

WORKFORCE DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIA PUBLIC SERVICE: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

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ABSTRACT: *Workforce diversity management in general term has, become a crucial part of organizational competitiveness and effectiveness not just in Nigeria public service but in other large corporations globally. It is no doubt that diversity management is increasingly becoming a standard of human resources management in contemporary time. Socio-economic forces like globalization and the internationalization of public issues contribute to expand the flow of labour across ethnic and national boundaries and have facilitated the constant exchange of materials, as well as symbolic and human resource. To remain competitive and relevant, the Nigeria public service must acclimatize and manage these environmental socio-economic forces. But the new complexity of work operations demands more diverse functions and the use of more diverse talents. As the need for employee diversity increases, so do the demands, such as the need for effective interaction among diverse employees, this tendency is believed to have potential for conflict and schism among employees. Using the workforce management model this study attempts to highlight the salient feature of this process with a particular emphasis on the problems and prospects associated with workforce diversity management in Nigeria public service.*

KEYWORDS: Workforce, Diversity Management, Public Service, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, workplace diversity has been widely attributed to the demographic composition of a workforce, whether in the private or public sector. In empirical studies, diversity is usually measured using the compositional approach, otherwise known as Surface-level or demographic diversity which refers to the extent to which a unit is heterogeneous on characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, religion, age, functional background, and organizational tenure (Tsui and Gutek, 2000). Contemporary believe system is marked by a generalized sense that traditional work arrangements are inadequate to address the challenges organizations encounter in recent times. It appears that the shifts from an industrial to an information-based society and from a manufacturing to a service economy, coupled with the forces of globalization, have forced innovative changes on the work place arrangements. These tendencies have affected work not just in industrialized societies of the global north, but also in the developing countries such as Nigeria. Several conjecture on the best way to organize tasks and people as well as the solutions to organizational problems based on those hypothesis do not seem to make sense any more. A paradigmatic shift is taking place in contemporary time on how we think about contemporary organizations and their governance. The Nigeria Public Service is however not exempted from this modern organizational reality.

From a managerial perspective, the Nigeria Public Service is a large and complex heterogeneous organization. To effectively accomplish its mission in today's turbulent environment, it must engage in similar challenges as any other large corporation around the

globe. In the same way, a professional civil service system is just one version of another contemporary personnel system based on the merit principle (Ospina, 1996). Nigeria Public Service, no doubt, represents a particular type of employment relationship that, by its very nature, is different from private employment. Nevertheless, from the point of view of organizational theory, a national public bureaucracy, its conditions of employment, and its employees, are all equally subject to the remarkable pressures determining the fate of any complex organization in our own time. It is in this context that the challenge of managing diversity in the Nigeria Public service becomes an urgent and important agenda. The surface-level composition of the group, deep-level diversity, or differences related to attitudes, personality, and identifiable values have been investigated (See Harrison, et. al. 2002). A major dimension for the understanding of human behaviour on organizations is its corporate culture (Ugwuzor, 2010). People bring different socio-cultural, political, economic and even legal attitude to the work place. In other words, they can bring race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, physical disabilities, and income status, all of which reflect surface-level diversity; as well as other not so easily seen diversity dimensions. People think of diversity as differences, but diversity incorporates similarities as well, especially, the things that they have in common (Ugwuzo 2011). Workforce diversity has, also become an imperative for organizational competitiveness and effectiveness (Cox, 1993; Jackson and Schuler, 2000) and diversity management on the other hand is also increasingly becoming a standard of human resources management in any organization public or private (Mathews, 1998).

Forces like globalization and the internationalization of public issues contribute to expand the flow of labor across ethnic and national boundaries and facilitate the constant exchange of materials, as well as symbolic and human resources (UNEM 2001). These forces have also made it possible for modern organizations to be confronted with myriads of challenges, however, one of these challenges that appears to stand out prominently is that of managing differences among people. In Nigeria with a population of over one hundred and eighty million persons with over half of that number still in their working age (World Bank, 2010), managers of Public Service will be faced with a critical challenge of the management of diversity in the work place. To remain competitive, organizations must get acclimatize with the rising issues and manage these environmental forces appropriately. Consequently, public agencies should search for different work arrangements, leaders propose flatter organizational structures designed around teams and networks, and boundaries become permeable to facilitate intra and inter-organizational cooperation.

