which are premised on the research results to ensure face and content validity of instrument.

To determine the validity of the research instrument, the questionnaire was presented to different test and measurement experts to scrutinize the items. The face and content validity approaches was adopted. The experts and supervisor inputs was used by the researcher in effecting corrections before the questionnaires was presented to and approved by the supervisor and used.

Reliability is the degree of consistency with which an instrument measures what it was supposed to be measuring (Kothari, 2004). In order to ensure reliability of research instrument, reliability analysis was done. Pilot test is a survey which is done on a small group of respondents to make sure the questions being asked in the questionnaire is reliable. 20 copies of questionnaire were distributed. Respondents were asked to comment and suggest possible changes to the questionnaire. Most of the feedbacks directed to the comprehensibility of items, were used to modify some of the items to improve their clarities. Pilot test is meant to minimize the mistakes made in the questionnaire as well as the difficulties before making progress to distribute it out to the 196 targeted respondents. Reliability of the questionnaire was tested with the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient and results as presented in table 3.

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Estimates of the Variables under Study

(N = 20)

S/N	Variables	No of Items	X	SD	Cronbach Co-efficient
1	Religion	5	60.20	188	0.68
2	Ethnicity	5	15.90	1.86	0.57
3	Performance of UNICEM	10	26.05	2.81	0.70

Sources: Pilot testing, 2021

8. Method of Data Analysis

Data collected for this study were coded and processed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21. Data was therefore subjected to both descriptive and inferential statistical frequencies and percentages for the bio-data and variables. Results were presented in tables for easy understanding. Data analysis and the four null hypotheses crafted for the study were tested with the aid of Pearson product moment correlation analysis, given by the formula below:

$$r = \frac{n(\sum xy) - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{[n\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2][n\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2]}}$$

Where r = Pearson's correlation co-efficient

N = Sample size

$\sum XY$ = Sum of product of X and Y

$\sum X$ = Sum of X

$\sum Y$ = Sum of Y

$\sum X^2$ = sum of the square of X

$(\sum X^2)$ = squares of the sum of all Xs

$\sum Y^2$ = sum of square of Y

$(\sum Y)^2$ = squares of the sum of all Ys

9. Decision Rule.

The obtained r must be greater than the critical r to be significant. In other words, if the calculated value is less than the critical value, the null is not rejected and if however, otherwise, the null is rejected and the alternative accepted. The level of significance is 0.05 and degree of freedom is = 186

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 2: Religious Affiliations of the Respondents

Religious Affiliations	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Christianity	117	62.2	62.2	62.2
Islam	30	16.0	16.0	78.2
African Traditional Religion	15	8.0	8.0	86.2
Others	26	13.8	13.8	100.0
Total	188	100.0	100.0	

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

The result in Table shows that 117(62.2%) of the respondents were Christians, 30(16%) of the respondents were Muslim, 15(8%) of the respondents were African Traditional Religion while 26(13.8%) had others forms of

religion. This means that Christianity had a largely percentage, although workers religious affiliations cut across all religion. Workers in UNICEM have the right to worship or believe in anything they choose.

Table 3: Ethnic Groups of the Respondents

Ethnic Groups	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
EFIK	27	14.4	14.4	14.4
IBIBIO	14	7.4	7.4	21.8
HAUSA	34	18.1	18.1	39.9
IGBO	22	11.7	11.7	51.6
YORUBA	26	13.8	13.8	65.4
EJAGHAM	24	12.8	12.8	78.2
BETTE	7	3.7	3.7	81.9
UKELLE	5	2.7	2.7	84.6
YAKURR	10	5.3	5.3	89.9
YALA	7	3.7	3.7	93.6
OTHERS	12	6.4	6.4	100.0
Total	188	100.0	100.0	

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

The results in Table 2 shows that 27(14.4%) of the respondents were Efik, 14(4.4%) of the respondents were Ibibio, 34(18.1%) of the respondents were Hausa, 22(13.8%) of the respondents were Igbo, 26(11.7%) were Yoruba, 24(12.8%) of the respondents were Ejagham, 7(3.7%) of the respondent were Bette, 5(2.7%) of the respondent were Ukelle, 10(5.3%) of the respondents were Yakurr, 7(3.7%) of the respondent were Yala, while 12(6.4%) were from Others ethnic groups.

Hypothesis one (Ho¹)

There is no positive significant relationship between religious diversity and the performance of United Cement Company, Calabar. The Independent Variable: Religious heterogeneity and the dependent Variable: the performance of UNICEM, Calabar. The Pearson product moment correlation is employed to test the hypothesis. The data used is taken from questionnaire response.

