



Cultural Diversity and Employee's Performance in Millennium Industries Awka, Anambra State.

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ABSTRACT

Workplace differences manifest in various forms such as ethnic disparity, religious belief and language variety and this has resulted to discriminatory attitude among staff of Millennium Industries Ltd, Awka, Anambra State. The study ascertained the effect of cultural diversity on employee's performance in Millennium Industries Ltd, Awka, Anambra State. However, the specific objectives were to investigate the effect of ethnic disparity on quality of work, to examine the influence of unbalanced religion on employee efficiency, and the effect of language variety on individual goal. The study was anchored on Person-environment fit (P-E fit) theory by French, Caplan and Harrison. The study adopted survey research design and the population size of the study is 106. A sample size of 106 were determined using complete enumeration method. Data were collected with the aid of questionnaire and bio data were presented using simple frequency and percentage tables while other data were analyzed using arithmetic mean. Hypotheses were tested using simple regression with the aid of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS version 20). Findings revealed that there is significant effect of cultural diversity on employee performance in Millennium Industries Ltd, Awka, Anambra State by indicating significant effect of ethnic disparity on quality of work, there is significant effect of unbalanced religion on employee efficiency, and that language variety has effect on individual goals. The study concluded that cultural diversity components such as ethnic disparity, religious belief and language variety could affect employee performance. The study recommends that management needs to adopt oneness or mixed cultural system of operations as a cultural alignment strategy in a bid to reduce the dangers caused by both cultural and ethnic diversity.

Keywords: cultural diversity, employee performance, industry, ethnic disparity.

Introduction

Cultural diversity refers to the differences in the components of culture at workplace such as differences in belief system, language, dressing, religion, perception and behavior. Cultural diversity plays a significant role at workplace and if not managed could result in workplace discrimination (Stahl, Maznevsh, Voigt & Jonsen, 2016). Employees hired to work in an organization are from different cultural background which reflect in the behavior of employees at workplace and as well affect relationships that exists at workplace. The issues arising from the presence of workplace diversity is of relevance to the performance of employees as behavior and job characteristics seem to affect the degree of task accomplishment, employee engagement and job commitment as organization tends to operate with diverse individuals who may be different in terms of ethnic, gender and religion (Ezeadi, 2019). Organizations and their employees do not exist in a vacuum but in a specific cultural or socio-cultural environment. For an organization, to remain relevant in a competitive environment, it is necessary for the management to hire employees who represents its demographics (Jehn & Bezrukovaka, 2014). This could include people who represent a particular ethnic community, who understands and knows the needs of their culture. It could also mean having a representative from a particular religion, who may be able to give insight on the acceptable and non-offensive traditions that could be used by the organizations, for example, during a marketing campaign (Worman, 2018). Understanding the effect of culture on human behavior is crucial to the business success of any organization. For an organization to succeed and have a competitive edge over the rest in the industry, it has to greatly embrace diversity to be able to realize its benefits. (Farrer, 2016). Being able to handle workplace diversity issues as well as develop and implement diversity plans gives an organization several benefits (Stahl, Maznevsh, Voigt & Jonsen, 2016).

Millennium Industries Ltd is a Plastic Manufacturing company in Awka, Anambra State that deals with the production of plastic chairs, tables, spoons and plates, drums and buckets among other items (Ukam, 2019). The company employs the service of employees from different cultural background and this seems to reflect in the workplace relationship of employees as it is believed that the workforce of Millennium Industries Ltd comprised people of various ethnic group with different value system as it was reported by staff from the Support and development department of Millennium Industries Ltd that there exists informal group due to the discriminating attitude of the employees with regards to ethnicity (Mkpareni, 2019). These informal group may not function effectively if they find themselves in team outside the informal group formed. This seems to affect the quality of work of employees as their input may be withheld as well discrimination among workforce may be present as this do not support the ground of work cooperation. The nature of varying value system of employees in Millennium Industries Ltd is likely to reduce the morale, increase employee turnover and cause significant communication gap if not effectively managed. One of the most salient dimensions of team heterogeneity is ethnicity (Alesina & Laferrara, 2015).

Kellough and Naff (2014) reported that almost 90% of the Manufacturing firms have not effectively manage cultural diversity problems. There may be little to discuss when it comes to understanding the actual effect of ethnic diversity on performance outcomes in the Millennium Industries Ltd, Awka, Anambra State.

