

Employee Satisfaction and Retention in a Diverse Workplace: A Case Study of the National Assembly Service Commission, Abuja

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ABSTRACT

In today's increasingly globalised and multicultural environment, workplace diversity has become an essential factor for organisational effectiveness. The National Assembly Service Commission (NASC), as a central legislative support body in Nigeria, embodies a workforce that is diverse in terms of ethnicity, gender, educational background, and professional experience. This study investigates the relationship between workplace diversity and employee satisfaction and retention within NASC, with the objective of identifying the key drivers of satisfaction in a diverse public institution and examining how these drivers influence an employee's decision to remain in service.

The study adopted a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. A structured questionnaire was administered to 300 randomly selected employees across departments, with stratified random sampling used to ensure representativeness across gender, ethnicity, age, and job role categories. In-depth semi-structured interviews were additionally conducted with 20 senior management employees to capture leadership perspectives on diversity and retention. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, correlation and regression analysis in SPSS, with reliability assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Qualitative data from interviews were analysed using thematic analysis. Triangulation across data sources enhanced the credibility of the findings.

The findings reveal a positive and statistically significant correlation between diversity climate and employee satisfaction ($p < 0.05$), confirming that employees who perceive NASC's diversity policies as genuinely inclusive report higher satisfaction and stronger intention to remain in the organisation. Inclusive leadership and active diversity management emerged as the most critical mediating factors between diversity and retention outcomes. The study concludes that diversity alone does not guarantee improved satisfaction or retention; its effective management through inclusive and structured practices is what determines organisational outcomes. The study acknowledges that its cross-sectional, single-institution design limits causal inference and generalisability, and calls for longitudinal multi-agency research to build on these findings.

Keywords: employee satisfaction, employee retention, workplace diversity, inclusive leadership, National Assembly Service Commission

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The dynamics of employee satisfaction and retention have long been a central concern for organisational leaders, especially in public sector institutions where bureaucratic structures and limited mobility can significantly influence employee morale and commitment. In the context of increasing workforce diversity, organisations face both new challenges and new opportunities in managing their human capital effectively. The National Assembly Service Commission (NASC), as the administrative backbone of Nigeria's legislative

arm, is characterised by a richly diverse workforce drawn from various ethnic, regional, and professional backgrounds. This diversity reflects Nigeria's broader socio-cultural landscape and plays a significant role in shaping the internal work environment, interpersonal dynamics, and ultimately the satisfaction and retention of employees.

However, diversity alone does not guarantee harmony or high performance. Issues such as perceived inequities, lack of inclusivity, and ineffective communication across diverse groups can lead to dissatisfaction, decreased motivation, and high turnover rates. When diversity is well managed, it can lead to greater innovation, employee engagement, and organisational loyalty. Despite the critical role that employee satisfaction and retention play in maintaining institutional memory and ensuring operational efficiency, limited empirical research has been conducted on how diversity affects these outcomes in Nigeria's public service institutions. This study fills that gap by focusing on the NASC and exploring how various dimensions of diversity interact with employee satisfaction and retention outcomes across the Commission. The findings are particularly relevant given the growing emphasis on inclusive governance and representative public institutions across sub-Saharan Africa.

Statement of the Problem

Despite various efforts to promote diversity within public organisations like NASC, employee turnover remains a significant concern. A diverse workforce does not automatically translate into higher satisfaction or stronger retention. The problem this study addresses is whether and how workplace diversity, and more importantly the management of that diversity, contributes to higher employee satisfaction and better retention rates within NASC. Existing literature confirms that diversity initiatives frequently fail to produce intended outcomes when not supported by genuine leadership commitment, structured training, and inclusive policy frameworks. The contextual factors unique to NASC, including its constitutional mandate for federal character representation and the specific pressures of legislative service work, further shape how diversity management operates in practice and these are examined in the discussion section.

Research Question

To what extent does workplace diversity influence employee satisfaction and retention in the National Assembly Service Commission?

Objective of the Study

To examine the relationship between workplace diversity and employee satisfaction, with a focus on retention outcomes in the National Assembly Service Commission.

Hypothesis

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between workplace diversity and employee satisfaction, which positively influences employee retention at the National Assembly Service Commission.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study rests on the proposition that workplace diversity can lead to higher job satisfaction by promoting a sense of belonging and value among employees. Diverse workplaces foster creativity, improved communication, and stronger employee engagement, all closely linked to job satisfaction [1]. However, diversity alone is insufficient to ensure retention. Organisational support for diversity, such as mentorship programmes, inclusive leadership, and structured diversity policies, is essential for translating diversity into positive retention outcomes [9]. The distinction between the presence of diversity and the effective management of diversity is central to this study's analytical framework.

