

INFLUENCE OF DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES ON ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF SELECTED PUBLIC TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN MUBI ADAMAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study examined how different approaches to diversity management affect the performance of selected educational institutions in Adamawa State, Nigeria, using a cross-sectional survey research design in which a descriptive approach predominated. Using Yamani's (1964) formula for sample size determination, 387 respondents were selected from a population of 3,210 employees across the chosen institutions in Mubi, Adamawa State. Data were collected through a standardized face-to-face questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale. The hypotheses were tested inferentially at the 0.05 level of significance using multiple linear regression analysis. Version 26 of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was employed for both descriptive and inferential analyses. The findings revealed that the elements of diversity management strategies, particularly effective communication and good leadership, have a significant and positive influence on organizational performance in the selected tertiary institutions in Adamawa State. The study recommends that management should practice inclusive and fair leadership that engages all employees, irrespective of their diversity, without favoritism toward any particular group, as this will greatly enhance diversity management within the institutions.

Keywords: Diversity management, Organizational performance, effective communication, and Leadership.

Introduction

The modern workplace has become increasingly diverse due to globalization, which has transformed the world into a global village and interconnected people, cultures, and economies. Workplace diversity now encompasses national, ethnic, linguistic, organizational, and economic variations, making most organizations multicultural rather than uniform. This diversity fosters creativity, knowledge sharing, and innovation, transforming organizations into learning communities where varied perspectives enhance decision-making and overall performance (Mor, 2016).

As organizations grow more diverse, the need to cultivate inclusive learning cultures becomes essential. A diverse workforce can significantly improve productivity, cross-functional communication, and innovation through collaboration and shared experiences. However, challenges such as intergroup bias, financial and operational complexities, and gender disparities often emerge in managing diversity (Mor, 2016). Addressing these challenges

requires deliberate efforts to promote understanding, equity, and mutual respect within the workplace.

Diversity management is a strategic approach aimed at creating and maintaining an inclusive environment that values individuals' unique qualities and contributions. It involves implementing organizational policies and programs that promote equal opportunities, respect for differences, and cultural integration. Scholars such as Davis et al. (2016) and Nnadi and Chinedu (2019) emphasize that effective diversity management not only fosters employee inclusion and growth but also enhances organizational competitiveness and performance.

To ensure effective diversity management, organizations must focus on four key elements: effective communication, good leadership, sensitivity training, and teamwork. Clear and empathetic communication between leaders and employees builds trust, strengthens collaboration, and enhances organizational performance. Leadership commitment to promoting communication skills and emotional understanding within teams is essential for building cohesive, high-performing, and inclusive workplaces (Shonubi & Akintaro, 2016).

This study is motivated by the growing importance of managing workplace diversity resulting from globalization and increasing multiculturalism in organizations. It seeks to examine how effective diversity management practices such as communication, leadership, sensitivity training, and teamwork can enhance collaboration, innovation, and organizational performance. The study also aims to address persistent challenges like bias and inequality, emphasizing the need for inclusive strategies that maximize the potential of a diverse workforce.

Statement of the Problem

Effective diversity management fosters creativity, innovation, and efficiency by encouraging the exchange of diverse perspectives within the workplace. It aims to create an inclusive environment where individuals' differences and similarities are respected, allowing everyone to maximize their potential and contribute to organizational goals. Managers play a vital role in promoting multicultural management and ensuring employee satisfaction by addressing challenges such as communication barriers, cultural misunderstandings, and interpersonal conflicts. In today's diverse workplace, factors like age, ethnicity, and gender add complexity to decision-making, requiring managers to adopt fair, inclusive, and thoughtful approaches to leadership that promote collaboration, openness, and effective communication among employees.

Despite growing awareness of the importance of workforce diversity, organizations still face significant challenges in managing it effectively. Greenberg (2004) identified communication barriers, employee resistance to change, and weak institutionalization of diversity policies as key obstacles to effective diversity management. While scholars such as Deshwal and

Choudhary (2012), Harvey and Allard (2019), and Kirton and Green (2019) have highlighted the benefits of diversity in fostering inclusivity, studies also reveal that many institutions struggle to fully leverage its advantages. For instance, higher education institutions in the Meerut region continue to face challenges despite having diverse faculty members. Against this backdrop, the present study seeks to address these gaps by investigating the impact of diversity management particularly through effective communication and good leadership on the organizational performance of selected public tertiary institutions in Mubi, Adamawa State, Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the influence of diversity management on organisational performance of selected tertiary institution in Adamawa State, Nigeria. While the specific objectives are to:

- i. examine the influence of effective communication on organisational performance of selected Public Tertiary Institution in Mubi, Adamawa State;
- ii. ascertain the influence of good leadership on organisational performance of selected Public Tertiary Institution in Mubi, Adamawa State;

Research Hypotheses

To guide this study, the following hypotheses were explored:

1. H01: Effective communication does not significantly impact the organizational performance of selected public tertiary institutions in Mubi, Adamawa State.
2. H02: Good leadership does not significantly influence the organizational performance of public tertiary institutions in Mubi, Adamawa State.

Literature Review

Diversity Management

Workforce diversity encompasses the variety of demographic dimensions within an organization's labour force, including attributes such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, cultural background, and physical or neurological differences (Dessler, 2011). The researcher further explains that the range of perspectives within an organization's workforce arises from individuals of distinct cultural backgrounds coming together on a common platform to work toward a shared goal. According to Gomez-Mejia and Palich (2017), diversity introduces a variety of ideas to address challenges and develop innovative strategies, as individuals with different viewpoints contribute a broad range of alternatives for problem-solving. Therefore, having employees from diverse backgrounds and managing that diversity effectively is a key factor in enhancing organizational performance.

Initially, diversity management was viewed as an umbrella concept, regarded as a modernized alternative and restructuring of earlier affirmative action programs and Equal Employment

Opportunity (EEO) regulations under Title VII of the U.S. Civil Rights Act (Oppenheimer, 2016). It represents an approach to establishing a vision for recognizing and implementing diversity within organizational collaboration and structures (Deshwal & Choudhary, 2012). The term *diversity management* began to gain prominence in 1990 following an influential article by Roosevelt Thomas (Ivancevich & Gilbert, 2000; Pitts, 2009). Diversity management involves organizational strategies that promote inclusivity through structural adjustments in workplace dynamics, while aligning these efforts with institutional objectives (Bizri, 2018). This aligns with Sharma's (2016) view of diversity management as a proactive corporate effort to eliminate bias and foster respect for individual differences, regardless of race, religion, or other identity-based factors.

Effective Communication

Effective communication involves more than just exchanging information it encompasses expressing one's needs, concerns, ideas, and aspirations clearly and respectfully. It is also about actively listening to others, interpreting their messages accurately, and fostering mutual understanding. In a workplace or team environment, effective communication helps build trust, promotes collaboration, and reduces misunderstandings that could hinder productivity or relationships.

Furthermore, communication effectiveness depends on knowing when and how to seek assistance or clarification when challenges arise. Team members must be familiar with the available communication tools and channels, such as meetings, emails, or digital platforms, and use them appropriately. Equally important is recognizing and addressing barriers to communication whether they stem from language differences, cultural variations, or technological limitations to ensure that information flows freely and accurately across all levels of the organization (Gomez-Mejia & Palich, 2017).

Leadership

According to DuBrin (2012), leadership is the ability to inspire trust and cooperation among individuals who are essential to achieving organizational objectives. Because leadership remains one of the most studied topics in management research, numerous definitions of the term exist. The concept of leadership is rooted in human theory and continues to evolve as an essential quality of effective management (Horner). Leadership can be viewed as an individual process through which leaders apply their knowledge, skills, and experiences to accomplish organizational goals (Ameen & Ahmad, 2013).

It is imperative for leaders to understand the impact their leadership has on the overall success of their organizations. Michael (2010) asserts that leadership exerts a direct causal influence on organizations and their achievements. Leaders play a crucial role in defining an organization's values, shaping its culture, and guiding its adaptation to change. Furthermore,

they inspire and motivate employees, creating an environment where individuals feel empowered to contribute their best efforts, thereby driving organizational success. Leadership is not confined to management roles—it exists at all levels of an organization. Effective leaders share a common trait: they influence others to optimize the organization's resources, particularly its valuable human capital. Sustained success, therefore, depends on the appropriate application of leadership styles and techniques. As Northouse (2009) explains, leadership is a process of using persuasive influence to establish collective or institutional goals, encourage actions toward achieving those goals, and shape the overarching identity of the organization.