Cultural differences in Millennium Industries Ltd seems to reflect even in the unbalanced religion at workplace. The problem of unbalanced religion seems to reflect in the policy of the organization as staff working in the organization are off varying religion of which the firm attached preferential treatment to Sundays along which is worship days for Christians while the other religions at workplace do not have balanced treatment in terms of days of worship as the firm operates all days aside Sunday irrespective of religion differences. Another issue of unbalanced religion is the identification of employees of few other religions aside the religion that is vast in the South East and the efficiency of employees could be affected especially when they are made to work among team members of various belief system. This was reflected in the statement of Weaver and Agle (2015) as they indicate that unbalanced religion affects role expectations, internalized as a religious self-identity, can influence ethical behavior or values of individual. Same with the statement of Ferm (2013) as he contends that an acceptable definition of unbalanced religion refers to “a set of behaviors or meanings which are connected to the action of a religious person” (Gallup, 2018).

In addition to the ethnicity disparity experienced by staff in Millennium Industries Ltd, it was observed that there is language barrier as this is common among the casual staff of the firm. Most of communications among these staff are in their local dialect and this could be the reason why staff prefers working with colleagues from same ethnicity, hence, there may be conflict in the individual goals of employees in Millennium Industry. Language barrier could be a hindrance in workplace communication if not properly checked (Okpanel & Adegho, 2017). The differences in languages seem to affect workplace relationship and activeness of employees among teams of uncommon ground. It is with the above problem statement that the study of the effect of cultural diversity on employee performance in Millennium Industries was carried out. However, the specific objectives were to investigate the effect of ethnic disparity on quality of work, to examine the influence of unbalanced religion on employee efficiency, and the effect of language variety on individual goal.

Literature Review

Cultural Diversity

Cultural diversity refers to differences in lifestyle, languages, ethnicity, values and religion of people within a well –defined environment (Kluckhohn, 2016). Kluckhohn (2016) posits that “the core essence of culture consists of traditional (i.e historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values” (Dhakshayene & Anneli, 2013). This is in turn passed on from one generation to their next (Samovar, 2019). Furthermore, culture consists of explicit and implicit patterns and includes customs, morals and laws that shapes behavior and affects how the world is viewed (Dehashayene & Anneli, 2013). This can be argued since culture is a type of diversity that is difficult to change and is important for a person’s development in early socialization as well as ongoing life which according to Loden and Rosner (2015) are characteristics to primary diversity. This is however a difficult concept to categorize since culture also seems to be something that is developed over a period of time rather than something immediate and constant, like for example physical features and age that are typical primary dimensions of diversity. Cultural diversity often results in prejudice and stereotyping (Okpako, 2015). Career outcomes tend to be more positive when phenotype and culture are congruent than when they are dissimilar (Cox, 2013). Thus, it’s instructive for managers to note that an organization’s cultural mix affects the ability of out-group members to perform within the organization. Some derivatives of cultural diversity that negatively affect minority culture members include prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping. Prejudice here is understood as a prejudgment of someone on the basis of some characteristics which may include cultural idiosyncrasies, while discrimination speaks to behavioral biases toward a person based on his/her group identity. Research suggests that minority group size also affects the level of discrimination. Majority group members tend to increase levels of discrimination against minorities when the latter’s percentage of representation is low (Blau, 2017). Stereotyping also presents an obstacle to minority group members of an organization.

Employee Performance

Employee performance refers the effective discharge of duty for which one is hired to do (Odhiambo, 2018). Zhuwao (2017) define employee performance as the successful completion of tasks by a selected individual, whereas Krishnan, Gowrishankar, and Kanagaraj (2017) explained as efficiently and effectively utilizing the available resources within a changing environment. Employee performance is depending on the willingness and also the openness of the employees itself on doing their job (Sinha, 2013). Further Sinha (2013) stated that by having this willingness and openness of the employees in doing their job, it could increase the employee’s productivity which also leads to the performance (Sinha, 2013). An employees’ performance can also be determined as a person’s ability to perform also including the opportunity and willingness to perform as well. The meaning of willingness to perform means that the desire of the employees in putting as much effort towards their job (Eysenck, 2015). However, Howell and Hall-Merenda (2012) has a different point of view regarding this employee’s performance. Howell stated that employees’ performance is all about social standing which also related to the point of view that being stated by Greenberg and Baron (2014). Greenberg and Baron (2014) had stated that it gives a positive impact on the relationship in between of the job performance and also the vocation. There are several factors that being described by Stup (2013) towards the success of the employee’s performance. The factors are such as physical work environment, equipment, meaningful work, performance expectation, and feedback on performance, reward for good or bad system, standard operating procedures, knowledge, skills and attitudes. Stup (2013) also explained that to have a standard performance, employers have to get the employees task to be done on track as to achieve the organization goal or target. By having the work or job done on track, employers could be able to monitor their employees and help them to improve their performance. Furthermore, a reward system should be implemented based on the performance of the employees.