Employee satisfaction refers to the extent to which employees feel positive about their work, their colleagues, and their organisation, encompassing job content, working conditions, relationships with supervisors, fairness of compensation, and opportunities for advancement. Employee retention refers to an organisation's capacity to keep its employees over time, reducing voluntary turnover and preserving institutional knowledge. In diverse organisations, both satisfaction and retention are significantly influenced by the degree to which employees from all backgrounds feel included, valued, and fairly treated. Additional constructs that may mediate the diversity-retention relationship, including organisational commitment, employee engagement, and perceived organisational support, are discussed in Section 2.3 and represent important avenues for future investigation.

Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by three complementary theoretical frameworks. Social Identity Theory [2] suggests that employees' identification with their workgroup can be strengthened in a diverse workplace, fostering satisfaction and loyalty when group membership feels inclusive rather than divisive. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory [3] posits that job satisfaction is influenced by both motivators such as career advancement and hygiene factors such as working conditions, with effective diversity management acting as a motivator that enhances intrinsic satisfaction. Equity Theory [4] further posits that employees compare their inputs and outcomes relative to others; in diverse workplaces, perceived fairness in recognition, promotion, and pay is crucial to retaining employees from underrepresented groups. Together, these frameworks provide a comprehensive theoretical basis for understanding how diversity, when effectively managed, contributes to satisfaction and retention outcomes. The frameworks also suggest the importance of perceived organisational support and organisational commitment as variables that may mediate these relationships, consistent with recommendations in the broader diversity management literature [12].

Empirical Review

Empirical research on workplace diversity and its relationship to satisfaction and retention reveals mixed but predominantly positive outcomes when diversity is actively managed. Hogg et al. (2021) found that workplace diversity can enhance employee satisfaction and reduce turnover rates when diversity policies are well implemented [5]. Williams and Johnson (2020) found that while diversity improved job satisfaction in some cases, it had no significant impact on retention unless paired with an inclusive organisational culture [6]. Turner et al. (2018) argued that employee retention is influenced more by how diversity is managed than by diversity itself; in workplaces where diversity policies were not supported by training or leadership, retention rates remained low despite a diverse workforce [7].

Choi (2017) found that employees in government agencies with a positive diversity climate reported higher job satisfaction and stronger intention to stay, with perceived support for diversity policies acting as a significant mediator between diversity and retention [8]. This finding from a public-sector government context is particularly relevant to the NASC setting. Mor Barak (2015) demonstrated that organisations with strong diversity management practices, including leadership commitment, cultural competence training, and employee resource groups, experience lower turnover and higher job satisfaction [9]. Raghuram et al. (2010) observed that the effect of diversity initiatives on retention becomes more pronounced after long-term support for diversity is integrated into organisational culture, with mentorship programmes and diversity training identified as critical enabling factors [10].

More recent work by Ely and Thomas (2001) on cultural diversity perspectives and Gonzalez and DeNisi (2009) on cross-level diversity climate effects provides additional theoretical grounding for understanding how institutional context shapes the diversity-satisfaction relationship [12, 13]. Shen et al. (2009) further demonstrate that human resource management practices specifically designed to support diversity, including structured recruitment, equitable reward systems, and targeted training, are essential preconditions for positive diversity outcomes [14]. These studies collectively support the argument that the active and sustained management of diversity, rather than its passive presence, is the key driver of positive satisfaction and retention outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to capture a holistic view of how diversity affects employee satisfaction and retention within NASC. This design was appropriate because it allowed both the statistical measurement of relationships between variables and the in-depth exploration of employee and leadership experiences that quantitative data alone cannot fully capture [11]. Triangulation across quantitative survey data, qualitative interview data, and organisational document review strengthened the credibility and depth of the findings.

Population and Sample

The target population consisted of all employees working within NASC. A total of 300 employees were randomly selected from different departments using stratified random sampling, ensuring that each demographic group, including gender, ethnicity, age, and job role, was adequately represented. Employees who had been with NASC for a minimum of one year and had been exposed to diversity training were included to ensure meaningful responses. Additionally, 20 senior management employees including team leaders and HR directors were purposively selected for in-depth interviews.

Data Collection

A structured questionnaire was developed to measure employee satisfaction, perceptions of diversity climate, and intention to stay. Closed-ended questions were measured on a five-point Likert scale, while open-ended questions allowed employees to provide additional qualitative insights. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with senior management to understand leadership's role in promoting diversity and its effect on retention. Key organisational documents including diversity policies and annual satisfaction reports were also reviewed.

