Diversity in Age and Gender of Workers: Implications for Organizational Performance in Nigeria. (Evidence from United Cement Company Calabar, Nigeria)

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the relationship between workforce diversity in age and gender, and the performance of United Cement Company Limited, (UNICEM) Calabar, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to evaluate the extent to which, gender and age diversities, respectively affects the performance of UNICEM. Relevant conceptual and empirical reviews were conducted and the theoretical framework of the study was anchored on organizational theory by Mary Pakelfollet. Descriptive research design was used for the study. 400 employees of UNICEM constituted the population of the study, from which a sample of 196 was carved out with the aid of Krejcie and Morgan Table. Questionnaire was used to gather relevant data from the respondents and data was analysed and the null hypotheses tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis. Results revealed that UNICEM employs workers of diverse age brackets who work together harmoniously. Furthermore, results showed that both male and female performed their duties appropriately. Recommendations were also adduced, which included the fact that sensitive organizational activities should be organized in a manner that is all inclusive of employees of diverse age brackets in UNICEM.

Keywords: Workforce, Diversity, Age, Gender, Performance, Discrimination, Inclusiveness and Organizational

INTRODUCTION

The existence of workforce diversity within a workplace indicates that the workforce is heterogeneous in terms of gender, culture, religion, ethnicity and language, in which case employees possess elements and qualities, differing from one another (Robbins, 2020). Also Richard (2006), defines workplace diversity as a broad range and differences that influence how people interact and achieve organizations results. Furthermore, workplace diversity can be characterized as an organization, in which employees possess distinct elements and qualities, differing from

one another. The different elements include employees' belief, values and actions. They can also include; gender, ethnicity, age, lifestyle and physical abilities. Managing these elements can create staffing related problems that are the main focus for human resource departments. Managing diversity is focused on the assumption that diverse segments of an organization create new methods of working together and that morale, profits and productivity will increase (Shaw, 1993; Sadri & Tran, 2002). These authors observed that managing diversity includes building specific skills and creating policies that increased the best work behavior and attitudes from each employee. Implementing workforce diversity has become a major focus in many human resource departments and therefore in order to meet the demands of modern technological society, corporations must rethink what diversity means and how the concepts of developing, valuing and managing a truly diverse corporation must go beyond traditional strategies (Urima, 2011).

Human resource management strategies are designed to allow human resource departments to strategically utilize personnel, in a fashion that will meet the heterogeneous demands of society, through improvements in the corporation's productivity and performance. Human resource managers in their role of managing diversity should be aware of problems and elements that may impact this role. Several elements are included in managing workforce diversity and one of the main elements is equal employment opportunity. Equal employment opportunity warrants the treatment of employees in a fair and impartial way in all aspects of employment. Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) regulations include legislation and policies that are responsible for enforcing legislation and policies in this context. In addition to EEO, affirmative action, and discrimination law are also elements that corporations use to manage and regulate workforce diversity. Almost everyone is now able to communicate and work with other people from different parts of the world due to the advancement in the outsourcing of many administrative jobs. Workplace diversity despite having numerous benefits also has its several dysfunctional consequences especially when not properly managed. Workplace diversity ought to therefore be one of the top

things contemporary organizations should address. Organizations are therefore to prioritize hiring diverse employees because of the many great things associated with it. The main goal of workplace diversity management is the prohibition of discrimination against individuals, which would cause them to be unfairly differentiated from co-workers. In addition to globalization, diversity has also increased as a result of an increase in women and people with disabilities entering the workforce. One of the tasks of managing workforce diversity is to recognize the differences among individuals and provide opportunities and means for individuals to contribute, hire talents to the organization. Supervisors and managers need to recognize the ways in which the workplace is changing and evolving. Managing diversity is a significant organizational challenge, so managerial skills must adapt to accommodate a multicultural work environment. Culturally, diverse population lives in all countries of the world. With increasing immigration, increasing number of people working abroad, and the presence of indigenous ethnic communities, employees who never even leave home often lace a multicultural workforce in local companies and organizations. Each set of population exhibits a culturally unique life-style (Adler, 1997).

Demographic changes (women in the workplace, organizational restructuring, and equal opportunity legislation) will require organizations to review their management practices and develop new and creative approaches to managing people. Future human resource management challenges will include an increase in the number of women employed, more minorities, varieties of ethnic background, disabled, and people with different lifestyle. The extent to which these shifts are efficiently and effectively managed will have an impact on the competitive economic performance of business organization (Wentling and Palma-Rivas, 2000). Africa has also witnessed transformation in the diversity of the workforce and embrace of the same. Diversity from a systemic globalized perspective thus requires a type of organizational culture in which each employee can pursue his or her career aspiration without being inhibited by gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, religion or other factors that are irrelevant to performance (Evans, 2007).

Managing diversity in a globalized environment means enabling the diverse workforce perform its full potential in an equitable environment where no one group has an advantage or disadvantage (Wagge et al. 2012). It is the cultural background that creates differences (Barney, 2003), furthermore Hambler (2015) found highly significant differences in the behavior and attitudes of employees and managers from different countries. According to him, managers and employees vary on four primary cultural dimensions, that is, individualism/collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance and masculinity/femininity. Later Ekanade (2018), along with others identified a fifth dimension that is confusion dynamism, measures employees' devotion to the work ethics and their respect to tradition (Kossek, Lobel & Brown, 2005).