Theoretical Review

Person-Environment Fit (P-E Fit) Theory

This study was anchored on Person-environment fit (P-E fit) theory by French, Caplan and Harrison in 1982). French, Caplan and Harrison explained how the individual and environment can match. Hence its important implications in the workplace, person-environment fit have maintained a Continuance position in industrial and organizational psychology and such fields. Person characteristics may include a person's physical needs, values, goals, abilities, or character, while environmental characteristic could include intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, need of a job or role, cultural values, or behavior of other individuals and collectives in the individual's social environment. Person-environment fit can be described as a specific type of individual situation interaction that includes the similarity among the corresponding individual and environment dimensions. This is not recognized to the fact that person-environment fit coincide a number of subsets, such as person-supervisor fit and person-job fit, which are conceptually distinct from one another. However, it is generally assumed that person-environment fit succeeds to positive outcomes, such as efficiency, performance, and overall. Even when person – situation interactions as they connect to fit have been discussed in the scientific literature for decades, the area has yet to reach consensus on how to depict and put them in practice person –environment fit.

Empirical Review

Kemunto (2019) studied the effects of employee cultural diversity on organizational performance in oil Libya Petrol Stations, Nairobi. The study adopted descriptive quantitative research method. Primary data were collected with the use of Five Scale Likert questionnaire which was administered to respondents of oil Libya petrol stations situated at Nairobi. Data submitted through questionnaire was entered into SPSS 2.0 statistical software and analyzed for descriptive statistics. Regression analysis was used to establish the relationship between employee cultural diversity and organizational performance, the findings of the study revealed that employee ethnic had effect on organization performance. The study also indicated that cultural values affect organization performance positively and lastly employee language variables did not have a significant effect on organizational performance with only ethnicity and negative working practices having a positive significant effect on organizational performance.

Dulaimi & Hariz (2018) researched on the impact of cultural diversity on the effectiveness of construction project firms in Dubai. The study made use of descriptive survey research design and a well-structured questionnaire of five point Likert scale was used to collect data from 250 managers. Regression Analysis and correlation was used to test the relationship between the variables. The findings of the study showed that there is no significant relationship between the degree of project teams, cultural diversity and their overall performance measures. However, the results showed that there is a negative relationship between the degree of cultural diversity and output, productivity and efficiency.

Methodology

The study adopted survey research design because the nature of the study seeks direct opinion of respondents through questionnaire. Since survey research design supports the collection of data via primary source either through the questionnaire approach, observation or interview medium. Survey research design was considered appropriate for the study. The opinion of respondents was collated on the subject matter with the aid of structured questionnaire. The population of this study comprised management and employees of Millennium Industries Ltd, Awka, Anambra State. The total staff strength of the company is 106. The sample size was determined through the complete enumeration method as the population size which is 106 is within the research capacity of the researcher. Since the population size is small, the population size would be the same as the sample size which is 106 respondents. The study adopted content validity of the questionnaire, reliability of instrument was obtained through Cronbach Alpha method. Responses relating to questions on the questionnaire were analyzed using arithmetic mean and hypotheses were tested using Simple Regression on Statistical packages for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.

Data Analysis

Analysis of Data Related to Research Questions

Decision rule

The decision in the analysis section would be determine by the average of the responses of respondents. Strongly agree (5 points), agree (4 points), undecided (3 points), disagree (2 points) and strongly disagree (1 point). The average of the responses are $(5+4+3+2+1)/5 = 3.0$. Therefore, mean score below 3.0 would be considered as disagree and mean score of 3.0 and above would be considered as agreed.

Table 4.2.1 Analysis of Respondents' responses to the extent does ethnic disparity affects quality of work.

S/N	Questionnaire Items	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Remark
The effect of ethnic disparity on quality of work								
1.	Staff of this organization are from different cultural background and this affects the flow of work in this organization.	27	24	11	19	14	3.3	Agree

2.	Staff from the same cultural background works prefers to work together than staff from other cultural background and this has hindered high quality of work.	29	26	15	14	11	3.51	Agree
3.	I relate with staff that shares similar ethnic background than staff from other ethnic background and I achieve more with this approach.	12	21	9	27	26	2.64	Disagree
4.	We put in our best into our assigned roles in this organization despite the difference in ethnicity.	33	39	7	12	4	3.89	Agree
5.	The issue of differences in ethnicity affects the smooth flow of work due to poor coordination at workplace.	28	22	5	23	17	3.22	Agree
Grand Average							3.31	Agree

Source; Computation of Respondents' Responses

Table 4.2.1 shows that respondents agreed to the questions relating to effect of ethnic diversity on quality of work with grand average of 3.31. But disagreed to relating with staff that shares similar ethnicity than staff from other ethnic background and they have achieved more via this approach with mean score of 2.64.

