

The Effect of Workplace Diversity on Innovativeness in Selected Private Universities in Ogun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Innovativeness is a critical factor that places any organization in a competitive environment especially when it is achieved collectively by employees of such organization. However, some organisations especially educational institutions do not pay adequate attention to innovativeness due to non-adoption of workplace diversity variables (WPD) leading to poor performance. Literature has reviewed some authors writeups on Workplace diversity and its effect on organizational outcomes but not stating its importance when it comes to non-academic staff in private universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study therefore investigated the effect of workplace diversity (age, gender, ethnicity personality and attitude) and organisational innovativeness in selected private Universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study adopted survey research design. The population was 797 non-academic staff of five private Universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. The sample size of 475 was determined using Research Advisor table. Simple random sampling technique was adopted to select the respondent. A structured and validated questionnaire was used for data collection. Response rate was 73%. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the constructs ranged from 0.71 and 0.85. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential (multiple linear regression) statistics at 5% significance level. The study revealed that workplace diversity had significant effect on innovativeness of selected private Universities in Ogun State, Nigeria ($Adj.R^2 = 0.41$, $F(5, 341) = 48.83$, $p < 0.05$). The study concluded that workplace diversity improved innovativeness driven by the contribution of the non-academic staff of selected private Universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study recommended that the universities management should adopt workplace diversity as a core value of the organisations to enhance organisational innovativeness.

Background to the Study

Innovativeness in private Universities especially by non-academic staff continues to seek improvement as experience has shown that most organisations are still fighting to enhance performance due to inadequate adoption of workplace diversity variables. The study therefore investigated the effect of workplace diversity (age, gender, ethnicity personality and attitude) and organisational innovativeness in selected private Universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. Though there are numbers of possible reasons for poor creativity which hindered good organisational innovativeness among employees, it has been observed that most education institutions do not encourage or reward creativity in diversity, or that employees feel they do not have the time or resources to be creative (Cai et al., 2020). Also, most employees simply lack the skills or knowledge needed to be creative (Cai et al. 2020). Thus, poor creativity due to lack of diversity has ultimately, led to a decline in productivity and innovation within many organisations.

According to statistics collected from ten large U.S. tech businesses between 2014 and 2019, organisations with more diverse leadership teams report higher innovation revenues (Chirino et al., 2020). This is because, when it comes to diversity and inclusion in the industry, the United States continues to underperform (Evans, 2020). The percentage of women in these workforces increased by less than 2% (Velinov, 2019). According to the gender and race reports, the majority of these ladies were White. The report also showed that the percentage of black employees increased by less than 3%, the number of Hispanic employees increased by about 1%, and the number of Indigenous employees decreased by about 0.01 percent, while diversity data also showed that Asian employees was made up about 30% of tech workforces in 2019 (Stevens, 2020).

Innovativeness in organisation functionality through positive employee outcomes has been a primary emphasis for education managers in the United Kingdom (UK) (Marcinko & Taylor, 2021). This understanding has prompted academics and practitioners to argue for the need for a systematic approach to measuring effectiveness that extends beyond the scope of the individual stakeholder, as well as the integration of measures into the strategic planning process, which necessitates stringent management control systems (Ozcan, & Ramaswamy, 2018). Also, lack of creativity is a precursor of poor competitiveness among organisations (Paillé & Halilem, 2019). Additionally, lack of focus on customers' needs and wants has resulted in companies failing to provide the products and services that customers are looking for. (Rodriguez & Wiengarten, 2017).

In a survey of 2,000 UK employees, 45% said no progress had been made during the period time, rising to 46% of female respondents and 52% of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) respondents. While 74% of respondents were aware that their organisation had launched diversity programs, only 33% of the intended beneficiaries said they had gained much from those initiatives (BCG, 2020). Competitiveness among organisations in the United Kingdom (UK) was affected negatively due to some factors. Firstly, Brexit had a significant impact on the UK's international competitiveness, with businesses facing increased costs due to tariffs, taxes, and other trade restrictions.

Secondly, the United Kingdom (UK) has experienced number of prolonged economic downturns over the last decade, leading to lower consumer confidence, reduced investment, and a weaker currency (Jansen et al., 2020).