The new complexity of work operations demands more diverse functions and the use of more diverse talents. As the need for employee diversity increases, so do demands like the need for effective interaction among diverse employees, the potential for conflict among them and the urgency to manage this conflicts in order to attain the organizational objectives (Schneider and Northcraft, 1999). In a country such as Nigeria with quite a lot of ethnic nationalities and languages, as well as diverse cultural and religious backgrounds, workforce diversity should even be more important to managers as it will be interesting to know how employees behave towards each other as individuals and as groups (Ugwuzo 2011). Diversity poses tough challenges for managers in both public and private organizations. These are compounded in the public sector by pressures creating additional dilemmas for the civil service system. Public sector organizations in most countries, rich and poor, experience an environment characterized by greater scarcity of resources. Competition, pressures to reduce the production role of the State, and taxpayer demands for higher efficiency and cost-effectiveness mark the new work place realities. In this context, incentives to invest in human capital to adjust to the new

demands will be minimal. Public officials and managers must respond to competing demands as they design and implement programs that both increase flexibility and address the requirements for a more diverse workforce effectively (Berman et al, 2001). Workforce Diversity Management is the ability of a manager to achieve success for an organization by making the best use of the similarities and differences among employees in terms of age, cultural background, physical abilities and disabilities, race, ethnicity, religion, sex and sexual orientation, as well as in terms of personality, values, attitude, perception and cognitive style. Diversity Management issues abound in organizations and it is expedient that they are proactively identified and appropriately addressed.

Studies have revealed that Public and Private Organizations are increasingly embracing the use of workforce diversity as a strategy in the pursuit of organizational objectives. This new development in organizing work is predicated on flexibility, innovation, and quick decision making prospects inherent in a team-work setting. In a environment of increasing competitions many organizations rely on workgroups to generate the innovations necessary to sustained organizational development and set goals (Mumford and Licuanan, 2004). In addition, the modern demographic changes, greater mobility, and laws aimed at promoting fairness in recruitment practices, have doubtlessly increased diversities in workforce composition in many organizations (Williams and O'Reilly, 1998). Scholars have examined firm-wide business strategies as a variable in determining the relationship between workforce diversity and performance (Richard, 2000). In this essay, we seek to extend the existing research on workforce diversities with a particular attention on the problems and prospects of the concept. But before that we shall x-ray the concept of workforce management and workforce diversity.

Workforce Diversity: A Theoretical Exposition

The concept of workplace diversity in the management literature is a complex, controversial, administrative phenomena that have defied scholarly consensus (Janssens and Steyaert, 2003). It has been perceived differently by scholars of different ideological orientation from several viewpoints. a number of them have looked at it from a narrow perspective, while some others from a wider viewpoint (Nkomo, 1995). Most of these scholars who choose a narrow to the definition of the concept contend that the concept of workforce diversity should be restricted to specific cultural categories, such as race and gender (see Cross, Katz, Miller and Seashore, 1994). But some argued that diversity based on race, ethnicity and gender cannot be understood in the same way as diversity based on organizational functions, abilities or cognitive orientations (Nkomo, 1995). Moreover, the key issues of diversity are those that arise because of discrimination and exclusion of a given cultural groups from conventional organizations such as the Nigeria Public Service (Cross et al., 1994).consequently, if diversity is a concept that is inclusive to all individuals, it will become very difficult to identify discriminatory practices in a given situation. The main concern of this perspective is that a broad definition of the concept may suggest that all differences among people are the same. Therefore, diversity studies would then be reduced to the conclusion that everyone is different and, if this conclusion is accepted by the scholars of management sciences, then the concept of diversity may become “nothing more than a benign, meaningless concept (Nkomo, 1995). The problems of narrowly defining the concept of diversity, however, is that only one dimension of cultural diversity (race, age, ethnicity, or gender) is by and large the subject of research at a time. Since a cultural diversity dimension interacts with other dimensions of diversity, a narrow concept of diversity would be deficient by failing to recognize these interactions (Michaéla, Deanne, Paul, and Janique, 2003).