As opined by Collins (2006) and Fernandez (2009) noted, diversity management is a perpetual process, with an ambitious goal, toward the creation of an organizational culture where the best people want to work, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, where people are promoted on their merits and where opportunities for success are available to all. Evans (2007) concurs and argues that embedding the principles of diversity management in every organizational activity can be stepping in ensuring that organizations achieve their most ambitious business goals. In other words diversity management is ultimately about unleashing the rich and diverse potential of an entire workforce by facilitating the exchange of new perspectives, improving problems solving by inviting different ideas, and creating a respectful, acceptable work environment (Kandola and Fullerton, 2012). Grant and Osanlo (2014), submit that the key to employee and organizational performance is to make diversity an asset within the organization. Dynamic organizations look for people who are different from each other because the diverse workforce may bring different talents, interest, and viewpoints (Imenda, 2014). The organization which fail to embrace diversity effectively and do not adopt a holistic approach to eliminate discrimination and injustice are usually adversely affected by both employees and customers. Organization should therefore rethink and redefine mission strategies, management practices, cultures, markets, and products to meet the needs

of an increasingly diverse body of employees, customers and stakeholders (Fernandez, 2009). Ultimately the key to create, develop, and retain a diverse workforce is to find a way to make the workforce feel connected to their company (Jackson, Joshi, and Erhardt, 2003, Webber and Donahue, 2001). Business organizations are increasingly embracing the use of workgroup as a strategy–structure mix in the pursuit of organizational goals. This new trend in organizing work is predicated on flexibility, innovation, and quick decision making prospect inherent in a team-work setting. In a climate of increasing competitiveness, many organizations rely on workgroup to generate the innovation necessary for sustained business success (Mumford and Luciana, 2004; West and Anderson, 2012). In addition, the contemporary demographic changes, increasingly globalized markets and greater mobility, aimed at promoting fairness in recruitment practices, doubtlessly is precipitating diversity within work-team in today's organizations (Williams and O'Reilly, 2008). Richard (2006) examines firm-wide business strategies as a variable in determining the relationship between diversity and performance, (Richard (2006; Richard & Johnson, (2001). Organizational performance on the other hand, deals with the goals means and strategies. It is defined as the extent to which a company, as a social system, with certain resources is able to fulfill its goals without being obliged to incapacitate its resources and means or putting excessive strain on its employees, (Paleer, 2003). Basically, the concept of organization performance is predicated upon the idea that an organization is a voluntary association of productive assets; including human, physical and capital resources, for the purpose of achieving, (Darwin, 2014).

As observed by Oloyede (2014), those providing the assets will only commit them to the organization so long as they are satisfied with the value they receive in exchange, relative to alternative uses of the assets. Thus, the essence of performance as therefore the creation of value by the use of the contributed assets is equal or greater than the value expected by those contributing the assets, the asset will then continue to be made available to the organization and the organization will continue to exist.

The measurement of performance refers to the evaluation of the achievement of the fundamental organizational goals and further sets the scope and direction of possible improvements and action, (shorts and Palmer, 2003). As further noted by shorts and Palmer (2003: 100), "what cannot be measured, cannot be managed". There is no one acceptable parameter for measuring performance and therefore each organization must identity its own by which to measure its performance (Nwikali and Kyalo, 2014). The organizational performance constructs of financial and non- financial components is probably the most commonly used dependent variable measure utilized in organizational performance evaluation. The financial (quantitative) indicators, include; the level profit/financial performance, level of output/ productivity, the distribution of goods/services, state of the quality of goods and services, type of production methods and technology, and so on, (Oloyede 2014); the non-financial (qualitative) indicators of organizational performance include the following; labour turnover, goal attainment, staying competitive, labour unrest, stakeholders satisfaction, motivation level of employees and so on. The primary duty of any organization is to harmonize the various departments in order to increase productivity, expand the business and stabilize cash flow. In spite of the glaring importance of workforce diversity in UNICEM, Calabar, most departments still face challenges due to differences in religion, culture, beliefs, gender, age, colour, physical ability, ethnicity and so on. It is against this background that the researcher seeks to study the impact of workplace diversity on the performance of UNICEM. The dimensions of workplace diversity to be considered are; religion, ethnicity, gender and age.

Statement of the Problem

In an organization such as UNICEM with a highly diversified workforce, if diversity in terms of gender and age is not properly managed, the diverse workforce will then become an inhibitor of organizational performance. This expression or observation concurs with the study of Anthony (2019). If diversity is not properly handled in any organization, as is the case with UNICEM with employees of age and gender divides,

the organization is bound to experience a situation where the older employee could form and experience the dysfunctional consequences of informal group or cliques against the younger employee and many other issues of gender segregations may occur leading to decline in organization performance (UNICEM Communication Bulletin, 2021). Equally as noted by Ekanade (2014), when issues of gender and age diversities are not well managed and the doctrine of equality and equity emphasized, it may lead to gender and age discriminations which are counter-productive to development of organizations such as UNICEM. From Evidence of a pilot study conducted in UNICEM in 2021, participants' observed that UNICEM has been experiencing a lot of unresolved conflicts which are traceable to the age and gender components of its workforce which has not been strategically managed (UNICEM Human Resource Information Unit). The observations of the pilot study, aptly agrees with the position of the Group Managing Director of UNICEM, who recently raised the issue of incessant inter-personal crises and conflict. According to him, these crises are traceable to the ethnic and religious diversities (UNICEM monthly Communication Bulletin, 2021).Osaghae (2010), in a survey of front-line supervisors found that low performing agencies failed to strive towards workforce diversity, thus these gives credence to the fact that if workplace diversity is not handled strategically, the formation of informal groups would occur, which would tend to power struggle, miscommunication, conflicts, high labour turnover and many other inhibitive consequences.

Objectives of the Study
The broad objective of this study is to establish how workforce diversity relate to the performance of UNICEM, while the specific objectives are:
i. To evaluate the extent to which gender diversity relates to the performance of UNICEM, Calabar.
ii. To ascertain the extent to which age diversity relates to the performance of UNICEM, Calabar.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

i. To what extent does gender diversity relate to the performance of UNICEM, Calabar?
ii. To what extent does age diversity relate to the performance of UNICEM, Calabar?

Statement of Hypotheses

The following Null hypotheses were formulated for the study:

H_01: There is no significant relationship between gender diversity and the performance of UNICEM, Calabar.