In Africa, negative employee outcomes may have generally contributed to these institutions' poor organisational outcomes. Frequent job-hopping hinders an organisation's ability to deliver services efficiently (Beardwell & Claydon, 2007). In South Africa, organisational outcomes: poor creativity, lack of innovativeness, and decline in organisational outcomes, are a critical issue in contemporary times. Institutions face the constraints of technological backwardness, lack of human resource skills, weak management systems, and insufficient use of information technology and low level of organisational outcomes (Makanga & Paul, 2017). South Africa for instance has been faced with frequent labour unrest, with many employees expressing dissatisfaction with their jobs precisely in the financial sector (Mlandi & Vander, 2015).

In the Nigerian context, it is posited that diversity management can make a difference at organisational and national levels (Kundu & Mor, 2017). Nigeria's low survey score is reflective of the several challenges of managing Diversity and Inclusion (D & I) in a country characterised by multiple diversities, yet with conspicuously weak or non-existing institutional arrangements to effectively handle diversity in the workplace. Nigeria is known to be the giant of Africa with a population of over 180 million people and more than half the population consists of people of working age (Akinnusi et al., 2017; Ohunakin et al., 2019). Makhdoomi & Nika (2017) said so long as individuals with differences working the same environment, diversity in the workplace will always be an issue. Though our differences can promote creativity and increase satisfaction at workplace nonetheless, they can be the root of conflict and frustration between groups (Makhdoomi & Nika, 2017). Hence, some organisation leaders have failed to understand how the workplace interacts with one another as individuals and as groups, and how the behaviour of the workplace affects both employee and organisational outcomes (Makhdoomi & Nika, 2017; Ng & Sears, 2020). In spite of this, and the fact that nonacademic is yet to emerge on the radar screen of many human resources (HR) practitioners and business leaders in Nigeria (particularly in the private sector), some forward-looking organisations are embracing diversity to create an inclusive workplace, possible outcomes that could be achieved by organisations operating in Nigeria include increased efficiency and productivity, improved communication and collaboration. (Ahmed & Bukar, 2020).

Given the declining success of most companies, the contributions of a diverse workplace can no longer be overemphasized (Ajemba, 2023). Higher education institutions and leaders continue to face the opportunities and challenges presented by emerging and increasingly diverse environments and in order to become a successful leader in the area of diversity, university leaders need to be conscious or understand that diversity has an influence on the performance of employees and overall organisational outcomes. The diversity of the workplace relates to gender, ethnicity, age, disability, personality,

identity and education (Onwuzu & Nnamani, 2023). Despite increased workforce mobility, several organisations have recognized that diversity in the workplace is a challenge. It may cause issues; nevertheless, it may also become a source of innovation from which employees' abilities develop into organisational advantages. The aforementioned, gives rise to the objective of this study which examined the effect of: work place diversities on innovativeness of selected private Universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. To achieve the objective, a research question and hypothesis were formulated:

Research Question:

What is the effect of workplace diversity on innovativeness of selected private Universities in Ogun State, Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis:

H₀: work place diversity has no significant effect on innovativeness of selected private universities in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

This section deals with the review of conceptual, empirical and theoretical views of both independent and dependent variables.

Work Place Diversity

Work place diversity is a holistic concept that denotes the differences that exist between people working within with various characteristics, such as different gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation. Amaliyah (2015) defined workplace diversity (WPD) as a concept that denotes the differences between people working in or for an organisation. This can also mean the multiplicity of differences amongst individuals and their beliefs about how they identify themselves as well as how others distinguish them in that organisation According to Guillaume et al., (2017) workplace diversity is defined as an infinite number of objective and perceived differences among members of an organisational unit, such as age, nationality, and work abilities.

The transition to a diverse workplace can be difficult; employers across the country and the globe are making moves to diversify (Scarborough et al., 2019). They're finding it's worth the effort and the investment and that the results are both morally and financially rewarding. Diversity in the workplace requires a commitment from every level of the chain of command for it to be a successful experience. We live in a society that expects instant results and diversity can provide unique perspectives, but it may take time for revenue and productivity increases to arrive. Many initiatives stop before they can be successful because there is a lack of patience with this process (Ng & Sears, 2020). Work place diversity is defined as the co-existence of individuals from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds working together to achieve al goals and objectives.

