



EDUCATIONAL DIVERSITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS: A STUDY OF MTN, LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

ABSTRACT

This study titled “educational diversity and organizational efficiency: A study of MTN Lagos, Nigeria”, constitutes response to specific gap (scarcity of literature on educational diversity and organizational efficiency, more so, as touching telecommunication with specific focus on MTN, Lagos State). Survey research design, questionnaire, and simple random sampling were applied. A sample of 200 emerged from population of MTN Lagos staff, through application of Taro Yamane’s formular. Correlation analysis was done, apparently, correlation coefficient between educational diversity and organizational effectiveness was 0.364, a confirmation of moderate positive relationship. Result was statistically significant ($p = 0.000 < 0.01$). P-value was less than significance level of 0.05, hence, we reject null hypothesis, which states that educational diversity has no significant relationship with organizational effectiveness in MTN, Lagos State. This study concludes that educational diversity significantly enhances organizational effectiveness at MTN, Lagos State. In line with findings, researchers recommend that MTN, Lagos State, should ensure a mix of employees with varying educational backgrounds and provide continuous learning opportunities. Encouraging skills acquisition, professional certifications, and alternative educational perspectives would help leverage diverse educational experiences for improved problem-solving and organizational efficiency.

Keywords: Educational, Diversity, Organizational, Efficiency, Lagos

1.0 INTRODUCTION

MTN Nigeria, being one of the largest and most influential telecommunications companies in the country, plays a pivotal role in Nigeria's economy. Given the critical importance of telecommunications in driving economic development, understanding the impact of diversity in this industry becomes vital. While benefits of diversity management are obvious in other industries, dearth of insight on educational diversity management has been preventing MTN, Lagos State from maximizing improvement and gain competitive edge in highly dynamic and competitive telecommunication industry.

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Despite the well-documented benefits of diversity, there remains a significant gap in understanding the extent to which various aspects of diversity affect the efficiency of organizations in the telecommunication sector particularly for MTN Nigeria. As the largest telecommunication operator in Nigeria, MTN serves as an ideal organization to use as case study for this research. The company has a very diverse workforce. The direct impact of diversity metric such as education on the effectiveness of MTN, Lagos State has not been fully explored in the literature.

This study filled the gap identified above by exploring relationship between educational diversity and organizational effectiveness, using MTN, Lagos State as case study. Serial knowledge arising from this investigation become useful not only to the management of MTN, Lagos State, but, also to other players in Nigerian telecommunication industry. This study examined the relationship between educational diversity and organizational effectiveness in the Nigerian telecommunications sector, with a focus on Lagos State.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Educational diversity

Educational diversity encompasses the range of educational backgrounds within an organization. Combs (2002); Al-Edenat (2023); Asif, et al. (2024); Gilli, et al. (2023); and Hannan (2023), respectively emphasize that organizational leaders are tasked with fostering educational diversity to inspire and motivate employees to collaborate effectively toward common goals. By doing so, leaders aim to enhance teamwork and overall productivity. The principle of division of labour highlights the importance of each individual's educational background as a key predictor of their skills, experiences, and capabilities. A diverse educational landscape can lead to innovative problem-solving, as team members with different educational experiences bring unique perspectives to discussions and decision-making processes.

Eduard (2010); Purwanto, et al. (2023); Sanina, et al. (2023); Tsou and Chen (2023); Wang, et al. (2023); and Zhang, et al. (2023), separately note that employees with lower educational qualifications may experience feelings of inadequacy, which can adversely affect their job performance. These employees often grapple with social insecurities and diminished self-confidence in the workplace. Such feelings can hinder their effectiveness and potentially foster a negative attitude toward their colleagues and the organization as a whole. This negative dynamic can lead to reduced collaboration and communication, ultimately impacting organizational performance.