Table 4.2.2 Analysis of Respondents' responses to the effect of unbalanced religion on employee efficiency.

S/N	Questionnaire Items	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Remark
The effect of religious belief on employee efficiency								
1.	There is variation in the belief system of staff in this organization and some staff finds it difficult to flow with work.	14	21	8	28	24	2.72	Disagree
2.	Our differences in religion influences the manner at which work is carried out in this organization.	23	25	11	19	17	3.08	Agree
3.	Management gives preferential treatment to staff of certain religion than the others and this resulted in poor attitude to staff who perceived unfairness.	13	16	2	35	29	2.46	Disagree
4.	I am very active at workplace even with the religion differences at my workplace.	36	32	8	13	6	3.83	Agree
5.	Religion differences do not affect my work attitude as I use the resources of this organization for its designated purpose.	24	27	19	15	10	3.4	Agree
Grand Average							3.10	Agree

Source; Computation of Respondents' Response

Table 4.2.2 shows that respondents agreed to questions relating to the effect of religious belief on employee efficiency with mean scores of 3.08, 3.83 and 3.40 respectively with grand mean scores of 3.10. But disagreed to presence of variation in the belief system of staff which have resulted in staff finding it difficult to flow with work with average score of 2.72 and management giving preferential treatment to certain staff with similar religion resulting in poor attitude to work with average of 2.46.

Table 4.2.3 Analysis of Respondents' responses to the effect of language variety on individual goals.

S/N	Questionnaire Items	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Remark
The effect of language variety on individual goal								
1.	We have staff with different languages in this organization and this affects cooperation towards set goals.	19	28	7	25	16	3.09	Agree
2.	Staff with similar languages communicate better than staff of different languages resulting in conflicting goals.	29	35	11	13	7	3.69	Agree
3.	Languages is a barrier to communication in this organization making it difficult to communicate work flow in this organization.	21	26	13	18	17	3.17	Agree
4.	There are people with different goals and languages in this organization.	35	33	13	8	6	3.87	Agree
5.	Even with the presence of differences in languages, the behaviour of staff is influenced by personal goals.	24	31	14	11	15	3.40	Agree
Grand Mean							3.44	Agree

Source; computation of Respondents' Responses

Table 4.2.3 shows that respondents agreed to questions on the effect of language variety on individual goal attainment with mean scores of 3.09, 3.69, 3.17, 3.87 and 3.40 respectively. The grand average is 3.44.

Test of Hypotheses**Test of Hypothesis One**

H₀: There is no significant effect of ethnic disparity on quality of work.

Table 4.3.1a Model Summary of Ethnic Disparity**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.716 ^a	.513	.475	34.82183

a. Predictors: (Constant), Ethnic_disparity

Table Summary

Table 4.3.2a above shows that Regression Coefficient with R=0.716, ethnic disparity significantly affects quality of work R square of 0.513.

Table 4.3.1b ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	16573.126	1	16573.126	13.668	.003 ^b
	Residual	15763.274	94	1212.560		
	Total	32336.400	95			

a. Dependent Variable: Quality_of_work

b. Predictors: (Constant), Ethnic_diversity

Table Summary

The Anova Table shows that at n-1 degree of freedom, that is $95-1=94$ with $P=0.003$ (that is $P<0.05$). Since P value is less than 0.05, there is significant effect of ethnic diversity on quality of work.

4.3.1c Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	24.421	14.022		1.742	.105
Ethnic_diversity	.618	.167	.716	3.697	.003

a. Dependent Variable: Quality_of_work

Table 4.3.2c above shows that at the coefficient of $P=0.003$ ($P<0.05$), the alternate hypothesis would be accepted that there is significant effect of ethnic diversity on quality of work.

Test of Hypothesis Two

H_0 : Religious belief has no significant influence on employee efficiency.

Table 4.3.2a Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.683 ^a	.467	.426	39.53671

a. Predictors: (Constant), Unbalanced_religion

Summary

Table 4.3.2a shows that with Regression Co-efficient $R=0.683$ and 0.426 , religious belief has effect on employee efficiency.