Age Diversity

The concept of age describes how old a person is at a particular point in time, the time of life at which some particular qualification, power, or capacity arises or stages of life and the length of an existence from the beginning to any given time. Furthermore, due to the increasing pressure on pension systems, many countries have raised the retirement age of the working population (Boehm & Kunze, 2015). Age diversity has been associated with variables such as conflict and age discrimination, and the relationship between age diversity and work performance has been found to be predominantly negative. According to Odhiambo et al., (2018) organisations are facing the challenge of age diversity because it is natural that individuals inclined towards their own groups at the cost of other groups. Furthermore, if employee's age is set significant criteria for distinction, other age groups feel insecure and sense of emotional instability and discrimination developed inside the institutions. Gomez & Bernet (2019) summarized that diversity in age group may adversely influence the efficiency of workers because of difference in belief, values and preferences of distinct age groups. Each generation believed that its strengths are matchless and therefore no needs to worry about disparities come forward because of generations gaps.

Ethnicity Diversity

Ethnicity refers to a group of individuals sharing a common racial and/or cultural background. The individuals who enjoy common culture, tradition, customs, routine practice, costumes, beliefs, and values are Effect of nonacademic on Employees' Performance generally known as ethnicity concluded that ethnicity may be considered as substitute or alternate for cultural background. The differences in the ethnicity can bring innovative and creative performance among the members. Pitts et al. (2010) argued that institutions are becoming more divers on racial viewpoint, therefore logically it is very important to study how various ethnic groups behave at workplace. People of different cultural or racial backgrounds can interact and get to learn and appreciate each other's uniqueness hence fostering tolerance and peaceful coexistence. The peaceful coexistence allows each group to maintain its identity giving rise to societies free of discrimination and conflict. Countries such as Switzerland and Indonesia are renowned for the peaceful coexistence of multi-ethnic groups (Van-Staveren & Pervaiz, 2017).

Gender Diversity

The term gender was introduced in 1970 in place of sex to define traits of women and men (Unger, 1979). Gender refers to one self-identity i.e. how much a person associates himself or herself as prescribed by the society. Usually, firms preferred male over to female on the basis of perception that male could perform better on managerial positions. Carr-Ruffino (2003), opined that workforce diversity in the organisation become redundant due to mismanagement of the gender issues. Connel (2002) avowed that gender diversity is positively correlates with the performance of workers. Genders are defined as a range of differences between man and women, extending from a biological to the social. The influence of employee gender on various workplace outcomes has gained significant attention in recent years. Gender equality is good for marginalized racial groups, fosters peace and gives everyone equal opportunities (Hideg & Ferris, 2016).

Attitude

Attitudes refer to the degree to which concepts or actions are evaluated as favorable or unfavorable and are influenced by the person (e.g., values, goals, language, emotions, developmental influences), the social context, and the broad socio historical context (Albarracin & Shavitt, 2019). Attitudes are dynamic and they are formed over time as individuals get exposed to stimuli since the subject matter of attitude can be an object, a person or an abstract idea (Albarracin & Shavitt, 2018). An attitude represents man's total inclinations and feelings, prejudice or preconceived notions, ideas, fears, threats, and other any specific topic. Attitudes are not innate, but formed after the individual is born. Many factors that can affect attitudes, including knowledge and understanding, values, education, life goals, emotions, environment, and so on (Albarracin & Shavitt, 2018). Attitudes are learned predispositions towards aspects of our environment. They may be positively or negatively directed towards certain people, service, or institution." Attitudes affect behaviors in the workplace. Employers can promote good employee attitudes with incentives. A business owner looks at an employee's behavior to determine his ultimate productivity and contributions to the business objectives.