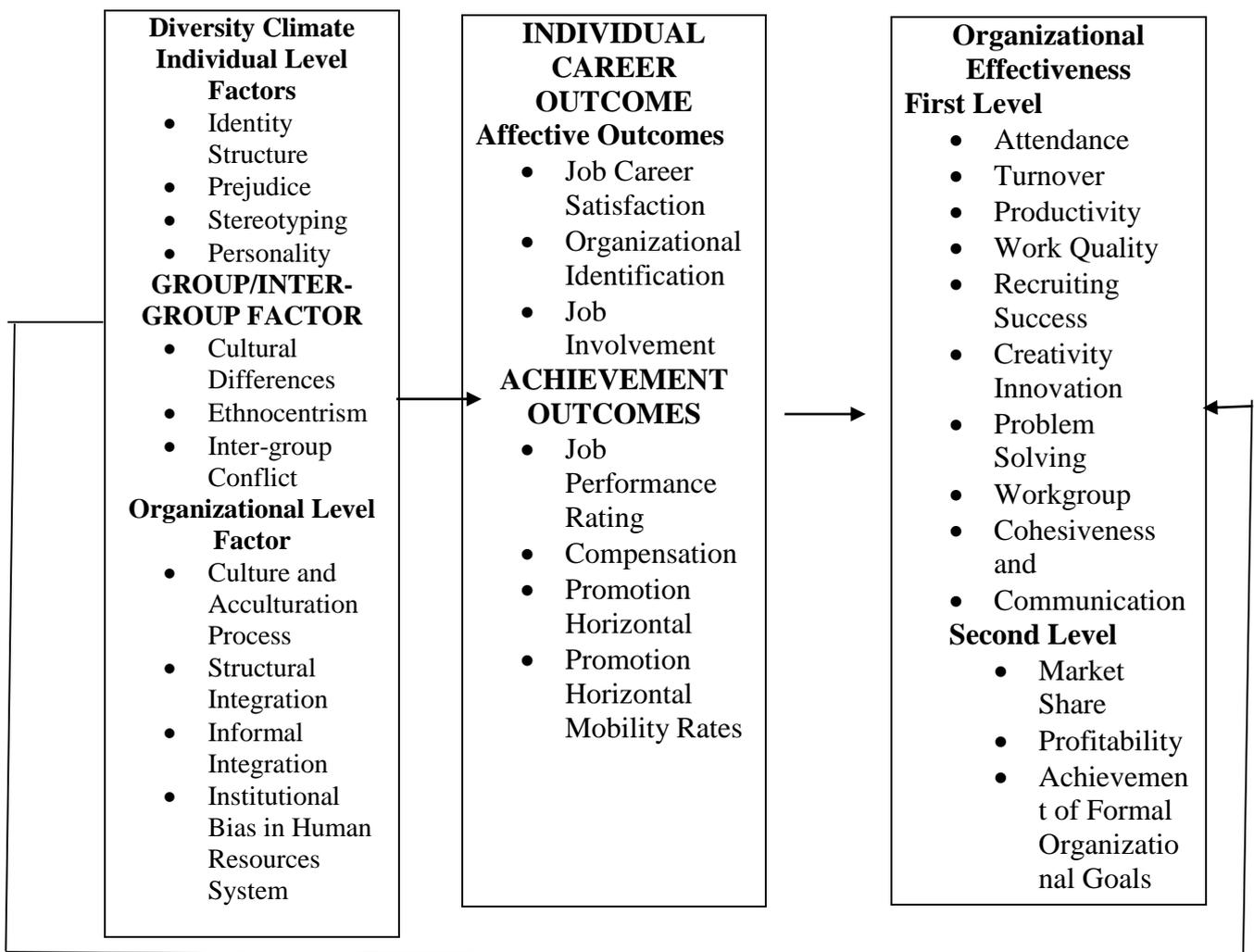
On the other hand, Scholars, who choose a broader part to the definition of workforce diversity contends that diversity encompasses all the possible ways people can differ from each other and not just in language, religious ethnic or cultural differences (see Jackson, May and Whitney, 1995). Individuals, according to this scholars, do not only differ because of their race, gender, age and other demographic categories, but also because of their values, abilities, organizational function, tenure and personality. They argued that an individual has multiple identities and that the manifold dimensions cannot be isolated in an organizational setting. Apart from bringing their race, age, ethnicity, and gender, individuals also come with their particular knowledge, personality, and cognitive style to the work place. Therefore, in order to understand the dynamics of a heterogeneous workforce, the interactive effects of multi-dimensional diversity have to be addressed.

In addition, it is argued that expansion of the concept of diversity has a potential positive effect on diversity management programs, as it will be more acceptable if it is all inclusive i.e. not only oriented towards specific demographic groups of employees (Thomas, 1991). McGath, Berdahl and Arrow (1995) in their study analyzed the concept of workplace diversity by developing a five cluster classification. This often cited categorization is as follows: demographic characteristics such as age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical status, religion and education; task-related knowledge, skills and capacities; values, views and attitudes; personal, cognitive and attitudinal styles; Status in the organization such as one's hierarchical position, professional domain, departmental affiliation and seniority. Theoretically, the workplace diversity literature highlighted three different theoretical frameworks for the assessment of the possible effects of workplace diversity in any organization; the first is social categorization, which, according to Turner (1987) describes the categorization of people based on salient attributes like gender, ethnicity or age, resulting in stereotyping on the basis of these differences. The second is similarity/attraction theory, which asserts that similarity on salient and non salient attributes like race or values increases interpersonal attraction and attachment. The third is information and decision making theory, which examines the impact of distribution of information and expertise on work-teams (Wittenbaum and Stasser, 1996). In Cox (1994) study, he also provided a conceptual model of workforce diversity, revealing the impact of workforce diversity on the behavior of an organization (see Figure One). In this classic study he ties together his research and uses information on gender, race-ethnicity, nationality, age and other areas of diversity like job function, background and values, to create this model. However, the model did not elaborate on how the individual identifies with the culture of the group. It proposes that the impact of diversity on an organization is an interaction of the environment and individuals. The logic of the model shows that a person's group affiliations such as age, gender and race can be analyzed on three levels: individual, group/inter-group and organizational. These collectively will define the diversity climate of the organization. This climate may influence individual and organizational outcomes as either affective outcomes or achievement outcomes. These individual outcomes may influence organizational factors such as work quality and productivity (See Figure One).