H_02: There is no significant relationship between age diversity and the performance of UNICEM, Calabar.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of diversity

Diversity is a subjective phenomenon; created by group members themselves who on the basis of their different social identities categorize others as similar or dissimilar: "A group is diverse if it is composed of individuals who differ on a characteristic on which they base their own social identity" (Ekanade, 2014:10). Diversity could be defined as that which differentiates one group of people from another along primary and secondary dimensions. Primary dimensions of diversity, those exerting primary influences on identities, are gender, ethnicity, race, religion, age and mental or physical abilities and characteristics. There is a finite trend towards definitions of a multiplicity of diversity dimensions; Cole (2016) adds culture, social class and language to the primary dimensions and healthcare beliefs and recreational interests to the secondary dimensions. She further adds a tertiary dimension, which encompasses historical moments experienced. Generally diversity acknowledges, understands, accepts, values and celebrates differences among people with respect to age, religion, ethnicity, gender, physical and language. People no longer live and work in an insular environment; they are now part of a worldwide economy competing within a global framework, for this reason, profit and non-profit organizations need to become more diversified to remain

competitive, maximizing and capitalizing on workplace diversity as an important issue for management.

Other dimensions such as sexual orientation, disability and political orientation are less obvious, and could be said to constitute the secondary dimensions lying just below the surface, which may be revealed with time. The tertiary dimensions are often the core of individual identity and lie deeper below the surface. According to Dahm (2003), diversity within an organization can evoke an array of emotions. Many researches such as the foregoing, view diversity as something to be dealt with rather than a tool to he used to improve the organizations. Even though many researchers agree that the results of diversity are conscious, organizations add value to their performance. Research on the effects of within teams and small groups indicate that diversity can have both positive and negative effects (Saxena, 2022).

The Concept of Gender Diversity

The demography of a work-group critically influences group processes. Which affect group performance, which in turn shapes organization performance. Diverse groups encourage individuals to access other individuals with different backgrounds, experiences, networks, information, education and expertise than their own. By facilitating a positive environment of constructive disagreements, debates and discussions, diversity furthers novel insights, creativity and innovation, and advanced problem-solving geared toward higher-order outcomes – far better than what would be possible in more homogenous learns. This is because when presented with conflicting opinions, knowledge and perspectives, a diverse group can consider, discuss and evaluate all relevant interpretations, alternatives and consequences, before narrowing down to a common resolution and making the relevant task-related decision. Through this channel of information-processing, gender diversity can be a source of sustained competitive advantage for the organization (Barney, 2003). According to Wentling and Palma Rivas (2000), the importance of gender diversity is to spur innovation is especially relevant today as organizations across sectors are struggling to cope with the disruption

accompanying sweeping technological advancement, from automation or artificial intelligence, these transformations bring opportunities as well as challenges for businesses as they strive to stay competitive against new products, services or organizational models that are completely supplanting the existing versions. Women managers are more likely than men to exhibit key leadership behaviours, which are critical to addressing the business needs to the future, further strengthening the case for firms to foster gender diversity and leverage it towards navigating a rapidly changing marketplace. Mwikali and Kyalo (2015) observe that in Asian countries, especially Korea and Japan, there has been paradigm shift in male dominance of the labour markets, which has embraced gender diversity. The authors noted that in Korea, by 2003, economic participation of the women in labour force was almost at par with that of the men at 48.9% according to a survey conducted by the National Statistical Office, Japan's Ministry of Labour and Welfare estimated Japan's women representation at 48.3% the other firm outcome that must be evaluated as part of performance is talent. In an increasing diverse labour market, actively promotion gender diversity can help firms to attract and retain the best talent, which is critical for firms to perform well. More than half of those employers facing the challenge of bridging the talent gap feel that they are not able to serve their clients satisfactorily, which decrease their competitiveness in the market, to recruit the best people, an organization must take advantage of the entire talent pool and tap into potential of eligible women candidate. This is especially important if there exists a competitive talent shortage.

The increase in workforce gender diversity in work place has attracted the attention of both researchers and practitioners. In the early 1990s, both scholars and practitioners were generally optimistic about the effects of workplace diversity on performance. For example, Cox and Blake (2001) argued that diversity can result to competitive advantage for organizations. However, theories and empirical research suggest that diversity can lead to either positive or negative outcome, the resource-based view of the firm (Barney, 2003) suggests that there is a positive relation between diversity and performance, whereas social identify

theory suggests a negative diversity-performance relationship. Furthermore, empirical research has found inconsistent results suggesting that diversity can be either good or bad for businesses. Four studies found no main effects, two studies found positive effect, two studies found negative effect, and one study found a nonlinear effect. The body of literature on gender diversity produces contradictory results for practitioners and scholars about whether gender diversity is good for businesses. The mixed results suggest the value of focusing on competing predictions include in non-linear predictions. Gender-based inequities in organizations are reinforced and justified by stereo types and biases that describe positive characteristics and therefore a higher status to the males (Leonard and Levine, 2003). Kossek, Lobel and Brown (2005), only 54% of working age women are in the workforce worldwide compared to 80% of men. Furthermore, women continue to have the upper hand on the "invisible care" economy, which relates to care giving and domestic work. Gender-based inequities in organizations are reinforced and justifies by stereotype and biases that describe positive characteristics and therefore a higher status tom the males (Leaonard and Levine, 2003). In other words, organizations prefer to hire male workers compared with women because they are perceived to have better performance and ability to manage their jobs. Besides, according to (Barney, 2003) significant amount of workforce diversity remains ineffective if gender issues are not first recognized and managed. The research and study also that the most constitutional challenge is overcoming the thought that women are not equal to man. Kossek, Lobel, and Brown (2005) only 54% of working age women are in the workforce worldwide compared to 80% of men. Furthermore, women continue to have the upper hand on the "invisible care" economy, which relates to care giving and domestic work.