Data Analysis and Reliability

Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics and correlation and regression analysis in SPSS. The regression model treated employee retention intention as the dependent variable, with perceived diversity climate, inclusive leadership, and participation in diversity training as independent variables. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with values above 0.70 confirming internal consistency across all key constructs. Qualitative data from interviews and open-ended responses were analysed using thematic analysis, with themes derived inductively from the data and reviewed for consistency across the sample. Triangulation across all three data sources enhanced the credibility of the overall findings.

Limitations

The study acknowledges several important limitations. First, the cross-sectional design restricts the ability to establish causal relationships between diversity initiatives and long-term retention outcomes. The findings document associations that are statistically significant and consistent across data sources, but they cannot confirm that diversity management interventions cause retention improvements over time. Second, the study focuses on a single public institution, which limits the generalisability of the findings to other sectors, other government agencies, or international contexts. NASC's specific constitutional mandate for federal character representation and its legislative service environment create contextual conditions that may not be replicated elsewhere. Third, self-reported satisfaction and retention intention measures carry inherent response bias risks, particularly in a public sector institution where social desirability effects may influence survey responses. These limitations are addressed through the multi-method design and triangulation but cannot be fully eliminated. Future longitudinal research across multiple government agencies would substantially strengthen the evidence base on which these findings rest.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Quantitative Findings

The quantitative analysis reveals a positive and statistically significant relationship between perceived diversity climate and employee satisfaction and retention at NASC. The correlation between diversity climate scores and satisfaction scores was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), indicating that employees who perceived NASC's diversity management practices as genuinely inclusive reported higher levels of overall job satisfaction. The regression analysis, with retention intention as the dependent variable and diversity climate, inclusive leadership, and diversity training participation as independent variables, confirmed that these three factors collectively explained a significant proportion of variance in retention intention outcomes. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics and reliability coefficients for the key constructs measured in this study.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Coefficients for Key Constructs (N = 300)

Construct	Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Mean (1-5 scale)	Interpretation
Perceived Diversity Climate	6	> 0.70	Reported as positive by majority of respondents	Acceptable internal consistency
Employee Satisfaction	8	> 0.70	Higher among employees with inclusive leaders	Acceptable internal consistency
Retention Intention	5	> 0.70	Significantly higher in teams with diversity training	Acceptable internal consistency
Inclusive Leadership	6	> 0.70	Identified as strongest mediating factor	Acceptable internal consistency

Note: Exact mean values and standard deviations were not fully recorded in available field documentation. Values above reflect the directional findings reported across quantitative and qualitative data sources. Cronbach's alpha values above 0.70 confirmed acceptable reliability for all constructs. Full regression output including standardised coefficients and model fit statistics should be reported in future studies as a priority.

Employees who worked under inclusive leaders reported significantly higher satisfaction rates than those under leaders perceived as less inclusive, and retention rates were correspondingly higher in those teams. Employees who participated in diversity training also showed higher intention to remain at NASC compared to those who did not. The relationship between diversity climate and retention intention was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), confirming that a positive diversity climate exerts a strong and positive effect on retention outcomes.

Qualitative Findings

Thematic analysis of management interviews reinforced the quantitative patterns and provided contextual depth. Leadership commitment to diversity was consistently identified by interviewees as the most critical factor in translating diverse workforce composition into positive satisfaction and retention outcomes. Where leadership failed to demonstrate genuine commitment to diversity principles, employees from underrepresented groups reported lower satisfaction and weaker organisational loyalty. This finding aligns directly with Choi's (2017) finding that perceived support for diversity policies acts as a significant mediator between diversity and retention in government organisations [8].

The qualitative data also revealed that demographic fault lines emerge in organisations where diversity is not actively managed, leading to group divisions that negatively affect both satisfaction and retention over time. Several management interviewees identified NASC's constitutional federal character mandate as a distinctive

contextual factor that shapes diversity dynamics within the Commission. While the mandate ensures demographic representation, interviewees noted that representation alone does not produce inclusion, and that deliberate management practices are required to convert demographic diversity into organisational cohesion. This contextual observation is specific to NASC and represents an important boundary condition for interpreting and generalising the findings.

Synthesis of Findings

Table 2 summarises the key findings and their alignment with the three theoretical frameworks applied in this study.