2.1.2 Organizational effectiveness.

Cameron and Whetten (2013) define organizational effectiveness primarily as the achievement of strategic goals. Their model suggests that a high-performing organization is one that not only meets its predefined objectives but also demonstrates flexibility and resilience in responding to external disruptions. However, this goal-oriented definition has been critiqued for its narrow focus, as it overlooks the human and cultural factors that can influence performance outcomes.

Expanding on this, Harrison and Rainer (2022) argue that organizational effectiveness must also account for employee satisfaction, engagement, and overall well-being. Their research posits that organizations solely emphasizing financial outcomes may struggle with sustainability and long-term success if they neglect human resource factors. This perspective shifts the discourse from a purely performance-based view to a more holistic approach, emphasizing that a truly effective organization is one that balances financial success with positive employee experiences. This broad view is supported by Yoon, Shin, and Suh (2020), who emphasize the role of digital transformation in organizational effectiveness. They suggest that, in the contemporary business environment, technological adaptability and innovative practices are crucial for sustaining effectiveness, thus positioning digital competency as a core component of the concept.

Furthermore, Lee and Zhang (2021) highlight the importance of organizational culture and leadership in determining effectiveness. Their research shows that companies with a strong culture of trust, inclusivity, and shared values tend to outperform those lacking these qualities. The authors argue that transformational leadership styles, which encourage innovation and inspire employees to go beyond their basic responsibilities, are critical for achieving and sustaining effectiveness. This perspective integrates the role of leadership and culture, thus adding another layer to the definition of effectiveness.

Synthesizing these perspectives, it is evident that organizational effectiveness is not a one-dimensional construct. It encompasses various elements, including goal attainment (Cameron & Whetten, 2013), employee well-being and engagement (Harrison & Rainer, 2022), digital transformation (Yoon et al., 2020), and leadership and culture (Lee & Zhang, 2021). An effective organization, therefore, is one that not only meets its strategic objectives but also fosters a positive work environment, embraces technological advancements, and is guided by strong leadership

2.2 Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory (SIT), developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s, explores how individuals categorize themselves and others into social groups. The theory posits that a significant part of a person's self-concept is derived from their membership in social groups (e.g., based on race, gender, age, or organizational affiliation). This categorization affects individuals' perceptions, attitudes, and

behaviours, influencing their interactions within diverse groups. Social Identity Theory provides valuable insights into understanding group dynamics, including the effects of diversity on organizational behaviour. Its strengths lie in its ability to explain how group memberships can shape individuals' interactions and the overall work environment.

This theory is useful for this study as it will help the researcher better understand how diverse social identities impact employee interactions at MTN, Lagos State. By examining how employees identify with various groups (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity and educational background), the researcher can gain insights into team cohesion and potential sources of conflict or collaboration. Furthermore, understanding these dynamics can inform strategies to promote inclusivity and enhance employee engagement, ultimately leading to improved organizational effectiveness. This theoretical framework will allow the researcher to analyse the implications of social identity on workplace behaviour, providing a comprehensive understanding of how diversity influences performance in the Nigerian telecom sector.

2.3 Empirical Review

2.3.1 Educational Diversity and Organizational Effectiveness

Bello-Pintado and Bianchi (2017) investigated the relationship between horizontal educational diversity (HED) within firms and their innovation performance, specifically looking at both the propensity to innovate and the intensity of innovation. Additionally, the authors hypothesize that the organizational structure of firms moderates this relationship. The researchers utilized panel data from the Uruguayan Innovation Survey covering the years 2006-2012. The econometric analysis employed various statistical techniques to assess the relationship between HED and innovation performance, controlling for different organizational structures. The findings indicate that HED has a weak association with innovation performance concerning both product and process innovations. However, the results suggest that firms with advanced organizational structures experience a positive moderation effect on the relationship between HED and innovation performance, particularly in cases of radical innovations. This implies that while educational diversity alone may not significantly enhance innovation outcomes, the effectiveness of this diversity is amplified in organizations with more sophisticated structures. The study concludes that while HED alone does not strongly drive innovation performance, the combination of educational diversity with advanced organizational structures can foster a conducive environment for achieving radical innovations. This finding underscores the importance of not just promoting diversity but also ensuring that organizational structures support collaborative innovation efforts. The authors recommend that firms aiming to enhance their innovation capabilities should focus on developing advanced organizational structures that can leverage the benefits of educational diversity. Additionally, they