Personality Diversity

It refers to individual differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving. On many accounts, personality is seen, in whole or in part, as on many accounts, personality is seen, in whole or in part, as some entity (e.g., a structure or mechanism) that underlies behavior and is related to it as cause to effect. Larsen et al. (2017) conceptualized personality as the set of psychological traits and mechanisms within the individual that are organised and relatively enduring and that influence his or her interactions with, and adaptations to, the intra-psychic, physical, and social environments. Personality refers to individual differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving. It is used to indicate the external outlook of an individual. In philosophy, it means internal quality (Eysenck, 2018). Personality represents a dynamic orientation of an organism to the environment. Personality is greatly influenced by social interactions, and it impacts behaviors and actions (Carson, 2019). Personality represents a unique organisation of persistent dynamic and social predisposition (Baumert et al., 2017).

Work Place Diversity and Innovativeness

Numerous studies on the relationship between nonacademic components and organisational performance have been conducted using diverse dimensions such as gender diversity to determine whether surface-level actual similarity interacts with leader-member dyadic communication agreement in predicting group member performance in organisations (Jacqueline, 2017), demonstrating that the nuances of gender diversity and inclusion bring true essence in terms of al reputation, decision-making, and performance (Susan, & Linda, 2004; Yukiko, 2015). Among these aspects include women reported lower levels of decisiveness in decision-making, leadership ability, career aspiration, capacity to bear pressure, and adaptability to change compared to men. Priyanka et al. (2018) argue that it is critical to understand the relationship

between key characteristics of diversity and social capital. The multi-dimensional feature of workplace diversity that contributes to organisational competitiveness was not examined in the preceding studies, implying a scope, construct, analytical, and unit of analysis gap. Jayne and Dipboye (2004) demonstrated that gender diversity does not inevitably provide positive outcomes such as boosting drive, enhancing abilities, consolidating obligation, improving values, and declining conflict. As a result, additional empirical research is required, as suggested by the various studies to be conducted on non-academic and al innovativeness.

Resource-Based View Theory

The Resource-Based View (RBV) was propounded by Barney 1991. The theory is a managerial framework used to determine the strategic resources a firm can exploit to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. Barney's 1991 article "Firm Resources and Sustained Competitive Advantage" is widely cited as a pivotal work in the emergence of the resource-based view. While the primary focus of institutional theory is on organisational homogeneity, the main research question of resource-based view theory is performance heterogeneity among organisations (Barney & Clark, 2007). This perspective views of organisations consists variety of resources, generally including four categories: physical capital, financial capital, human capital, and corporate capital resources (Barney & Clark, 2007).

Supporters of the Resource-Based View (RBV) argue that the basis of a firm's sustained competitive advantage lies in the resources and capabilities it has accumulated (Dubey et al., 2019). These resources and capabilities must be valuable, rare, and costly to imitate in order to provide a competitive advantage. This is because valuable resources can be used to generate products and services that are in high demand, rare resources are not easily replicated by competitors, and costly to imitate resources make it difficult for competitors to replicate them (Nason & Wiklund, 2018). The RBV also proposes that firms should strive to create a bundle of resources and capabilities that are difficult for competitors to imitate. This is because the combination of resources and capabilities can provide an even greater competitive advantage (Barney, 2018). Additionally, firms should continually strive to develop and enhance their resources and capabilities in order to maintain their competitive advantage. Furthermore, the RBV theory suggests that firms should strive to create a competitive advantage that is durable, meaning that it is difficult for competitors to replicate or imitate. This can be done by continuously innovating and developing new resources and capabilities that are difficult to imitate (Singh et al., 2021). In conclusion, the Resource-Based View theory ((RBV) argues that the basis of a firm's sustained competitive advantage lies in the resources and capabilities it has accumulated, and that firms should strive to create a bundle of resources and capabilities that are difficult for competitors to imitate in order to gain and maintain a competitive advantage (Freeman et al., 2021).

Since resources can either facilitate or inhibit firms from efficiently conceiving and implementing business strategies, the attributes of resources held by firms determine firm

performance heterogeneity. Resources that allow a firm to conceive and implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness are viewed as valuable, and can be a source of competitive parity. Resources that are valuable and rare, or valuable and are possessed only by a small number of firms can be a source of competitive advantage. (Barney & Clark, 2007). Moreover, to achieve a sustain-able competitive advantage, a firm needs to have the ability to exploit the full competitive potential of its valuable, rare, and inimitable resources (Barney & Clark, 2007). Such ability often resides in the firm's structures, procedures, and practices.

