

Human Resources Management: Diversity and Inclusion

Onyekachi Kingsley Ezeugwu¹, Charity Nonyelum Edeh², Emmanuel Emeka Obiapuna³

¹Department of Management, ESUT Business School, Enugu State University of Science and Technology Enugu, Nigeria

²Department of Economics, Enugu State University of Science & Technology Agbani, Enugu Nigeria

³Department of Economics, Enugu State University of Science & Technology Agbani, Enugu Nigeria

Abstract: Human Resources Management as an organizational function play an important role in managing diversity through it proactive policy in reducing inequalities as well as to attract, develop, retain and motivate diverse workforces. Achieving Diversity alone is not sufficient to achieving organizational commitment by employees, inclusion is needed. This study is poised to highlight the role of diversity-inclusion interface towards the achievement of efficient organizational culture, increasing and improving the productivity of the workforce. While adopting a methodology of content analysis of previous studies, the present study shows that effective diversity and inclusion management through good HR practices and procedures leads to positive outcomes. Ineffective diversity and inclusion management in HR is most likely to result in conflict, demotivation, higher employee turnover and low organizational performance. The study recommends that workplace diversity and inclusion should be at the top of mind of employers these days and will only grow in importance as companies continue to invest in their diversity and inclusion programmes.

Keywords: Diversity, Inclusion, human resources, workplace, management

I. INTRODUCTION

With respect to workplace environment, the human resource department is vested with the duty of managing the total diversity and inclusion of employees of the organization. In every organization, the human resources department has the role of ensuring that the concerns of workers are met and their problems solved whenever they arise.

Human Resources diversity and inclusion management has gained momentum because of the pressures on business that become domestically and internationally competitive, the changing labour force composition, growing awareness of the importance of human resources management and a backlash created by perceptions of special treatment for women and ethnic minorities. It has been noted in many studies that there is wide discrimination in employment. This is evidenced by low employment of women and minorities and the lack of minority representation at higher organizational levels (Shen, Chanda, D'Netto and Mongaa, 2009). Again, womenfolk and the minority employees are always disadvantaged in training, performance appraisals and remuneration.

Second, Human Resources diversity is often restricted to hiring by numbers (Agocs and Burr 1996). Relatively, little is

done on other HR activities including training, management development and individual-based appraisal and pay. Often, minority employees are recruited for lower positions and provided few promotion opportunities. While many organizations provide diversity training, most training programmes reinforce norms and values of the dominant organizational culture. Organizations normally do not take individual differences into cognizance when formulating and implementing training, appraisal and remuneration policies. Gender income inequality is still a controversial issue in diversity management. Ethnic minorities are frequently not comfortable with open expression of their opinions.

Empowerment of a truly diverse and inclusive workforce is not yet a norm. Third, an important focus in HR management is placed on the notion of equality, usually described as fairness or workplace discrimination. Most companies do not really have effective diversity management practices that value and make use of diversity (Shen, Chanda, D'Netto and Mongaa, 2009). Recently, countries like Brazil, England have streamlined and announced equal pay for the male and female sportsmen and women, especially in football. This is a new development in a bid to acknowledge diversity and inclusion in human resource management. Such effort and program by managers would unleash the potential of the diverse workforce they employ.

This paper is structured in four sections. The foregoing is the introductory part, which is followed by a brief review of the concepts of diversity as the second part. The third part is the review the concept of Inclusion, while the fourth part of the study examines the interface between of the concepts of diversity and inclusion. In the fifth part, there is a short review of the practical implications of diversity and inclusion in organizations in the sixth part. The conclusion forms the final lap in this paper.

II. CONCEPT OF DIVERSITY

Whenever one thinks of diversity, ideas that readily come to mind include ethnicity, race and gender, but the issue of diversity has more to do than these. Loden & Rosener (1991) sees diversity as those attributes that emphasizes the need to accommodating others who are different from members within the group in which we belong. Put in another way, diversity could apply to another person who you see as being

different from yourself. Diversity exists in different dimensions ranging from ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, sexual orientation, educational background, work experience, parental status, e.t.c. (Loden & Rosener, 1991)

III. BENEFITS OF DIVERSITY

According to courses.lumenlearning.com, theories abound on the reasons behind fostering diversity in business organizations. The arguments include enhancement of interpersonal innovation, availability of talent, and risk avoidance, appealing to an international database.

The issue of diversity stems from the idea that diversity carries along with it some latent benefits, which include better decision making, enhanced solution to problems, increased skills, creativity, and innovation. All these benefits will definitely lead to better product development and marketing success to satisfy customer demands.

Innovation

In organization where diverse teams exist, implementation of better innovative and effective ideas is certain. The reason behind requires managers to find solutions from outside the organization's normal way of doing things, using diverse perspectives to reach new and creative thinking.

Individuals who share similar background and skills are much less likely to come across with new ideas that could lead to new product or new ways of productions A group of similar individuals with similar skills is much less likely to stumble across or generate new ideas that lead to innovation. Similarity leads to groupthink, which diminishes creativity.