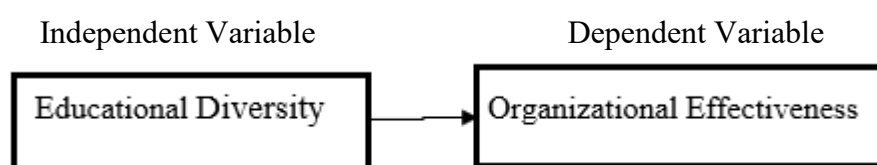
suggest that further research should explore the specific elements of organizational structures that best support the integration of diverse educational backgrounds for innovation purposes.

Andoh, et al. (2019) explored how different diversity variables such as age, gender, ethnicity, and educational background influence the performance of organizations. The authors provided both a theoretical framework and an empirical analysis to examine the moderating effects of these diversity categories on performance. The study involved a sample size of 175 respondents, consisting of both academic and administrative staff from four selected private universities in Ghana. The authors initially distributed the questionnaire to 320 individuals but received responses from 175, which formed the basis for their analysis. The findings of the study revealed that workplace diversity, in general, has a positive influence on employee performance within the university setting. However, not all diversity factors had the same level of impact. Educational diversity emerged as the most significant predictor of employee performance. Employees with diverse educational qualifications brought different skill sets, perspectives, and approaches to work, which enriched the collaborative efforts and improved overall performance. In contrast, age diversity also played a significant role in influencing employee performance. The presence of a multigenerational workforce, where employees from different age groups worked together, contributed to knowledge-sharing and mentorship opportunities. Interestingly, the study found that gender and ethnicity diversity did not have a statistically significant impact on employee performance in the sampled universities. This was somewhat surprising given the attention gender and ethnicity typically receive in discussions around diversity. The authors concluded by outlining recommendations for university administrators and leaders. This study recommended that organizations should invest in professional development programs that leverage the diverse educational backgrounds of their employees and create environments where different age groups can collaborate effectively. Additionally, the authors recommended that future studies explore how team composition and group dynamics interact with diversity factors to influence performance outcomes.

Muange and Kiptoo (2020) investigate the impact of workforce ethnic diversity and educational background diversity on employee performance within selected universities in Kenya. The specific objectives are to determine the effects of educational background diversity and workforce ethnic diversity on employee performance. The study is grounded in Social Identity Theory. The researchers adopted an explanatory research design and conducted a survey across selected universities in Kenya. A total of 371 self-administered questionnaires were distributed to both teaching and non-teaching administrators. Out of these, 305 questionnaires were returned, resulting in a response rate of 82%. The study assessed the reliability of the instruments using Cronbach's alpha. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) and Pearson correlation analysis. To test the hypotheses

and establish the impact of each variable on employee performance, the researchers employed regression analysis. The study's findings reveal that both ethnic diversity ($\beta_1 = 0.238, \rho < 0.05$) and educational background diversity ($\beta_2 = 0.048, \rho < 0.05$) have a significant and positive effect on employee performance. This indicates that as workforce diversity in terms of ethnicity and education increases, employee performance also improves. The study concluded that workforce diversity both in terms of ethnic and educational backgrounds plays a crucial role in enhancing employee performance in academic settings. These findings support the principles of Social Categorization Theory and add valuable insights to the existing literature on human resource management. The authors recommend that institutions and firms prioritize hiring employees from diverse ethnic and educational backgrounds to foster higher employee performance. Emphasizing diversity in recruitment strategies could lead to improved organizational outcomes, ultimately benefiting both employees and the institutions they serve.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Source: Researchers' conceptual framework