Organisational Performance

Frederick Taylor's scientific management principles from the early 20th century were foundational to our modern understanding of organizational performance. This concept refers to an organization's actual outcomes or results compared to its planned outputs (goals and objectives) that is why it remains a central focus of management research. It was also acknowledged that despite its widespread use in academic writing, there's no single, universally agreed-upon definition of organizational performance (Gavrea et al., 2011).

Richard and Shelor (2016) define Organizational performance spans three primary domains of company results: financial outcomes (such as profits, return on assets, and return on investment), product market results (including sales and market share), and shareholder value (encompassing total shareholder return and economic value added). Organizational performance is a concern for professionals across various Organizations today navigate complex challenges by integrating insights from fields such as strategic planning, operations management, financial strategies, legal frameworks, and organizational growth. A widely adopted methodology for overseeing performance is the balanced scorecard framework, which evaluates progress across diverse criteria, including financial outcomes (e.g., shareholder equity), customer satisfaction, ethical and societal contributions, operational workflows, and workforce advancement (Richard & Shelor, 2016).

Influence of Effective Communication on Organisational Performance

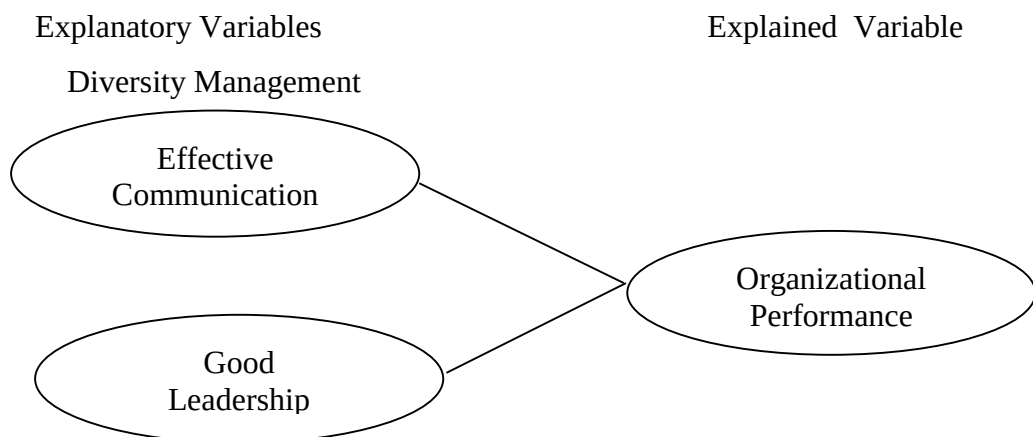
Communication between organisations plays essential significance among staff members in industries such as manufacturing. It involves actions of delivering and receiving data or communications through many different levels of authority, utilising various communications systems, and debating diverse themes of interest (Shonubi & Akintaro, 2016). Thus, in organizational dynamics, knowledge-sharing platforms, resource allocation frameworks, and policy dissemination processes are utilised to enable the seamless exchange of information, assets, and regulatory guidelines. Therefore, in order to achieve effective performance, manufacturing organisations need successful communication strategies for employees to communicate across the organisational structure. This method the company enhances the communication flow within the entire departmental area for seamless and better operating of

the business and also higher employee performance. This suggests that communication patterns have their own value in organisational communication and consequently have an impact on worker efficiency (Shonubi & Akintaro, 2016).

Influence of Good Leadership on Organisational Performance

Elenkov's (2012) research revealed that participatory management had a favourable influence on worker performance. Under a democratic leadership approach, employees are granted the authority to make decisions and are urged to communicate these choices with both management and their peers. This leadership style cultivates a sense of responsibility within the workforce, while also delivering balanced recognition and constructive feedback. Furthermore, Bhargavi and Yaseen (2016) investigated the influence of participatory leadership on staff productivity. According to their findings, democratic leadership has a good impact on an organization's performance because it gives employees the chance to express and carry out their creative ideas and participate in the decision-making process. Long-term benefits to the company from this leadership style include preparing the next generation of leaders. Furthermore, as Choi (2007) highlights, a democratic leader prioritizes group participation and open dialogue, which positively influences the performance of their followers.

Fig. 2.1: Conceptual model



Source: Researcher's Design, (2025)

The two elements of diversity management that are most pertinent to the Nigerian context effective communication and good leadership and their respective influences on organisational effectiveness served as the foundation for the development of the Conceptual Model (Fig. 1). According to this conceptual framework, the influences of diversity management on organisational performance might be significant or not, depending on the outcome of the final result of the analysis.