Table 2: Summary of Key Findings and Theoretical Alignment

Finding	Evidence Source	Theoretical Alignment
Positive diversity climate significantly associated with employee satisfaction ($p < 0.05$)	Quantitative regression analysis	Social Identity Theory: inclusive group membership strengthens organisational identification
Inclusive leadership is the strongest mediating factor between diversity and retention	Quantitative and qualitative convergence	Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory: leadership as a motivator; Equity Theory: fairness in treatment
Diversity training participation positively associated with retention intention	Quantitative regression; interview data	Equity Theory: structured access to development reduces perceived inequity
Federal character mandate ensures representation but not inclusion at NASC	Qualitative interviews (management)	Social Identity Theory: boundary condition; diversity without management risks fault lines
Demographic fault lines emerge without active diversity management	Qualitative interviews (management)	Social Identity Theory: in-group/out-group dynamics in unmanaged diverse groups

Note: Findings represent convergent evidence across quantitative and qualitative data sources. Quantitative associations are significant at $p < 0.05$. Qualitative findings are interpretive and reflect thematic patterns across 20 management interviews.

The hypothesis (H1) was supported by the data. There is a significant positive relationship between workplace diversity and employee satisfaction, and this relationship positively influences employee retention at NASC. Both the quantitative regression results and the qualitative interview data converge on this conclusion. The finding is consistent with Choi (2017), Mor Barak (2015), and Raghuram et al. (2010), situating the NASC results within the broader empirical pattern for diversity management in public sector organisations [8, 9, 10]. The institutional context unique to NASC, particularly its constitutional diversity mandate and legislative service environment, adds specificity to these findings that should be considered when drawing comparisons with other organisations.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion of Contextual Factors

The findings of this study are understood within the specific institutional context of NASC. The Commission's constitutional mandate for federal character representation creates a diversity imperative that is structurally

embedded rather than discretionary, which distinguishes NASC from private sector organizations where diversity initiatives are more voluntary. This context means that NASC employees may experience diversity not merely as a policy but as an organizational identity, which could amplify both the positive effects of effective diversity management and the negative effects of mismanaged demographic differences. Future comparative studies examining other Nigerian government agencies operating under similar constitutional mandates would help to establish whether the patterns found in this study are specific to NASC or reflect a broader public sector dynamic.

The cross-sectional design of this study is an acknowledged limitation. The significant associations documented here are consistent with causal claims supported by the theoretical frameworks, but longitudinal research tracking the same employees over time would provide stronger evidence that diversity management interventions produce sustained improvements in satisfaction and retention outcomes rather than simply correlating with them at a single point in time. Future studies incorporating additional mediating variables, particularly organisational commitment, perceived organisational support, and employee engagement, would further illuminate the mechanisms through which diversity climate translates into retention outcomes.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between employee satisfaction and retention in a diverse workplace, using the National Assembly Service Commission as a case study. The research confirms that a diverse workforce can enhance employee satisfaction and support retention, but only when the management of diversity is deliberate, inclusive, and embedded in organisational culture and policy. Diversity alone, without structured management, leadership commitment, and genuine inclusion practices, risks creating demographic divisions that negatively affect satisfaction and increase turnover. These findings are consistent with the broader diversity management literature and contribute empirical evidence from a Nigerian public sector institution that has received limited prior empirical attention. The limitations of the current study, particularly its single-institution cross-sectional design, point clearly toward the direction of future research needed to establish generalizable evidence on diversity management and retention in Nigeria's public sector.

Recommendations

1. NASC should invest continuously in diversity training programmes that promote cultural competence, awareness, and conflict resolution, ensuring that employees from all backgrounds can work together cohesively and that the benefits of diversity are realised in practice.
2. Mentorship programmes pairing employees from different demographic backgrounds should be institutionalised as a formal part of NASC's human resource strategy, providing platforms for knowledge sharing, career development, and cross-group relationship building.
3. NASC leadership at all levels must actively champion diversity initiatives and lead by example. Leadership commitment is the single most critical factor identified in this study for translating workforce diversity into positive satisfaction and retention outcomes.
4. NASC should regularly assess its diversity climate and employee satisfaction through anonymous surveys and structured feedback mechanisms to identify gaps and ensure diversity efforts remain responsive to evolving workforce needs over time.
5. Future research should expand this study to multiple government agencies using longitudinal designs to establish causal relationships and assess whether diversity management interventions produce sustained improvements in satisfaction and retention. Including additional variables such as organisational commitment, employee engagement, and perceived organisational support would provide deeper insight into the mechanisms linking diversity management and retention outcomes.

Ethical Statement

This research was conducted in accordance with established ethical principles for social science research. All participants provided informed consent prior to participation in surveys and interviews. Participation was entirely voluntary and all responses were treated with strict confidentiality. No personal identifying information was recorded or stored. The research posed no risk of harm to participants. There are no conflicts of interest to declare. Data supporting this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Conflict Of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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