These theories lead to different and sometimes contradictory hypotheses regarding the effects of diversity on group process and performance. Social categorization and similarity-attraction theory predict negative effects, such as reduction in within-group communication, decreased satisfaction and commitment, and increased labour turnover. However, from the information and decision-making perspective, positive effects of diversity are hypothesized, mainly because more diverse work-teams are expected to process information differently, as team

members may bring together differing viewpoints (Williams and O'Reilly, 1998; Pollar and Gonzalez, 1994). This, however, is expected to lead to more creativity and increased performance. Studies have revealed that several factors could be responsible for the conflicts provoked by diversity in work-team composition. Most management scholars have suggested that identifying individual group members with distinct groups such as out-groups may disrupt group dynamics. Consistent with this, research on self-categorization theory has shown that out-group members evoke more disliking, distrust, and competition than in-group members (Hogg, Cooper-Shaw, and Holzworth, 1993). In addition, biases against out-group members seem to unfold automatically: the perception of a salient quality such as race, or sex more or less inevitably triggers a corresponding categorization (Fiske and Neuberg, 1990). Generally, there is empirical support for

FIGURE ONE: International Model of the Impact of Workforce Diversity on Individual Career Outcomes and Organizational Effectiveness



The assumption that all dimensions of work diversity can lead to positive as well as negative effects (Jackson et al., 2003). Social categorization theory, emphasize that similarities and dissimilarities can lead to categorizations which, in turn, lead to favoring one's in-group to the detriment of one or more out-groups social (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). On an intra-group level, this approach is typically referred to as relational demography. Therefore, categorizations within a work group based on an attribute such as gender, race, or age can lead to the problematic formation of sub-groups like "us" versus "them" believe system. In addition, studies has revealed that, relative to homogeneous groups, members of diverse work-groups display less attachment to each other, show less commitment to their respective organizations, communicate less with one another, miss work more often, experience more conflict and take more time to reach decisions (Watson et al., 1993; Pelled, Eisenhardt and Xin, 1999; Hambrick, Cho, and Chen, 1996).

However, when a member of a work group have different demographic backgrounds, they may have contradictory belief structures, priorities, assumptions about future events, and understandings of alternatives based on previous training and experiences. These divergences are likely to manifest themselves as intra-group task conflict. As diversity within a work group increases, such task conflict is likely to increase. Increased diversity generally means there is a greater probability that individual exchanges will not be in tandem with others within a particular workplace. Members are more likely to hear views that diverge from their own, hence intra-group task conflict may become more pronounced. Also, cognitive tasks in organizations typically demand the experience and knowledge obtained through exposure to functional areas and organizational tenure. Ancona and Caldwell (1992) noted in their classic study that for tasks such as those of product development teams, functional background and company tenure are likely to be particularly important because they determine one's technical skills, information, expertise, and one's perspective on an organization's history. Others have similarly argued that functional background and tenure are especially pertinent to work group tasks. Age, gender, and race, in contrast, are low in job-relatedness (Milliken and Martins, 1996; Pelled, 1996). Thus, when a co-worker conveys expectations for or model biased behaviour, an employee is more likely to follow suit and engage in discrimination. As personnel often work in groups or teams facing pressure to conform to group norm, the need for belonging and acceptance by in-group members is a powerful motivator for human behaviour. Even without a formal team structure, many organizations foster a psychological sense of community, and informal social norms arise. Notwithstanding, the above expositions we must not forget the issue of reverse discrimination. While discrimination suggests favouring those who have an advantage over the less advantaged in a particular issue, the trend of reverse discrimination appears to be doing the exact opposite. Reverse discrimination is a preference against the privileged as compared to those who are perceived as the advantaged lot (Pincus, 2003). Stereotypes may allow perceivers to understand often inaccurately, and take predictions about others, averting the onerous task of learning in-depth details about each individual encountered. Stereotypes come in explicit and implicit varieties (Baron and Banaji, 2006). Explicit stereotypes operate at the conscious level and occur with intention, effort, awareness, and control. Attitude and stereotypes can also be implicit; in which case stereotypes may occur unintentionally, unconsciously, and effortlessly. The implicit variant of stereotyping is particularly implicated in modern discrimination.