Table 4: Summary of data of Pearson Product Moment Correlation between Religious heterogeneity and performance of UNICEM, Calabar

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	R	p-value
Religious heterogeneity	15.14	3.53	188	.128	.079
Performance of UNICEM	30.87	3.97	188		

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

*p> .05, DF =186

The result in table 3 shows that the calculated r-value of .128 representing the correlation between Religious diversity and performance of United Cement Company, Calabar was not significant at p –value of .079 at .05 level of significance with 186 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was accepted. This therefore implies that there is no significant relationship between religious diversity and the performance of United Cement Company, Calabar.

Hypothesis two (Ho²)

There is no positive significant relationship between ethnic diversity and the performance of UNICEM, Calabar. The Independent Variable: Ethnic diversity and the dependent Variable: the performance of UNICEM. The Pearson product moment correlation is employed to test the hypothesis. Data used for analysis is taken from questionnaire response.

Table 5: Summary of data of Pearson Product Moment Correlation between Ethnic heterogeneity and performance of UNICEM, Calabar

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	R	p-value
Ethnic diversity	13.27	3.71	188	.128	.080
Performance	30.87	3.97	188		

Source: Fieldwork, 2021

*p> .05, DF =186

The result in Table 4 shows that the calculated r-value of .128 representing the correlation between Ethnic diversity and performance of United Cement Company, Calabar was not significant at p –value of .080 at .05 level of significance with 186 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was accepted. This

therefore implies that Ethnic diversity does not significantly relate to performance of United Cement Company, Calabar

Discussion

The findings revealed that there is a very negligible or low relationship between religious diversity and the performance of UNICEM. These findings are not in line with the position of Messarra (2014) who states that as the workforce becomes more diversified in terms of religious, many individual values are carried over to the workplace. Hence, employees are most likely to bring their employees to express their spirituality are likely to become more successful. They added that when employees or their supervisors do not share or embrace religious beliefs of their co-workers or if workers are discriminated because of religious diversity, it has grievous effect on both employers and employees. Fobbin's and Judge (2013) explain further that people of different religious faiths often get into conflict. They concluded that employees in religiously diverse organization might be prone to increase interpersonal conflicts and misunderstanding which can increase prejudice between co-workers. Relatedly Ensher, Grant-Vallone and Donaldson (2011) reported that religious discrimination as perceived by employees can affect key areas such as recruitment, organizational culture, compensation employee relationship legislative, decisions and ultimately, it can have a financial effect on organization. Little wonder Sanchez and Brock (1996) reported a link between perceived discrimination and increased work tension and turn over. Also the result of Pearson product moment correlation coefficient test in table 16 further revealed that there was no significant relationship between religious diversity and employee performance in UNICEM. The implication of the finding is that employee performance could either be high or low irrespective of whether there is religious diversity or not.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that there is a very negligible or low relationship between ethnic diversity and the performance of UNICEM. The finding does not agree with the position of Osaghae (2010) ^[29] that some organizations incorporate ethnic diversity in their workforce in order to provide them with a competitive advantage. The author argued that ethnic diversity may bring along broader access to informational, social and cultural networks, which in turn stimulates creativity, innovativeness, and problem solving capabilities within organizations. Some organizations diversify their staff as a means to get access to and legitimize their presence on multicultural markets. For example, by matching their staff with the ethnic composition of clients, organizations argue that they are better able to address the needs of these customers (Barney, 2003) ^[5]. Also, it is the coexistence of the diverse races that exist around the world that Fearon (2003) ^[14], assumes to mean the engagements of ethnic identities and differences to gain advantage in situations of competition. According to Fernandez (2005), ethnic diversity implies diversity in languages, religions, race and cultures. They also added that there has been an increase in multicultural workforce in the organizations or utilizing greater participation and synergy to improve and increase both employee satisfaction and business performance. This increase is due to multicultural increase of our society. Ethnic diversity is highly relevant in an increasingly globalized world. It is a current fact of life. A moderate level of ethnic diversity has no effect in terms of performance of business outcomes, such as; sales, profit and market share. However if at least the majority of team members are ethnically diverse, then more ethnic diversity has a positive impact on performance.

Conclusion

Conclusion from the sum of evidence shows that employees of diverse religious background in UNICEM perform their duties in the same manner. In other words, the results concluded that there is no significant relationship between religions heterogeneity and performance of UNICEM. Furthermore, the study concludes that there is no discrimination of employee in UNICEM in terms of their ethnic background. Thus, employees from different ethnic background perform their duties creditably. Conclusively therefore, there is no significance relationship between ethnic diversity and performance of UNICEM.

Recommendations

1. Employees of diverse religious backgrounds should be allowed to observe their religious devotions.
2. Recruitment, promotion and appointment in UNICEM should not be based on ethnic background in other to have a workforce that is diverse in terms of ethnicity and most importantly employees should exercise tolerance and cooperate with others from different ethnic background.

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