However, according to Barney (2003), providing an equal job opportunity to women is vital to improve performance of employees in an organization. These societal mandates eliminated formal policies that discriminate against certain classes of workers and raised the costs to organization that failed to implement fair employment practices.

Discrimination on hiring workers based on gender has resulted in a firm hiring workers who are paid higher wages than alternative workers, but are no more productive (Barney, 2003). Moreover, Wentling and Palma Rivas (2000) study s that organization with diverse workforce will provide superior service because they can understand customer's belter (Kundu, 2003). The research from Kundu (2003) also that hiring woman, minorities and others will help organization to tap niche markets, based on the research from Joshi and Jackson (2003), appositive relationship was found between team gender diversity and intra-team cooperation, but only within regions that were relatively diverse in terms of gender. Furthermore, tea gender diversity was positively related to team performance, but again this was true only within regions characterized by relatively high gender diversity.

The Concept of Age Diversity

Age diversity has been found to be a vital and strategic capability that adds (if not creates) value to the firm especially in the face of competition (Darwin, 2014).One way in which age diversity brings value to the firm and increases a firms overall performance is by facilitating creativity and innovativeness. Creativity refers to the generation of novel ideas which are both useful and appropriate while innovation is the intentional introduction. Within a work team of novel ideas, procedures and processes that are new. Having an age-diverse workforce may provide more upward mobility for everyone. As noted by Wegge, that a homogeneous workforce leads to situations where workers may remain in job positions for many years and limit promotion opportunities for others (2012). A heterogeneous work force provides a more dynamic environment with continuous movement. Results from research studies as shown above, demonstrates that while age diversity may not directly correlate to bottom-line profitability, an age-inclusive workplace may impact the work environment, which leads to positive performance outcomes (Kune et al., 2013 and Wegge et al., 2012). An employee's age should not produce any barriers to achieving organizational opportunities or demonstrate signs of preferential treatment. Older employees, with breadth and depth or work experience, should not be

overlooked for upward mobility and younger employees, who are eager to learn, should not be limited due to lack of work tenure. Innovation organizations reap the most benefit from age diversity and tend to show increase in productivity outcomes. Nonetheless-some studies that have been conducted on the issue found a positive relationship between age diversity and creativity and innovativeness in ideas, procedures and processes in the organization.

Managing this age-diverse workforce presents challenges related to retaining experienced and highly skilled workers, maintaining the work motivation for middle-aged workers, and recruiting high-potential younger workers. It becomes vitally important to understand age-related difference in preferences related to factors such as pay, meaningful work, advancement and development opportunities, recognition, and autonomy (Harrison et al., 2008). According to Harrison, a cross-sectional study discovered that age diversity influenced the above-mentioned work factors based upon three different perspective rather than a single overall causative factors. The three factors were as follows: generational differences, access to opportunities or job level, and organizational socialization. Study results indicated that generational cohort preferences determined the differences needs for recognition actual access to opportunities or job level explained the differences regarding the importance of pay, meaningfulness of work, and autonomy. Organizational socialization was the most influencing factor for differences related to the importance of advancement, differing values, attitudes, and perceptions between different age groups lead to challenges in effective team performance. Innovation organizations reap the most benefits from age diversity and tend to show increase in productivity outcomes. Age stereotypes exist for younger as well as older workers and are both positive and negative. These stereotypes have profound effects on workplace decisions, especially if these decisions lead to prejudice and discrimination. Glass (2007) observes that current lop leadership and managers of firms tap into the power of age diversity within the firm. In so doing, they are capable of making varied and potentially effective decision having considered the perspective provided

by such a heterogeneous workforce, further. Glass contends that age heterogeneity in a workforce enhances the level of creativity in the ideas from which the firm's top management is capable of defining and implementing novel solutions in anticipation of or in response to problems. It also follows that quality decision can therefore be achieved through teamwork of age-heterogeneous groups.

Numerous demographic and socioeconomic changes promote an aging workforce in the new millennium. People are healthier and willing longer than in the past. Older workers who find fulfillment in their work end enjoy being a productive member of society want to remain active in the workforce. Financial constraints due to inadequate savings, incased healthcare costs, or supporting other family members cause older workers to delay retirement. The declining birth-rate means fewer younger workers entering the workforce (Boehm et al. 2014 and Drabe et al. 2015). Each of these factors impacts changing workforce patterns and contribute to continuing bias, stereotyping, and mistreatment. The scholarly literature presents several reasons why age discrimination occurs and whom it impacted. Older workers are considered those who were aged 55 years old and approaching the traditional age of retirement (James et al. 2013). This age group may face age discrimination because employers mistakenly believe that eliminating these potentially higher paid individuals may resolve company budget issues. What is not considered when devaluing older workers is the abundance of knowledge and skills acquired through years of experience (Duncan and Loretto, 20004). A study by Smeaton et al (2009) presented evidence that employees working past traditional retirement age benefit the economy. Older workers are also mistakenly viewed as less productive than younger workers. Employers may be reluctant to invest in training and development older workers due to a perceived diminished return on investment (Urwin 2006). Older female workers may be particularly vulnerable, as stereotype encourages the perception that they have less education than younger female employees (Schuman and Kdeiner 2001). Older workers may face greater discrimination because they are perceived to be compliant and thus willing to put up with more (Glover

and Brainel, 1997). Additionally, study results indicated that older workers who are consistently subjected to age stereotype stand to conform to these lower expectations, resulting in a self-fulfill prophecy (Grima, 2011). Even middle-aged workers are not immune from age discrimination. Failure to achieve what is considered sufficient job-level progression tends to foster feelings of discrimination in the milled age workers (Arrowsmith and McGoldrick, 1997). Discrimination in this age group may also be linked to organization standards. In advertising and IT, a worker as young as 40 can be considered too old (Duncan and