Furthermore, if out-group members of any organization come from cultures or sub cultures with which in-group members are unfamiliar, linguistic or paralinguistic differences may foster miscommunication and misunderstanding. Less palpable differences associated with attitudes,

perceptions, and expectations may pose subtler but nevertheless formidable deterrents to communication and understanding in diverse groups. Together, these factors may combine to make diverse groups a fertile breeding ground for misunderstanding and discord (Palich and Gomez-Mejia, 1999). These theoretical evidence albeit, the controversy, whether or not there is a positive connection between workplace diversity and organizational, performance still lingers though scholars have reviewed the evidence for managing workplace diversity and suggested that, while there are prospects for workplace diversity, there are also negative implications associated with it (Anderson and Metcalfe, 2003). They argued that there is a paucity of stout research examining the impact of diversity upon Public service, which has raised questions about the existence of any connection between workplace diversity and staff performance in the organization. The organizational benefits of workplace diversity have been widely contested ever since the idea was conceived. And, even in contemporary time, there is still ongoing scholarly debate as to whether there is indeed any discernable advantage associated with workplace diversity; however, we shall come back to that later.

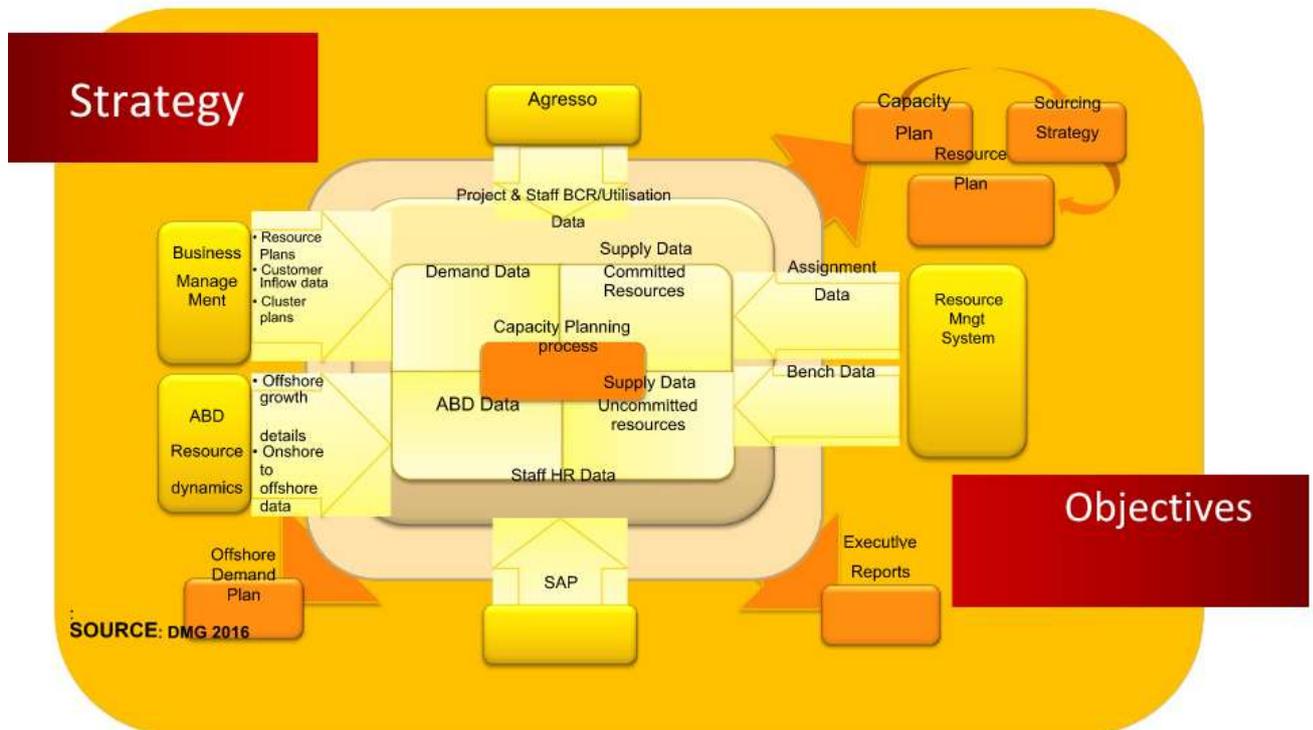
Workforce Management: A Disambiguation

Workforce management systems have evolved to include functions for time and attendance, absence management, labor budgeting, forecasting, scheduling, task management, and project management. Human Resource professionals leverage workforce management systems to match business demand with an appropriate labor mix. Successful workforce management stems from a combination of budgeting, planning, analytics, collaboration, and rules-based scheduling solutions. Data is reconciled with the availability, skills, and eligibility of workforce personnel (see figure Two). Workforce Force Management processes have predominantly been used by organizations with high percentages of hourly employees that need to schedule workers for specific business hours and locations. However, WFM is also helpful in organizations that have an exempt workforce, especially for managing and monitoring productivity and absenteeism. However, prejudice and discrimination has proven to be alive more in organizational settings where there are diverse sets of persons. For instance, issues of ethnicity and religion tend to relate to employment outcomes such as hiring decisions, performance evaluations, pay and work place discrimination. Again, cases of gender discrimination in an organization may increase the salience of gender as a social identity for female employees. One feature of the organizational context that can influence discrimination is its local social norms. Group norms not only define reality for group members but also communicate how members can obtain the approval of group processes. People adapt their cognitions, emotions, and behaviour to fit better into the social world of work. For instance, a bioresearch organization that has exempt some employees can leverage workforce management applications to schedule employees (Milliken and Martins, 1996).

This is a good way to monitor Paid Time Off (PTO) liability to ensure that it is recorded properly. Managers often face an extremely large PTO liability for exempt employees if they don't monitor PTO as it is taken—a common problem for organizations with large exempt populations. Today's WFM systems are enriched with analytics, support for mobile devices, and social networking technology to enable real-time collaboration and insight (see Figure Two). Keeping the workforce engaged through mobile capabilities and social networking permits more effective collaboration, significantly increasing productivity. For example, if a worker can easy collaborate among peers before going on vacation, then co-workers can keep track of critical work that needs to be performed while that worker is away. Support for mobile technology allows these employees to perform workforce management tasks while they are on

the go. While few organizations have calculated the loss to their businesses from suboptimal workforce management, many have identified the upside of instilling good workforce management practices. It's no surprise that experts consider workforce planning and workforce analytics as strategic aspects of a workforce management solution. WFM tools can take a very complex problem such as scheduling a large and diverse workforce and make it as simple as matching workforce supply to business demand.