A number of criticisms of RBV have been widely cited, and are as follows: The RBV is tautological (Collis, 1994). Different resource configurations can generate the same value for firms and thus would not be competitive advantage. The role of product markets is undersized in the argument. The theory has limited prescriptive implications. The failure to consider factors surrounding resources; that is, an assumption that they simply exist, rather than a critical investigation of how key capabilities are acquired or developed (Stinchcombe, 2000). Given the research objectives addressed in this study, and despite the sufficiency critics of RBV, this present study is in support of the RBV given that achieving a sustainable competitive advantage lies at the heart of much of the literature in strategic management and strategic marketing. The resource-based view offers strategists a means of evaluating potential factors that can be deployed to confer a competitive edge.

Methodology

The study adopted the positivism philosophy as well as research approach. The adoption of a positivist research philosophy in a study signifies a commitment to principles rooted in empiricism, objectivity and quantifiability (Saliya, 2023). This is in relation with the possibility to evaluate research with the understanding that gives clarity of choices that makes an impact in the finding of the study This study employed a research approach that primarily embraced the quantitative method. The study adopted survey research design. The population was 797 non-academic staff of five private Universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. The sample size of 475 was determined using Research Advisor table. Simple random sampling technique was adopted to select the respondent. A structured and validated questionnaire was used for data collection. Response rate was 73%. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the constructs ranged from 0.72 and 0.84. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential (multiple linear regression) statistics at 5% significance level.

Analysis

Restatement of Research Objective and Research Question

Examined the effect of Workplace diversity variable on Innovativeness of selected private Universities in Ogun State, Nigeria.

What is the effect of WPD on Innovativeness of selected private Universities in Ogun State, Nigeria?

Respondents were requested to share their views on various enquiries presented in the questionnaire regarding the study's variables. Six-point Likert type scale was used to analyse their responses. These points formed the weights for calculating the score for each item. The findings were presented in various tables of WPD which could not be presented due to limited pages as required by the publishing institution followed with an analysis and interpretation. The descriptive statistics for Innovativeness was presented as well in another table followed with the interpretations.

Restatement of Research Hypothesis

H₀: workplace diversity has no significant effect on innovativeness

Multiple linear regression analysis was employed to test the hypothesis. The independent variables were workplace diversity dimensions (age, gender, ethnicity, personality and attitude), while the dependent variable was innovativeness. In the hypothesis analysis, data for workplace diversity dimensions were created by adding together responses of all the items under the various dimensions to generate independent scores for each dimension. Data for innovativeness was generated by adding together responses of all items under the variable to create index of Innovativeness.

Hypothesis Table

Summary of multiple regression analysis for effect of workplace diversity dimensions on Innovativeness of Selected private Universities in Ogun State, Nigeria

Table 1.

N	Model	B	T	Sig.	ANOVA (Sig.)	R	Adjusted R ²	F (5, 341)
347	(Constant)	8.333	5.988	0.000	0.000 ^b	0.646 ^a	0.409	48.830
	Age Diversity	-0.123	-2.744	0.006				
	Gender Diversity	0.072	1.697	0.091				
	Ethnicity Diversity	-0.060	-1.311	0.191				
	Personality Diversity	0.203	4.319	0.000				
	Attitude	.523	10.121	0.000				
a. Dependent Variable: Innovativeness								
b. Prdictors: (Constant), Attitude, Age Diversity, Ethnicity Diversity, Gender Diversity, Personality Diversity								

Source: Researchers' Field Survey, 2026

The table above shows the results of multiple linear regression analysis for the effect of workplace diversity dimensions on innovativeness of selected Private Universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. According to the Table above, personality diversity ($\beta = 0.203$, $t =$