Lorcotto, 2004). Reserve age discrimination is equally difficulties when competing against older, more experienced colleagues (Choi et al. 2011; De Guzmen et al. 2014). For instance, at UNICEM clinic, patients reported feeling more comfortable discussion their health concern with younger employees (Clark 2004). Instances of reverse age discrimination may also be industry indicators to determine the credibility of the consultant (Choi et al., 2011). In the university setting, tenure practices inhibit younger educators teaching staff opportunities, which may lead to intergenerational conflicts (Barrett and Bourke 2013). Grima (2011) remarked that age heterogeneity on its own has a negative effect on individual productivity. Moreover, in the case of routine tasks, there are no substantial gains from age heterogeneity that could offset the increasing costs resulting from greater age heterogeneity. Thus in organization with routine types of work, increasing age heterogeneity overall leads to a decline in productivity. The researcher also suggested that the older and younger employees must come together to form coherent and viable corporate culture. These values possessed by different age groups can complement each in organizations and it tends to achieve firm performance. In her study result showed that different age groups provide different values for companies and these values can complement each other which improve companies' performance (Grima, 2011). A view of the literature on age work shows a clear theoretical emphasis on negative prediction on like race or gender diversity. Organizations rarely undertake initiatives to increase age diversity. Traditional age distributions within organizational structures (younger at the bottom

and older at the middle and top) were derived from hiring employees at a young age and retaining them through most of their working, the research on age diversity is much less developed than that on race and gender, suggesting the need for new paradigms and new approaches to studying age in the work setting (Duncan and Loretto. 204). Kunze et al. (2009) slated that individuals tend to favour members of their own age group at the expense of the other groups, against which they may discriminate. Consequently, if the employees age or generational belonging is regarded as a relevant criterion for distinction, a differentiation between age groups within an organization may emerge, fostering emotional conflicts and age based discrimination between age groups. (Grima, 2011), also that increased diversity may also provide any challenges for HR management, as the workforce ages, for instance, employees will have to struggle with higher healthcare costs and pension contributions. Employees will need to accept that benefits are in sync with the vision of the organization, thus their commitment will increase substantially.

Benschop (2001) argued that age heterogeneity can negatively affect productivity concerns and differences in the value and preferences of distinct age groups. They also indicate that older generation has a culture of doing things out of experience without consideration technological advances. Other respondents were of the view that the young generation is over ambitious and fail to see the future of their organization while the older generation is commitment to the organization; this lead to dysfunction of the organization. In addition, some respondents indicated that different tastes and preferences of the older and the young generation affects decision making. Firms are not adequately employing the talents of old specialist workers owing to false stereotype beliefs and assumptions that they are expensive, more inclined to heath issues, cannot conform to workplace changes and new technology, perform ineffectively, as opposed to the younger employees and result in decreased yield on training investment (Garen, 2003, Aigajtani, 2013). Age diverse workforce displays a host of different knowledge, values perspectives, interpretation and preferences that are prerequisites for

innovation. Moreover, younger managers are more likely to have greater learning capabilities, are more recently educated, and thus are more likely to be more risk-taking, flexible, and innovative. A combination of young and old partners of workers with different know ledge pools can, therefore, increase innovation as compared to having homogeneous workers (Winnie, 2008). However, there is a week negative and in significant relationship between age diversity and employee performance. The inclusion of all age groups also influences employee performance. The young generation people are viewed as too proud and ambitious while the old generation people are viewed as people who have experienced and possess better problem solving.

Empirical Review

Tamunomiebi and John-Eke (2022) conducted a study which was focused on investigating emerging issues in workforce diversity and their impact on organizational performance. The main objective was to investigate the impact of age, gender, religions and educational diversity on the performance of organizations in Portharcourt, Nigeria. 450 employees of five selected companied were studied and a sample of 203 constituted the population and sample respectively. Questionnaire was utilized in data gathering with was analyzed with statistical package for social science (SPSS) and spear man correlation analysis. Results revealed that there existed a significant impact of age, gender and religions diversities has on the performance of business organization. The researcher however considered the use of spear-man correlation test inappropriate because the study is not a relationship inclined study and also the large amount of data involve. Rather the use of multiple regression analysis would have been more suitable, especially because of the multi-variate nature of data involved. Ozgur (2022) carried out an empirical study whose main concern was to evaluate the relationship between global workforce diversity and the performance of multinational corporations in Turkey. The study indentified constructs of workforce diversities of gender, religion, lifestyle, age and educational levels. 800 employees of seven multinational companies in Turkey made up the population of the study, from which a sample of 390 was carved

out. Data was collected through the use of questionnaire and interviews. Data was analyzed using SPSS and multiple regression analysis. Results showed that all the constructs tested in this study has a strong relationship with the performance of the multinationals. The researcher is of the opinion that the use of multiple regression in the study alone was inadequate rather the additional use of a correlation statistical tool, such as Pearson product moment correlation analysis would have shown more appropriately the varying extent of relatedness for which the objectives actually sought to find.

Qwesi and Kumasi (2022) conducted a study centered on workforce diversity in age, gender and religious affiliation among bank workers and its effects on the banking sector of Ghana. 420 employees of five leading banks constituted the population and a sample of 205 was carved and used for the study. Questionnaire was administered to collect data which was analyzed with the aid of multiple regression. Finding revealed that indeed the proxies of workforce diversity, test has a strong and positive effect on the performance of banks in Ghana. The researcher deems the statistical tool used in analysis fit for the study, but finds conclusion to be at variance with the broad objective of the study. In an empirical study conducted by Saxena (2022), a sample 181 respondents. Carved from a population of 420 employees of four selected companies were used to determine the role of workforce diversity as a key to improving organizational performance. Questionnaire was used to collect data which was analyzed with the statistical data for social sciences and multiple regression test. Finding emanating from this study showed that all the proxies of diversity (Age, gender, lifestyle) has a significant effect on the performance of the companies studied. The researcher considers the methodology and analyses applied in the study appropriate. In another study carried out by Edewor and Aluko (2022), whose central theme was on workforce diversity and performance of multinational organizations in Nigeria, utilized a population of 250 and sample of 120 made up of employees of six multinational companies in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Questionnaire was used in data collecting, which was analyzed with SPSS, Pearson product moment correlation analysis and the