Managers need to be able to monitor key performance indicators (KPIs) related to time and labor management, absence management, project tracking, task management, and scheduling. A complete workforce management solution includes both transactional and analytic functionality, with business intelligence tools for planning, budgeting, monitoring, and compliance. Effective measurement begins with an assessment of the current state. Organizations should assess WFM business processes to determine the steps needed to fully unlock the strategic value that workforce management solutions can provide. The business drivers depend mostly upon where that organization falls on the maturity scale as well as its tendency to be a leader or laggard in leveraging technology. Organizations in emerging economies or in the mid-market space need basic solutions to deal with the business necessities of governance and compliance. Solutions for this space include HR, payroll, time and labor, and absence management. Organizations that have already implemented the basics need to leverage their existing investments so they can extend the features of those solutions to further reduce back office costs and increase efficiency. These organizations should consider rolling out self-service systems for web-based time capture rather than maintaining costly time clocks. Such systems simplify scheduling while enabling employees to request permission to work overtime or take a vacation. Organizations on the high end of the maturity scale often turn their attention to real-time analysis of HR data. They need systems that let them investigate KPIs related to labor costs and productivity so they can hold the workforce accountable to corporate goals and expectations. Workforce management technology in conjunction with business intelligence technology provides the solution they need to achieve these objectives. In all three cases, seamless integration with HR and payroll systems helps HR pros track the implication of changes when calculating accurate pay for each worker. Of course, while these information systems can help to simplify administration and reduce labor costs, true progress require a cultural change as well: the organization must embrace the WFM system, with support from the most senior levels.

FIGURE TWO: The Workforce Management Model

The Problems of Workforce Diversity Management in Nigeria

Managing diversity in workforce is a comprehensive managerial process for establishing an environment that will be conducive for all employees. Diversity management is an inclusive process since all employees belong to a given unique culture, including those from the country's traditionally dominant cultural group. Scholars has argued that diversity management must not be viewed as "us and them" kind of problem to be solved but as a resource to be managed (Thomas, 1991). Also, in the Carnevale and Stone (1994) classic study they emphasized that valuing diversity involves recognizing that other people's standards and values are as valid as one's own and note that for most organizations, valuing and managing diversity requires nothing less than cultural transformation. This is a phenomenal undertaking, for it requires people, especially those of the dominant culture to let go of their assumptions about the universal values and customary ways of doing things and to become receptive to other cultures they are not aware of hitherto leading to national integration. In this regard, cultural diversity in the public service poses a positive prospects as well as very difficult problems to surmount by the managers of the Public Service in Nigeria , theses problems and prospects can be reducible under the following subheadings;

Communication Barriers

When a Public or Private Corporation build a workforce with employees from different cultures, religion, ethnic, language and economic background, they increase the number of communication filters and language barriers that impact internal and external communication

processes in that organization. This is because studies has revealed that, work cultures that are less heterogeneous usually find communication easier because employees do not have to work as hard to overcome language and cultural issues. Some organizations hire interpreters and diversity trainers to help employees work through communication challenges of diversity.