Theoretical Framework

Resource-Based View Theory

Wernerfelt (1984) established the Resource Based View (RBV) theory, which developed the idea that an organization's approach is a feature of the complement of the assets seized. The Resource-Based View (RBV) theory examines how an organization's capabilities and resources contribute to its competitive advantage, which ultimately influences its overall performance. The approach places a heavy emphasis on creating and effectively using assets unique to a business (Niazi, 2011). The RBV emphasises that the success of organisations is dependent on the extent of its asset base. This is because an organization's performance cannot be improved by resources and capabilities that are not tied to ongoing operations and business procedures. RBV focusses primarily on how an organization's resources will impact the implementation of diversity efforts. A company's resources can be divided into four categories: corporate capital resources, human capital, financial capital, and physical capital.

Organisations strive to employ these resources in a manner that would support and enhance their performance because they have the potential to either help or hinder their operations. Organisations with greater diversity have an advantage over homogeneous organisations from a business standpoint. Yang and Konrad (2011) discovered that companies implementing more diversity management techniques had reduced employee attrition and that these methods had a favourable interaction with an innovation strategy, leading to increased performance and productivity. When it comes to performance, the RBV serves as the focal point for all human-centered resources.

A strategy's foundation is an organization's distinct resources and competencies, according to Hitt et al. (2005). An organization's success is determined by the types of resources it possesses, which can either help or hinder it from creating and executing plans effectively. The RBV points that organisations has to justify that it has good stock of resources to deliver diversity management strategies successfully and effectively. Organisations likewise; aim to advance through strengthening their areas of strength, decreasing their areas of weakness, seeing and seizing opportunities, and defeating dangers. This is significant because, in the rapidly evolving environment, every organisation wants to become more effective and relevant (Wernerfelt, 2011). As a result, competences tend to promote both individual and corporate engagement and are flexible enough to accommodate diversity management procedures.

Upper Echelon Theory

Theory of upper echelon (UET). According to Harmbrick and Mason (1984), managerial foundation characteristics and skills can predict organisational outcomes including performance levels and planned choices. UET, which was founded on strategic top leadership, argues that decision-making is influenced by individual qualities since leaders base their choices on their social, cognitive, and physical attributes. According to the idea, the senior leadership's many attributes such as age, career specialisation, tenure, and educational

attainment affect their strategy decisions, which in turn have an immediate impact on the organization's performance and choice of organisation strategy (Nielsen, 2010).

As senior management teams is more sensitive to the issues of attracting, retaining, and advancing diverse employees, Harmbrick and Mason (1984) contend that companies aiming to attract, retain, and benefit from a broad range of talent are often urged to start by increasing the variety within their top leadership groups. They also contend that senior management team diversity can raise organisational performance levels, therefore EUT explains the reasons for organisational variations and concentrates on how leadership influences these differences and impacts organisational success. People lose motivation as a result of comparing their own effort-to-compensation ratio to that of another person.

As per this concept, employees strive to maintain equilibrium between their perceived contributions and rewards by aligning them with those of their colleagues, ensuring fairness in the relationship between the inputs they provide to their roles such as education, time, experience, dedication, and effort and the benefits they derive, including higher remuneration, acknowledgment, and advancement. Individuals seek to ensure that their rewards reflect their organizational inputs in comparison to others. As a result, leaders aim to improve their decision-making by specialising in fields that improve their performance. For this reason, the idea is crucial to evaluating how effective leadership affects the organisational performance of Nigerian institutions.

Empirical Review

Ayman and crew (2022) zoomed in on how diversity management shapes employees' engagement, zeroing in on the roles organizational trust and job insecurity play. They rolled out a survey, quizzing 580 workers from Hungarian firms in fields like marketing, management consulting, IT, and logistics, to test ideas brewed from prior studies. Running the numbers through Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), they found that diversity management meaningfully lifts employee engagement, with organizational trust and job insecurity stepping in as key players that significantly bridge that connection. Along with social exchange theory, our research contributes to affirming that by implementing proper diversity management practices and by ensuring a trustworthy environment and outstanding work conditions, managers are constructively able to assist their employees, raise their involvement, and minimize the level of job insecurities.