4.319, $p < 0.05$) and attitude ($\beta = 0.523, t = 10.121, p < 0.05$) have a positive and significant effect on innovativeness. This implied that personality diversity and attitude positively predict the innovativeness of selected Private Universities in Ogun State. The results further showed that age diversity ($\beta = -0.123, t = -2.744, p < 0.05$) has a positive and significant effect on innovativeness meaning that age diversity positively influences the innovativeness of selected private universities in Ogun State. Gender diversity ($\beta = 0.072, t = 1.697, p > 0.05$) has a positive but insignificant effect on innovativeness while ethnicity diversity ($\beta = -0.060, t = -1.311, p > 0.05$) has a positive and insignificant effect on innovativeness of selected private Universities in Ogun State. The regression analysis results indicate that three dimensions of workplace diversity, namely age diversity, personality diversity and attitude significantly influence innovativeness. This suggests that workplace diversity predict innovativeness in the selected Private Universities in Ogun State, Nigeria.

According to the table, workplace diversity dimensions have a moderately strong positive relationship with the innovativeness of Selected Private Universities at $R = 0.646$ (Puth, Marie-Therese et al., 2014). This indicates that work diversity dimensions positively influence innovativeness in the Selected Private Universities. The adjusted R-squared ($R^2 = 0.409$) indicates that 40.9% variation in innovativeness of selected Private Universities can be attributed dimensions of workplace diversity that only affect innovativeness while the remaining 59.1% is attributed to other factors not included in the model. The predictive and prescriptive models from the results of the multiple regression analysis illustrated on table 4.16 are thus expressed:

$$INN = 8.333 - 0.123AD + 0.072GD - 0.060ED + 0.203PD + 0.523ATT + \mu_i \text{-----Eqn. 4.1 (Predictive Model)}$$

$$INN = 8.333 - 0.123AD + 0.203PD + 0.523ATT + U_i \text{-----Eqn. 4.1 (Prescriptive Model)}$$

Where;

AD = Age Diversity
 GD = Gender Diversity
 ED = Ethnicity Diversity
 PD = Personality Diversity
 ATT = Attitude
 INN = Innovativeness

From the predictive regression equation established, taking all the factors (age diversity, gender diversity, ethnicity diversity, personality diversity, and attitude) constant at zero, the innovativeness of selected Private Universities in Ogun State would be 8.333. From the predictive model, gender diversity and ethnicity diversity did not significantly predict innovativeness of Selected Private Universities, hence were not prescribed for the selected Private Universities in Ogun State in strategic decision making. Therefore, these variables were removed from the prescriptive model. The prescriptive model showed

that, if all the other variables of workplace diversity are kept constant, an increase in Age Diversity will lead to a -0.123 decrease in innovativeness of Selected Private Universities sector. A unit increase in Personality Diversity will lead to a 0.203 increase in the innovativeness of Selected Private Universities, and a unit increase in Attitude will lead to a 0.523 increase in the innovativeness of selected Private Universities. This suggests that selected Private Universities in Ogun State should pay close attention to age diversity, personality diversity, and attitude to improve their innovativeness. In addition, the F-statistics ($df = 5, 341$) = 48.830 at $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$) indicated that the overall model for predicting effect of workplace diversity dimensions on innovativeness. Therefore, the management of the selected private Universities in Ogun State should prioritize fostering personality diversity, promote a positive attitude, and manage age diversity effectively to enhance innovativeness. While gender and ethnicity diversity may not directly impact innovation, maintaining an inclusive and respectful work environment remains crucial for overall organisational outcomes. Based on these results, the null hypothesis (H_0) which states that workplace diversity has no significant effect on innovativeness was rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The aggregated results of the multiple regression analysis for hypothesis one revealed that workplace diversity variables (age diversity, gender diversity, ethnicity diversity, personality diversity, and attitude) have positive and significant effect on innovativeness of selected Private Universities in Ogun State, Nigeria ($R^2 = 0.409$; $df = 5, 341$) = 48.830 at $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$). Thus, the combination of the independent sub-variables was significant in predicting innovativeness of selected Private Universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. This finding implies that workplace diversity variables (age diversity, gender diversity, ethnicity diversity, personality diversity, and attitude) have positive and significant effect on organisational outcomes variables (innovativeness, competitiveness, creativity, productivity) significantly predict innovativeness of selected Private Universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. The results of this study align with existing literature on workplace diversity. Fadi et al., (2016) found that having a diversity of knowledge within virtual teams is noted to benefit organisational outcomes; leveraging the benefits of diversity (both deep and functional-levels) is likely to require a capability to facilitate collaboration among team members. Also, the study aligns with Susan and Linda (2004) which revealed that deep-level perceived similarity will interact with leader-member dyadic communication agreement in predicting group member performance ratings at later time periods in a workgroup's development. Results reveal that the interaction between leader-member dyadic communication agreement and perceived similarity explains 36 percent of the variance of perceived group members' performance ratings. Similarly, findings corroborate that of Navjeet and Pallvi (2020) who revealed the nuances of gender diversity and inclusion that bring out their true essence in terms of creativity and innovation, productivity, decision-making, problem-solving and organisational performance as its several advantages. It also attempts to bring out the reasons for acknowledging gender diversity and inclusion as a core of every organisations' policy and also found that in the status of gender diversity has slightly improved.