Cultural Resistance

In a classic study titled "Diversity in the Workplace: Benefits, Challenges and Solutions," in *The Multicultural Advantage*, Greenberg, points out that resistance to change is common in workplaces. When companies become more diverse, it changes the relationships and nature of the workplace. These changes can cause stress among employees and contribute to negative working relationships and poor workplace morale, if not well-planned and managed. Training employees about diversity is important if it will affect their work roles and processes.

Discrimination

Often, Public Service or corporations that deliberately employ a diverse workforce have human resources processes in place to manage diversity. However, companies that slowly become diverse without a strategic plan may find more discrimination between managers and subordinates and between employees. Recall that discrimination is unfair treatment of someone because of the existing distinguishing traits. Naturally, if you have a diverse workforce there is more opportunity for discrimination since diversity is based on distinguishing traits among workers.

Increased Costs

In his recommended steps to effective diversity management in public services, Greenberg includes diversity assessment, development and implementation of diversity workplace plans and various approaches to diversity training. All of these processes have direct and indirect costs implication on the organizations running capital. The use of supplies, consultants and outside professionals, and other materials of instance are direct costs. While the observable indirect costs would include the significant time involved by company employees providing and receiving training and participating in other aspects of analyzing and implementing diversity management.

Communication Issues

Diversity impacts workplace communication in positive and negative ways. Between co-workers, diversity can place impediments in the way of effective communication, which can directly dampen productivity and the cohesiveness of small groups. Spending time with diverse employees can break down communication barriers over the long-term, but first impressions and co-workers' orientation periods can be difficult to control when cultures clash. Diversity can strengthen your organization's relationships with specific society by making communication more effective. Customer service representatives can be paired up with customers from their specific demographic, making the customer feel comfortable with the representative, and thus with the organization. A number of public services in the developed society, for example, prefer to hire bi-lingual customer service reps to deal with foreign speaking customers in their native language.

Integration Issues

Social integration in the Public Service can only be influenced to a small degree as a result of workforce diversity. The formation of cliques and exclusive social groups is a natural process that can be impossible to control in a situation of that kind. Because of this, public organization can experience informal divisions in their staff members, thereby creating a situation where culturally diverse employees avoid exposure to each other during break times and after work. Although there is nothing fundamentally wrong with this scenario, it can hinder the effectiveness of sharing knowledge, skills and experience, therefore restriction productivity growth and the effectiveness of teams within a public service structure.

Workplace Relationships

workforce who comprehend the public service goals and objectives is to increase diversity may feel they are less important if they don't represent the typical diverse populations that focus on race, sex, ethnicity origin, age and disability. In a workplace where employees don't belong to diverse populations, these employees may feel undervalued and unappreciated based purely on the fact that they don't represent diversity. They also might believe that employees from diverse groups have more opportunities for advancement, thus disrupting the working relationships they once had with colleagues and co-workers.

Myriad Accommodations

Although the premise of workplace diversity is mutual respect, making accommodations for numerous diverse groups' demands can become burdensome on employers, making diversity management difficult. Employee requests and work constraints based on religion, ethnicity gender and race can become overwhelming if your workplace has so much diversity that it takes a full-time human resources staff member just to keep track of accommodating the needs of diverse groups in the workplace. Examples of accommodating numerous diverse populations include translating materials into multiple languages and having interpreters on hand for meetings with employees, accommodating employee absences due to religious practices or disabilities, as well as adjusting business hours to coincide with preferred schedules for employees with different work styles and personal obligations.

Mandatory Training

Increasing workplace diversity often includes mandatory diversity training, during which employees, supervisors and managers receive lessons on how best to interact with customers, clients and employees who represent diverse populations. Mandatory training for some employees is the equivalent of forcing employees to accept diversity at all costs, regardless of their personal exposure and experiences. Training that's forced upon employees may have unintended consequences. Employees who feel diversity training shouldn't be mandated might believe instead that the mere concept of diversity is more important than any other kind of employee training and development the employer provides to improve employees' skills and capabilities.

Hiring Manager Authority

In the name of increasing workplace diversity, the Public Service may feel pressured to recruit applicants from diverse groups. Many hiring managers believe that employer edicts concerning increasing diversity require them to overlook more suitably qualified applicants in favor of

applicants who bring diversity (Federal Character) and not necessarily the required talent to the organization. In these circumstances, hiring managers may begin to resent how increasing workplace diversity affects their ability to exercise independent judgment, as well as their authority in making hiring decisions.