regression analysis. Results revealed a strong correlation between diversity of employees in terms of Age, gender, religion and marital status and their job performance and by extension the performance of the multinational companies. The researcher consider appropriate the use of both correlation and regression statistical tools in the analysis of data, as the study has different sets of objectives requiring differing out comes. Nwahanye and Dze (2021) conducted a survey to examine the mediating role of workforce diversity on organizational performance of small and medium scale enterprises. Data was gathered from 1200 respondents who are employees of 306 small and medium scale enterprises operating in the Burea municipality of southwest Cameroon. Data collected with questionnaire was analyzed using The Baron and Kenny (1986) approach of mediation. Findings showed that the mediating the effects of gender, age, ethnic and educational background diversities impacts adversely on organizational performance. It was recommended amongst others, that SMEs should therefore develop the practice of properly managing workforce diversity in terms of gender, age and educational background to enhance organization performance. The researcher considers the method of data analysis faulty and rather recommend multiple regression since it involves large data from several respondent.

In a study conducted by Fadhili, Kiflemeriam and Mwanzia (2021), which was centered on determining the effects of diversity management on the job performance of Maua Methodist Hospital employees. The target population comprised of 317 employee of the Hospital, from which a sample of 170 was carved as respondents for the study. The main objective was determined how gender and age diversities affect the performance of the hospital. Data was analyzed using SPSS and Pearson Correlation Analysis. Results showed that decision making process was more effective and that the Human resource practices were more inclusive. Conclusively, the level of gender, age and ethnicity discrimination is very low. It was recommended that the recruitment and promotion process should be done without discrimination to boost job performance. Wachira (2020) carried out an empirical research utilizing selected state owned corporations in Nairobi, Kenya. The study was focused on investigating

the effects of employee diversity of age and gender on the performance of government owned corporations. 262 state owned corporations were utilized for the study, from which 3,300 and 1,200 respectively, constituted the population and sample of the study. Multiple Regression was run and results revealed that employee diversity was not properly managed in public corporations in Kenya and it was concluded, that was the one of the reasons for low productivity of public corporations in Kenya. It was among others, recommended that public corporation in Kenya should improve the strategies of managing its workers diversity in order to improve its productivity. In a study conducted by Hapompwe, Mulenga, Siwale and Kudano (2020) focused on assessing the impact of age and gender diversity and the performance of Zambia compulsory standard Agenda (ZCSA). A sample of 50 respondents were carved out from a population of 103 employees through stratified random sampling method. Data collected with the aid of questionnaire, was analyses using SPSS and multiple regression. The key finding of the study was that both age and gender diversity have a bearing with the performance of an employee and ultimately on the organization output. Furthermore, it was discovered that employees felt comfortable working with much older or younger colleagues. It was recommended that work teams should be formed with membership of person's diverse age brackets and gender to enhance work performance and output.

Inegbedion, Sunday, Asaleye, Lawal and Adebanji (2020) also conducted an empirical study. The study was meant to find out the extent to which diversity management influences organizational efficiency through the management of conflict. A sample of 178 was drawn from a population of 345, made up of employees of a multinational companies operating in the south-south Nigeria. Data collected with the aid of structured questionnaire was analysed using structured equation modeling, with diversity management and organizational efficiency serving as latent variables. Results showed that the management of age diversity, employees' perception of marginalization and conflict significantly influences diversity management. Furthermore, results indicated that diversity management

and teamwork significantly influence organizational efficiency. Mkoji (2019) conducted a study on the factors affecting implementation process of diversity in the public service. The focus of the study was on diversity such as, ethnic, gender, disability and sexual orientation. Data gathered with questionnaires was analyzed with SPSS and findings revealed that diversity measured in the study have not been properly managed and therefore, impacting negatively in the public service. The study is relevant because it is centered on diversity management.

Theoretical Framework
Organizational theory
Mary Parker Follet in 1993 propounded the organizational theory which is a human relation approach to management. This theory which concentrates on the tenet of task specialization, orderliness, stability and control with total neglect and understanding of the human factor in administration. The focus of human relations approach was people and their relationship in organization. She argued that while money is an important motivating factor, most people are willing to take part of their reward in form of humane treatment, personal attention and chance to feel important. This group recognized the fact that although work must be done according to established standards, rules and regulations, the man that does the job is even more important than the job itself because without the man, there will be no work done, given the importance of man as far as work is concerned, man should be given opportunity for development and self-actualizations, and everything possible must be done by the organization to keep man satisfied and comfortable in his work place. The organization should make sure it harmonizes the various segments of the workers in order to reduce religious intolerance, gender inequality, cultural and ethnic crisis. Specifically, this theory is based on the following assumptions:

i.   Management treats staff as human beings and acknowledges their need,
ii. Management provides comfortable and secured physical facilities,
iii. Management treats staff with respect and makes them feel important by giving attention to their complaints and differences.

iv. Management involves staff in making decisions concerning working conditions.

The relevance of the theory to this study is the fact that the theory emphasizes group dynamics as well as inter-personal relationship in small groups alongside the emphasis on the psychological needs of workers apart from the economic needs. The major concern of Follet in an organization is the development and maintaining of group and harmonious relationship. The management of workers at work is an integral part of management and organization should understand the critical importance of involving all employees in administration and participative decision making to achieve the goals of the organization is synonymous in the organization. Follet revealed that human element and organization are synonymous. In the organization, the administrator should see workers and other resource persons as the root source of quality and productivity gained. For proper goal achievement in organization the administrator must engage strong and effective motivational strategies at the various levels and departments of the organization. The theory also emphasizes on the development of informal the organization. The theory also emphasizes on the development of informal communication channels and the need for the use of line of communication established outside formal structure. With the above discussions on the Human Relations Theory (HRT) the researcher decided to anchor the research on this theory.