Localization

An organization with diverse employees has a better of the knowledge of the various consumer markets that patronize her products and services. As a result, the organization is better equipped to survive in the global market than a business that has a limited or narrow range of workforce demographics. With increasing trade and economic growth in developing economies, Organizations need domestic talents to permeate foreign markets, compete and communicate effectively. Employees from a particular region are expected to have sound, deep understanding and knowledge of the needs of customers in that region, including their culture, and this enables the organization to add considerable value to what they offer to customers.

Adaptability

Current trend requires that organizations be able to adapt with emerging technologies and changing cultures. These qualities become very vital if the organization intends to remain competitive and compete favourably with competitors in the industry.

Diversity engenders innovating thinking and improves decision making via a deeper and more comprehensive

worldview. An organization that is willing to engage in diversify benefits from a wider talent pool and recruits individuals equipped with diverse skill sets. The benefit of this, especially at the management level, is enormous.

IV. CONCEPT OF INCLUSION

Inclusion is a situation in an organization when diversity exists among the workforce, creating an impartial and healthy working environment which guarantees equity in access to resources and growth opportunities for all. Inclusion means having an open, free and unbiased climate where every stakeholder in an organization can survive (Williams and Wade-Golden, 2013).

Researchers at HRDQ (2014) itemized the following points as related to inclusive workplaces:

- Every stakeholder is accepted and treated with respect.
- Every employee gets fair hearing.
- Employees behavior promotes inclusive environment
- Rifts and disputes within the organization are addressed in impartiality.
- The diversity of the workforce reflects the local society and people who constitute the market for the firm.

In an environment where there is inclusion, participation and contribution of employees are maximized the existence of collaboration, support and respect. With true inclusion, all discrimination, intolerance and obstacles to personal development and growth are removed. When this is the case, everyone in the organization feels supported and included.

V. DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION INTERFACE

Leading organizations now see diversity and inclusion as a comprehensive strategy woven into every aspect of the talent life cycle to enhance employee engagement, improve brand, and drive performance.

Diversity and inclusion refers to the mission of the organization, its series of maneuvers and activities that engenders a diverse working environment and leverage the outcome of diversity to attain a competitive business edge. Companies that create diverse and inclusive workplace are more adaptable, creative, and become magnets that attract top talent (Mondal, 2020).

Diversity and inclusion in the work environment is an essential business practice that high-performing companies prioritize — building environments that help their employees thrive.

Diversity includes all visible and nonvisible dimensions that make an individual who they are. (National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education, 2018). It is the combination of differences and sameness with respect to background, values, experiences, preferences, beliefs, and

behaviors of individual in an organization (Gartner, Inc. 2019). Diversity is the measure; inclusion is the mechanism (Deloitte, Engaging the 21st Century Workforce, 2016). Diversity emphasizes quantity, while inclusion emphasizes quality. Diversity exemplifies being invited to the party, while inclusion compels the invitee to dance (Myers, 2011). Over time, Myers' definition has been expanded to include "belonging"—being asked to share your playlist, in the party context.

Diversity and inclusion now affects brand, organizational mission, and activities. Apart from the public being more aware of this trend, (as shown by marginalization based on gender and race in many industries) employees are also showing stronger concerns on issues of diversity and inclusion. Millennials, for example, see inclusion as a mandatory part of corporate culture, defining how the company listens to them at work. Shareholders, customers, and suppliers are all taking a closer look at this issue (Bourke and van Berkel 2017).

As awareness around diversity and inclusion grows, diversity and inclusion have become more important for talent acquisition and a company's employment brand. Many organizations operate in an environment of high transparency, which employees demand. For younger workers, inclusion is not just about assemblage of team members from different backgrounds, but also about connecting them so that everyone is given fair hearing and respected. Companies should align their approach with the expectations of Millennials and others, or they will likely lose talent (Bourke and van Berkel 2017).

Having realized that organizations these days now operate with great interconnectivity, it has become obvious that diversity and inclusion can improve organizational performance. A new study by Deloitte has demonstrated that diverse and inclusive workforce is more innovative, engaged, and creative in their work (Bourke and van Berkel 2017).

VI. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN WORKPLACES

There is a continuing and irreplaceable need for effective diversity and inclusion management in human resources management. Effective diversity and inclusion management through good HR practices and procedures leads to positive outcomes. Ineffective diversity and inclusion management in HR is most likely to result in conflict, demotivation, higher employee turnover and low organizational performance. As a result, diversity and Inclusion management must become a priority agenda in HRM practices for all organizations. Due to the fact that most organizations consider diversity mainly as an issue of compliance with legal requirements and recruiting

ethnic minorities, there is a great need for improved HR diversity and inclusion

VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In this paper, it is proposed that at the strategic level, top management is required to have a philosophy and foster organizational culture that recognizes diversity and inclusion in their workplaces, and commits resources and leadership so as to implement diversity and inclusion policies. At the tactical level, organizations should adopt a range of HRM policies incorporating diversity and inclusion strategies simultaneously. At the operational level, organizations should pay attention to educating employees, networking, communications and flexible employment. At all levels, line managers should be actively involved in HR diversity and inclusion management.

Top diversity and inclusion priority is recruitment of diverse employees. Therefore, workplace diversity and inclusion should be at the top of mind of employers these days and will only grow in importance as companies continue to invest in their diversity and inclusion programs.

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