Meanwhile, Ajala (2022) dug into how workforce diversity can be harnessed to make the most of human resources in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Using Taro Yamen model. The census sample technique was used for principals while the simple random technique was used to select the teachers from the various schools in Rivers State and was used for the study. The instrument for data collection is Questionnaire on Management of Workforce Diversity for Effective Human Resource Utilization (QMWDEHRU). The four-point Likert scale was

used for the study. The instrument was validated by expert in Business education and measurement and evaluation and the reliability index of 0.73 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha method. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation and hypotheses tested with the t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that principals and teachers agreed that the ways of managing workforce diversity in public secondary is an encompassing that will result to minimizing the impact of the diversity in schools. Both two groups agreed that there are challenges affecting managing workforce diversity for effective human resource utilization in public secondary schools in Rivers State but these challenges differ from one area to another area. Based on the findings, it was recommended that all forms of cultural and language-based diversity considerations and discrimination in recruitment, promotion processes, and daily employee activities should be eradicated. School authorities and teachers should focus on fostering a positive work environment that values both the similarities and differences among employees, leveraging these to nurture creativity and drive innovation. Moreso, non-governmental organisations and civil society groups should organize sensitization programmes that will promote national consciousness and national unity in diversity amongst secondary school workers.

Elias (2021) took a close look at how managing workforce diversity affects employee performance in Kenya's civil service. The study leaned on a descriptive research approach, using a semi-structured, self-filled questionnaire to gather fresh data, while also digging into existing theoretical and empirical writings for secondary insights. The focus was Kenya's civil service a hefty group of 256,651 people. From that, Elias zeroed in on a sample of 384 respondents, pulled from 26,000 civil servants stationed at the headquarters of 18 government ministries in Nairobi City. A pilot test checked the questions for clarity and trustworthiness. The analysis mixed quantitative and qualitative angles open-ended responses got a thematic breakdown, shared through narrative and direct quotes, while the numbers were crunched with statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) window version 21 to generate both descriptive and inferential data. The findings were summarized into frequencies and percentages and presented using Tables, pie charts, bar charts. The study employed multiple regression and inferential analyses to unpack its findings, proving handy for making sense of the results. It turned up a clear, positive link between employee performance and several factors: Diversity Policies ($r=.300$, $p=.000$), sensitivity training ($r=.136$, $p=.012$), work teams ($r=.258$, $p=.000$), affirmative action ($r=.322$, $p=.000$), and work committees ($r=.314$, $p=.000$). From this, a few suggestions emerged government ministries need to ramp up awareness about managing workforce diversity and its power to lift employee output. Plus, there's a call for thorough training, not just for HR folks but for managers across all ministries. The takeaway? Diversity management meaningfully shapes how civil servants perform, so it's worth funneling resources into strengthening that process.

METHODOLOGY

An exploratory survey research design was used for this study. This design is suitable for exploring relationships, patterns, and perceptions among variables without manipulating them. It allows for the collection of primary data directly from respondents, providing insights into their experiences, attitudes, and opinions. This research focused on three tertiary institutions in Mubi, Adamawa State, Nigeria: Adamawa State University, Federal Polytechnic, and the College of Health Technology. Employees of Adamawa State University Mubi, Federal Polytechnic, Mubi, and College of Health Technology, Mubi, make up the study's population. There are 667 employees at Adamawa State University in Mubi, 2418 employees at Federal Polytechnic in Mubi who are both academic and non-academic, and 127 employees at the College of Health and Technology who are both senior and junior employees.

In determination of the sample size, the researcher adopted the use of Taro Yamani's formula (1964).

$$\begin{aligned}
 n &= \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} \\
 N &= 3212 \\
 n &= \frac{3212}{1 + 3212(0.05)^2} \\
 n &= \frac{3212}{1 + 3212(0.0025)} \\
 &= \frac{3212}{8.03} \\
 &= 386.8 \text{ i.e., } \approx 387
 \end{aligned}$$

Hence, 387 is the sample size used in this study. Convenience sampling technique was used to arrive at the specific sample size. In this study, primary data was use in the collection of data through the use of closed ended questionnaires. The hypotheses were conducted using inferential statistics.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Results

Out of 387 distributed questionnaires, 363 were returned and deemed valid, resulting in a response rate of 93.7%. This substantially exceeds the minimum acceptable response rates suggested by Rogelburg and Staton (2007), who proposed 35–40% for organizational-level studies and 50% for individual-level studies using survey designs.