The findings of Navjeet and Palliv (2020) differ from Fadiet al, (2016) because the former focussed on gender diversity and Inclusion as key to organisational growth. Despite this dissimilarity an under lining relevance of workplace diversity components on organisational outcomes can be deduced. These findings are also in consonance with Mohammad (2017) whose study revealed that the innovative firms surpassed that of non-innovative firms by employing propensity score matching. The results indicate that firms that invested in research and development successfully obtained patents, and the protection granted by government-issued patents improved their performances.. The results show that not only the single factor of external legitimacy pressure, but also their interaction, affects corporate green innovation practices. This study is corroborate from Marian et al. (2017) established that surface and deep-level diversity on R&D "innovative performance and how diversity dimensions interact to drive innovation. Also, findings suggest that high diversity in gender or skills in cognitively diverse teams might be negative attributes to take into consideration.

On the contrary, the study does not align with the studies of Jayne and Dipboye (2004) which demonstrated that gender diversity does not inevitably provide positive outcomes such as boosting drive, enhancing abilities, consolidating obligation, improving values, and declining conflict. The negative side gender diversity delays decision making process because of internal conflict among members. The findings of this study agree with the assumptions of RBV theory According to RBV, diverse human capital within an organisation can be considered a valuable resource that contributes to sustained competitive advantage. The diverse skills, perspectives, and experiences brought by a diverse workforce may lead to increased creativity and innovation Therefore, the positive impact of workplace diversity on innovativeness in this study supports the idea that organisations strategically utilising diverse talents and perspectives are better positioned to innovate and thrive in dynamic environments, as proposed by RBV.

The study further underscores the importance of aligning organisational practices with these theoretical frameworks. If organisations aim to leverage diversity for sustained competitive advantage, they should not only recognise the potential benefits of diverse human capital but also implement practices that foster an inclusive and supportive environment Resource-Based View theory emphasizes the strategic management of resources for sustained competitive advantage. In the context of diversity, this means actively cultivating a diverse workforce, valuing and utilizing the unique skills and perspectives each individual brings to the table. This may involve recruitment and retention strategies that prioritize diversity, as well as providing ongoing training and development opportunities to capitalize on the varied expertise within the organisation. RBV strengthens the argument for diversity as a strategic imperative rather than just a compliance measure.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the effect of workplace diversity variables on innovativeness of selected private universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. This study made some significant

contributions to conceptual, empirical and theoretical reviews with associated implications to literature. Based on the empirical findings, the study revealed that workplace diversity positively influenced innovativeness.

Relying from the findings of this study, following recommendations were made:

1. Universities should actively embrace and promote workplace diversity as a core value of the organisations.
2. There should be creation of policies and practices that ensure equal opportunity for all employees, regardless of their background, gender, race, ethnicity, or other characteristics.
3. Diversity training programs can be implemented to increase awareness and appreciation of different perspectives and cultures.
4. To capitalize on the significant effect of workplace diversity on innovativeness, management should foster a culture that values and rewards innovation. This can be achieved by encouraging employees to think creatively, take risks, and challenge traditional ways of doing things. Providing resources, such as innovation labs or dedicated time for brainstorming sessions, can also support and encourage innovative thinking.

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