METHODOLOGY
Research Design
This study adopted a descriptive research design, adopting the survey approach. This research design is deemed appropriate by the researcher because it facilitates the identification of characteristics, frequencies, trends and correlations between variables.

Area of the Study
This research work is carried out in UNICEM, Mfamosing in Akamkpa which is close to Calabar. Akamkpa is located in the southern senatorial

district of Cross River State. The administrative headquarters of UNICEM is in Calabar which is the capital of Cross River State.

Population of the Study
This study is carried out in united cement company (UNICEM) Calabar. The work force constitutes for the population of the study is 400.

Sample Size Determination
This study utilized a sample size of 196 determined with the aid of the Krejcia and Morgan table (1970).

Sample and Sampling Technique
The study applied a stratified random sampling techniques of the 196 sample in the following categories: Top management, middle level management, specialist, supervisors and junior level workers.

Research Instrument
Questionnaire is a data-collecting instrument or tool, consisting of a set of written questions the respondents are required to complete. The questionnaire that was used for data collection for this research consisted of 20 questions. The questionnaire was designed with closed-ended questions with options of choice left for the respondents to either; Agree, Strongly Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. Questions in the questionnaire were framed to revolve around the four research objectives and research question crafted for the study. Section A of the questionnaire is to elicit personal data from respondent, relating to such basic information such as gender and age. On the other hand, section B of the questionnaire contained specific questions meant to investigate the relationship between employees' diversity and the performance of UNICEM. Therefore, the variables of the objectives of the study were measure with interval scale on a five point Likert scale.

Administration of Questionnaires
In administering the questionnaire, the researcher obtained approval of his supervisor before visiting UNICEM for familiarization. The researcher

personally administered the instrument on the respondents, on one-at-a-time basis, with the assistance of their respective Heads of Departments/Units. Intermittently the researcher interacted with the respondents and that interaction clarified areas of ambiguity throughout the course of administering the questionnaire. The filled out questionnaires were collected from respondents after a period of 14 days. A total of one hundred and ninety-six (196) questionnaire was administered, however, one hundred and eighty-eight (188) were filled and returned representing 95.9%, whereas seven (7) were not returned, representing 3.6% and one (1) was however returned, but not properly filled and therefore invalidated, representing 0.5%.

Validity and Reliability of Research Instrument

Validity is defined as the extent to which an instrument for research measures what it was set out for (Kolhari, 2004). It is therefore centered on accuracy and appropriateness of the inferences which are premised on the research results to ensure face and content validity of instrument. To determine the validity of the research instrument, the questionnaire was presented to different test and measurement experts to scrutinize the items. The face and content validity approaches was adopted. The experts and supervisor inputs was used by the researcher in effecting corrections before the questionnaires was presented to and approved by the supervisor and used. Reliability is the degree of consistency with which an instrument measures what it was supposed to be measuring (Kothari, 2004). In order to ensure reliability of research instrument, reliability analysis was done. Pilot test is a survey which is done on a small group of respondents to make sure the questions being asked in the questionnaire is reliable. 20 copies of questionnaire were distributed. Respondents were asked to comment and suggest possible changes to the questionnaire. Most of the feedbacks directed to the comprehensibility of items, were used to modify some of the items to improve their clarities. Pilot test is meant to minimize the mistakes made in the questionnaire as well as the difficulties before making progress to distribute it out to the 196 targeted respondents. Reliability of the questionnaire was tested with the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient and results as presented in table 3.

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Estimates of the Variables under Study (N = 20)

S/N	Variables	No of Items	X	SD	Cronbach Co-efficient
1	Gender	5	15.30	221	0.72
2	Age	5	15.40	2.03	0.61
3	Performance of UNICEM	10	26.05	2.81	0.70

Sources: Pilot testing, 2021

Method of Dara Analysis

Data collected for this study were coded and processed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21. Data was therefore subjected to both descriptive and inferential statistical frequencies and percentages for the bio-data and variables. Results were presented in tables for easy understanding. Data analysis and the four null hypotheses crafted for the study were tested with the aid of Pearson product moment correlation analysis, given by the formula below:

$$r = \frac{n(\sum xy) - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{[n\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2][n \sum y^2 - ([\sum y)^2]}}$$

Where r = Pearson's correlation co-efficient

N = Sample size
$\sum XY$ = Sum of product of X and Y
$\sum X$ = Sum of X
$\sum Y$ = Sum of Y
$\sum X^2$ = sum of the square of X
$\sum X^2)$ = squares of the sum of all Xs
$\sum Y^2$ = sum of square of Y
$(\sum Y)^2$ = squares of the sum of all Ys

Decision Rule

The obtained r must be greater than the critical r to be significant. In other words, if the calculated value is less than the critical value, the null is not rejected and if however, otherwise, the null is rejected and the alternative accepted. The level of significance is 0.05 and degree of freedom is = 186

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 2: Gender Distribution of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	147	78.2	78.2	78.2
Female	41	21.8	21.8	100.0
Total	188	100.0	100.0	

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

The result in Table 1 shows that 147 (78.2%) of the respondents were male while 41 (21.8%) of the respondents were female. This means there are more male workers than female worker in UNICEM.

Table 3: Showing Age Distribution of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
20-29years	42	22.3	22.3	22.3
30-39years	104	55.3	55.3	77.7
40-49years	24	12.8	12.8	90.4
50years & Above	18	9.6	9.6	100.0
Total	188	100.0	100.0	

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

The results in Table 2 shows that 42(22.3%) of the respondents were 20-29 years, 104(55.3%) of the respondents were 30-39 years, 24(12.8%) of the respondents were 40-49 years, while 18(9.6%) of the respondents were 50years and above

Hypothesis one (H$_o$1)

There is no positive significant relationship between gender diversity and the performance of UNICEM, Calabar. The Independent Variable: gender diversity and the dependent Variable: the performance of UNICEM, Calabar. The Pearson product moment correlation is employed to test the hypothesis. Data used for analysis is taken from questionnaire response.