Table 4.3.2b ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	17812.630	1	17812.630	11.395	.005 ^b
Residual	20320.970	94	1563.152		
Total	38133.600	95			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee_efficiency

b. Predictors: (Constant), Religious belief

The ANOVA test table shows the P value is 0.005 which indicates significant effect as stated by the decision rule. Since, P value is less than 0.05, the alternate hypothesis would be accepted that there is significant effect of religious belief on employee efficiency.

Table 4.3.3c Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-8.514	23.944		-.356	.728
Religious belief	1.141	.338	.683	3.376	.005

a. Dependent Variable: Employee_efficiency

The coefficient table shows that with P value of 0.005, according to the decision rule, the null hypotheses would be rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted that there is significant effect of religious belief on employee efficiency with $R = 0.683$.

4.3.3 Test of Hypothesis Three

H_{03} : There is no significant effect of language variety on individual goal.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.679 ^a	.461	.419	19.59467

a. Predictors: (Constant), Language_variety

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4264.237	1	4264.237	11.106	.005 ^b
	Residual	4991.363	94	383.951		
	Total	9255.600	95			

a. Dependent Variable: Individual_goal

c. Predictors: (Constant), Language_variety

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.640	13.236		.426	.677
	Language_variety	.877	.263	.679	3.333	.005

a. Dependent Variable: Individual_goals

From tables in the test of the third hypothesis, result showed that there is significant effect of language variety on individual goals at $r=0.679$, $n=95-1=94$ and $p =0.005$. Since P value < 0.05 , we accept the alternate hypothesis that there is positive effect of language variety on individual goals in Millennium Industries Ltd, Awka, Anambra State.

Discussion of Findings

The test of hypotheses revealed that there is significant effect of cultural diversity on employee performance in Millennium Industries Ltd, Awka, Anambra State. The test of the first hypothesis revealed that there is significant effect of ethnic disparity on quality of work. This is in line with the findings of Frimpong and Fan (2010) revealed that ethnic diversity has a positive impact on subsequent team performance. The test of the second hypothesis revealed that there is significant effect of religious belief and employee efficiency. This was supported by the study of Michael (2017) when he states that religion defines the belief system of staff as it affects the manner at which work is performed as well as work relationship within the organization. The third hypothesis revealed that there is significant effect of language disparity on individual goals. Though, no study has merge language disparity on individual goals but the opinion of Uduh & Edeh (2014) posits that language differences results in tribalism and favoritism at workplace and this often results in organizational politics.

Summary of Findings

The test of hypotheses revealed that there is significant effect of cultural diversity on employee performance in Millennium Industries Ltd, Awka, Anambra State through the following findings;

1. The test of the first hypothesis shows that there is significant effect of ethnic disparity on quality of work with $R=0.716$. This implies that ethnicity plays significant role in work cooperation towards achieving high quality of work.

2. The test of the second hypothesis revealed that there is significant effect of religious belief on employee efficiency. This implies that staff with less populated religion could be affected on the job as they may not be free to adopt some practices on the job due to perceived rejection by colleagues.
3. The test of the third hypotheses revealed that language variety affects the actualization of individual goals. This implies that language differences could result in communication barrier and as well affects work relationship which has tendency of affecting individual goals in the organization.

Conclusion

The study concluded that cultural diversity components such as ethnic disparity, religious belief and language variety could affect employee performance. It was deduced that ethnic disparity at workplace can affect team work as staff would cooperate more with team members of similar ethnicity than other staff. The potential effect of ethnic disparity is tribalism and favoritism, high indulgence in organizational politics whereby staff would want colleagues of similar ethnic background to occupy sensitive position so as to attract favoritism. This could affect the quality of work because favoritism and tribalistic practices do not consider qualification to assign jobs or rewards. The study concluded that religious belief could affect the level of employee efficiency especially when employees do not fit into the religious practices or belief system at workplace. religion is considered one of the factors that shapes the behavior and belief system of staff at workplace and in times of hiring staff, the population of a particular belief group as against the population of another is not considered and this has resulted in unbalanced religion. Thus in a situation whereby management gives preferential treatment to a staff that shares similar religion than other, it often reduces the span of operation of staff who feel inferior resulting low efficiency of staff. Lastly, the study concluded that language variety is a barrier to communication and communication is necessary for goal alignment and work coordination towards set goals.

Recommendations

The following were recommended by the study;

1. Management needs to adopt oneness or mixed cultural system of operations as a cultural alignment strategy so as to reduce the dangers caused by ethnic diversity.
2. There should be effective approach to checkmate the threats imposed by religious belief. This will establish some level of employee efficiency on the job.
3. There should be policy guiding the use of unofficial languages in the organization so as to ensure that all members of the organization speak and understand similar language as it is an essential element of communication.

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