The Prospects of Workforce Diversity Management in Nigeria

Workforce Diversity in the Nigeria Public service encompasses a range of elements just like in most multinational cooperation. Scholars has contended that this development is inevitable as a result of the relentless unfolding of history empowered by globalization. These differences in the workforce composition such as the ethnic origin, primary language, religion, social status and age can benefit or harm public organizations. Therefore, managing workforce diversity effectively is the key to leveraging the advantages and minimizing the disadvantages of diversity in the workplace.

Business Reputation

In the Nigeria Public Service diversity in the workplace is important for employees because it manifests itself in building a great reputation for the organization or ministry, leading to increased profitability and opportunities for workers. Workplace diversity is important within the organization as well as outside. Business reputations flourish when a particular public or private sector demonstrates their commitment to diversity through aggressive outreach and recruiting efforts. An organization known for its ethics, fair employment practices and appreciation for diverse talent is better able to attract a wider pool of qualified applicants. Other advantages include loyalty from customers who choose to do business only with companies whose business practices are socially responsible.

Job Promotion

The importance of workplace diversity cannot be overstated when it comes to an organization's ability to reach markets nationwide or even in foreign countries. The appeal of global markets creates two kinds of opportunities for employees: opportunities for promotion and employee development. A global marketplace opens doors for employees with diverse language skills and multicultural understanding to build global profit centers. Employees interested in learning multinational business strategy and who are available for possible expatriate assignments may also find new and challenging career opportunities.

Increased Exposure

A diverse workplace offers more than exposure to employees from different cultures and religious backgrounds. Employees learn from co-workers whose work styles vary and whose attitudes about work vary from their own. This is particularly true for employees within multigenerational work environments. Traditional-generation workers learn new technology and processes from workers who belong to the tech-savvy millennial generation. Likewise, Generation X employees learn from exposure to the assertive, go-getter work ethic typical of many Baby Boomers.

Increase in Productivity

Workforce diversity can bring about an increase in productivity and competitive advantages. Employers can offer more solutions to customers because of new ideas and processes brought

into the organization. Workplace diversity increases employee morale and causes employees to desire to work more effectively and efficiently. Diversity in leadership within a firm allows managers to bring in new skills and methods for achieving unity within their teams.

Increase in Creativity

Workforce diversity increases creativity within an organization because heterogeneous groups are cross-fertilizing one another within the organization. According to EthnoConnect, a consulting company specializing in workforce diversity, employees from different backgrounds bring in a variety of solutions on how to achieve a common goal. As more diverse ideas are suggested, the chances of finding a workable answer are improved. In atmospheres when brainstorming is necessary, more ideas are formed because team members are culturally diverse. For example, employees from the north working in south may approach a problem totally differently than do southern workers. Some organizations have successfully created innovative processes by taking ideas from several employees.

Language Skills

Public or private organisation that plan to expand into global markets benefit from language diversity in the workplace. For example, a company with employees fluent in Japanese and who understand Japanese culture experiences an easier time communicating with representatives from Japan. Many bilingual workers experience an advantage when applying for jobs because employees understand the benefits of language diversity. Another example can include a company that hires employees fluent in Mandarin to increase the company's reputation in Chinese communities. An increased presence usually results in an increase in sales.

Positive Reputation

Job seekers are drawn to companies with diverse workforces because it is evident that the companies do not practice employment discrimination. Potential employees want to know that employers treat their staff fairly regardless of race, ethnicity or gender. Not only are such firms able to attract new talent but they can also retain existing talent because of high employee morale resulting from workforce diversity. According to McInness (2009) top talent is no longer represented by a homogeneous group, but one representing people from many different backgrounds and life experiences.

Diverse Experience

Co-workers with diverse cultural backgrounds bring unique experiences and perceptions to the table in groups and work teams. Pooling the diverse knowledge and skills of culturally distinct workers together can benefit the public service by strengthening staff productivity and responsiveness to changing conditions. Each employee in a diverse workplace possesses unique strengths and weaknesses derived from their culture in addition to their individuality. When managed properly, diversity in the workplace can leverage the strengths and complement the weaknesses of each worker to make the impact of the workforce greater than the sum of its parts.

Learning and Growth

Another prospect of workforce diversity is the opportunity for employees' personal growth. It is expected that employee's exposure to new ideas, cultures and perspectives can help individuals to reach out intellectually and gain a clearer view of their surroundings and their place in the world. Spending time with culturally diverse co-workers can slowly break down the subconscious barriers of ethnocentrism and xenophobia, encouraging employees to be more well-rounded members of society.

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