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study adopts survey research design. Population (1,824) for the study comprises employees of MTN Nigeria, with a particular focus on those (400 employees, constituting about 22% of MTN's total workforce) based in Lagos State. Lagos State, being Nigeria's commercial hub, is home to a substantial portion of MTN's workforce. The study adopted convenience sampling technique. Taro Yamane's formula for sample determination was applied to derive a sample size of 200. The study utilized primary data collected through a questionnaire distributed to MTN employees in Lagos. A correlation analysis was adopted in testing the hypothesis.

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Test of Hypothesis

H_0 : Educational diversity has no significant relationship with organizational effectiveness in MTN, Lagos State.

Table 1. Correlation between Educational Diversity and Organisational Effectiveness

			Educational Diversity	Organisational Effectiveness
Spearman's rho	Educational Diversity	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.364**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	195	195
	Organisational Effectiveness	Correlation Coefficient	.364**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	195	195

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Researchers' Empirical Test

Decision

The Spearman correlation coefficient between educational diversity and organizational effectiveness is 0.364, indicating a moderate positive relationship. The result is statistically significant ($p = 0.000 < 0.01$). Since the p-value is less than the significance level of 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis, which states that educational diversity has no significant relationship with organizational effectiveness in MTN, Lagos State.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

Educational Diversity and Organizational Effectiveness in MTN,

The Spearman correlation coefficient of 0.364 found between educational diversity and organizational effectiveness in MTN, Lagos State, indicates a moderate positive relationship. This suggests that as educational diversity increases, organizational effectiveness tends to improve. The p-value of 0.000, which is well below the 0.01 significance threshold, confirms that the correlation is statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0), which posited that educational diversity has no significant effect on organizational effectiveness, is rejected. The data supports the alternative hypothesis (H_1), establishing that educational diversity positively contributes to the effectiveness of MTN.

Prior studies reinforce the importance of educational diversity in enhancing organizational performance. For instance, Bello-Pintado and Bianchi (2017) found that while educational diversity alone did not strongly drive innovation, its impact was amplified in firms with advanced organizational structures. This suggests that educational diversity contributes to effectiveness, but optimal outcomes are achieved when organizations also implement supportive structures.

Similarly, Andoh et al. (2019) highlighted that educational diversity was a significant predictor of employee performance in Ghanaian universities, with varied educational backgrounds enriching teamwork and improving productivity. This aligns with the findings at MTN, where diverse educational perspectives contribute to greater organizational effectiveness.

Furthermore, Muange and Kiptoo (2020) demonstrated that both educational and ethnic diversity significantly enhanced employee performance in Kenyan universities. Their research supports Social Categorization Theory, which posits that diverse teams can achieve higher performance due to the combination of varied expertise.

Findings from prior studies indicate that educational diversity positively influences organizational effectiveness by fostering a collaborative environment enriched with diverse perspectives and skills.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A moderate positive correlation (Spearman's rho = 0.364, p = 0.000) was found between educational diversity and organizational effectiveness. This demonstrates that educational diversity plays a significant role in boosting organizational performance at MTN, Lagos State. Educational diversity also exhibited a moderate positive correlation (Spearman's rho = 0.364, p = 0.000), emphasizing that diverse educational backgrounds contribute to enhanced problem-solving and innovation within the organization. In conclusion, the study underscores that educational diversity significantly enhances organizational effectiveness at MTN, Lagos State. By fostering an inclusive environment that embraces diverse educational backgrounds, organizations can achieve better performance, innovation, and collaboration. In line with findings, researchers recommend that MTN should ensure a mix of employees with varying educational backgrounds and provide continuous learning opportunities. Encouraging skills acquisition, professional certifications, and alternative educational perspectives would help leverage diverse educational experiences for improved problem-solving and organizational performance.

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