Table 4: Summary of data of Pearson Product Moment Correlation between gender diversity and performance of UNICEM, Calabar

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	R	p-value
Gender diversity	15.23	3.50	188	.142	.052
Performance of UNICEM	30.87	3.97	188		

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

*p> .05, DF =186

The result in table 3 shows that the calculated r-value of .142 representing the correlation between Religious diversity and performance of UNICEM, Calabar was not significant at p-value of .052 at .05 level of significance with 186 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was accepted. This therefore implies that there is no significant relationship between gender diversity and the performance of UNICEM, Calabar.

Hypothesis two (H₀2)

There is no positive significant relationship between age diversity and the performance of UNICEM, Calabar. The Independent Variable: Age diversity and the dependent Variable: the performance of UNICEM, Calabar. The Pearson product moment correlation is employed to test the hypothesis. Data used was extracted from questionnaire response.

Table 4: Summary of data of Pearson Product Moment Correlation between Age diversity and performance of UNICEM, Calabar

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	R	p-value
Age diversity	13.27	3.71	188	.127	.084
Performance of UNICEM	30.87	3.97	188		

Source: Fieldwork, 2021

*p> .05, DF =186

The result in Table 4 shows that the calculated r-value of .127 representing the correlation between Age diversity and performance of UNICEM,

Calabar was not significant at p–value of .084 at .05 level of significance with 186 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was accepted. This therefore implies that Age diversity does not significantly relate to performance of UNICEM, Calabar.

DISCUSSION

This result is not in consonance with the resource-based view of the firm (Barney, 2003) which suggests that there is a positive relation between diversity and performance. This sis due to the fact that gender-based inequities in organizations are reinforced and justified by stereotypes and biases that describe positive characteristics and therefore a higher status to the males (Leonard and Levine, 2003). Accordingly, Kossek, Lobel, and Brown (2005) states only 54% of working age women are in the workforce worldwide compared to 80% of men. In other words organizations prefer to hire male workers compared with women because they are perceived to have better performance and ability to manage their jobs. The authors concluded that the most constitutional challenge is overcoming the thought that woman are not equal to man. However, according to Barney (2003) providing an equal job opportunity to women is vital to improve performance of employees in an organization. These societal mandates eliminate formal policies that discriminate against certain classes of workers and raise the cost to organization as that failed to implement fair employment practices. Discrimination on hiring workers based on gender has resulted in a firm hiring workers who are paid higher wages than alternative workers, but are no more productive (Barney, 2003). Moreover, organization with diverse workforce will provide superior services because they can understand customers better (Kundu, 2003). The study states further that hiring woman, minorities and others will help organization to create niche markets. Furthermore, team gender diversity was positively related to team performance, but again this was true only within regions characterized by relatively high gender diversity. Overall regions with greater gender diversity at managerial as well as non-managerial levels were more cooperative. In comparison, Wentling and Palma Rivas (2000) argued that gender diversity does not necessarily bring positive outcome such as increase

motivation, improving talents, build commitment, and decline conflict. The argument that greater diversity is association with lower quality because it places lower performing people position for which they are not sited (Kundu, 2003). In short, critics of the diversity model suggest that group differences result in conflict and its attendant costs. Also the result of Pearson product correlation coefficient test in table 9 further revealed that there was no significant relationship between gender diversity and the performance of UNICEM. This finding implies that both male and female employees in UNICEM perform the same in the discharge of their duties.

However, the findings revealed that there is a very negligible or low relationship between age diversity and the performance of UNICEM. Managing this age-diverse workforce presents challenges related to remaining experienced and highly skilled older workers, maintaining the work motivation for middle-age workers, and recruiting high-potential younger workers. It becomes vitally important to understand age-related differences in preferences related to factors such as pay, meaningful work, advancement and development opportunities, recognition, and autonomy. (Harrison et al. 2008). According to Harrision, a cross-sectional study discovered that age diversity influenced the above-mentioned work factors based upon three different perspectives rather than a single overall causative factor. The three factors were as follows: generational difference, access to opportunities or job level, and organizational socialization. Study results indicated that generational cohort preferences determined the differing needs for recognition. Actual access to opportunities or job level explained the differences regarding the importance of pay, meaningfulness of work, and autonomy. Organizational socialization was the most influencing factor for differences related to the importance of advancement. Differing value, attitudes, and perceptions between different age groups lead to challenges in effective team performance. Innovative organizations reap the most benefit from age diversity and tend to show increase in productivity outcomes. Age stereotypes have profound effects on workplace decisions, especially if these decisions lead to prejudice and decimation.

Also the result of Pearson product correlation coefficient test in table 4 further revealed that there was no significant relationship between age diversity and the performance of UNICEM. The implication of this finding is that the performance of employees in UNICEM is not a function of their age.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion from the sum of evidence shows diversity and performance of male and female employees in UNICEM enjoy similar conditions of service established by the management of UNICEM and they perform their duties in similar manner. This indicates that gender diversity does not significantly impact on the performance of UNICEM. Furthermore, the study concluded that there is no discrimination of employee in UNICEM in terms of their age. Thus, employees of different age perform their duties creditably. Conclusively therefore, there is no significance relationship between age and gender diversity and performance of UNICEM.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were advanced.

1. Approval for workshop and seminar attendance should be granted both male and female employees of UNICEM to avoid gender discrimination that has grievous negative impact on their performance across board.
2. Organizational policies and practices should be formulated and implemented in a manner that gives no room for age discrimination to engender inclusiveness. In workforce.

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