Hypotheses Testing

Table 1: Model Summary of influence of Diversity Management on Organisational Performance

Var.	Coef.	Std. Err.	t-values	Sig-Values	Hypotheses
1 (Constant)	37.973	3.129	12.136	0.000	
EC	0.369	0.073	4.409	0.000	H ₀ 1 Rejected
GL	0.311	0.074	5.402	0.000	H ₀ 2 Rejected
R	0.770				
R ²	0.825				
Adjusted R	0.817				
F-Stats	43.055				

a. Dependent Variable: OP

(Source: Computed using SPSS 21. 2025)

The regression model's overview of the influence of effective communication and good leadership on organisational performance is displayed in Table 1. The bivariate association between the independent and dependent variables is strong and positive, according to the Pearson correlation value ($r = 0.77$). According to the coefficients of predictability (R-Square) value taken from the regression model summary, effective communication and good leadership accounts for around 82.5% of the variation in organisational performance, with the remaining 17.5% being ascribed to factors not included in the study's model. The model's goodness of fit, as indicated by the analysis of variance (ANOVA) findings, is statistically significant ($F = 43.055$, $P < 0.05$), suggesting that the variables in the model have collectively predicted the performance of the organisation.

The regression for the individual contribution of the independent variables as represented by the understudied beta-value of 37.973 indicates that one unit increase in effective communication and good leadership account for 37.973 units increase in the level of organisational performance and the relationship is significant at 1% level of significance. Hence, we conclude that effective communication and good leadership has significant positive influence on organisational performance in selected tertiary institutions in Adamawa State, Nigeria.

H₀1: There is no significant influence of effective communication on organisational performance in selected Public Tertiary Institution in Mubi, Adamawa State

The influence of effective communication (EC) on organisational performance was investigated in this hypothesis. EC has a statistically significant and favourable impact on organisational performance, according to the regression findings shown in Table 1 ($b = 0.369$, $t = 4.409$, $p = 0.000$). Accordingly, there is a 0.369-unit rise in organisational performance for every unit increase in EC. As a result, the alternative hypothesis that effective communication

significantly influences organisational performance in a subset of public tertiary institutions in Mubi, Adamawa State is supported and the null hypothesis is rejected.

Ho2: There is no significant influence of good leadership on organisational performance in selected Public Tertiary Institution in Mubi, Adamawa State

The impact of Good Leadership (GL) on organisational performance was examined in this hypothesis. GL has a statistically significant and favourable impact on organisational performance, according to the regression results in Table 4.16 ($b = 0.311$, $t = 5.402$, $p = 0.000$). This indicates that there is a 0.311 unit gain in organisational performance for every unit rise in GL. The alternative hypothesis, according to which effective leadership significantly affects organisational performance in a subset of Adamawa State's postsecondary institutions, is thus supported and the null hypothesis is rejected.

Summary of Findings

The summary of the findings of the study include:

- i. The results showed that, at a few public tertiary institutions in Mubi, Adamawa State, effective communication significantly and favourably affects organisational performance.
- ii. The aforementioned finding also shown that effective leadership significantly and favourably affects organisational performance in a subset of public tertiary institutions located in Mubi, Adamawa State.

Conclusion

Effective communication significantly and positively impacts organizational performance in the selected Adamawa State tertiary institutions while employees perceived that formal written communication within the organizational structure is consistently prompt, facilitating the timely and accurate exchange of information. They also believed that using appropriate communication channels helps them meet performance standards, effectively managing diversity within the organization.

Furthermore, strong leadership plays a crucial role in enhancing organizational performance, particularly in the context of diversity management and employees believed a good leader would give bonuses to employees' who have good performance and work in diverse organisations. Employees believe that leaders, regardless of their diversity, always provide comfort at work, such as the facilities provided, even though some employees don't believe that good leaders can be just leaders, no matter their diversity. This signifies that diversity influences some leaders in an organisation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are offered to address the identified issues;

1. It is no doubt that effective communication is an essential tool of diversity management; therefore, management of the selected tertiary institutions should exploit all means of communication within and outside the institutions that will aid in managing diversity among employees in the institutions.
2. The management should practice good leadership that will carry every employee along regardless of their diversity without showing favoritism to any diverse employee or groups of employees in the institution, as this will go a long way to managing diversity in the institution.

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