Exploring Culturally Diverse Workforce for Cordially Improving Work Environment: The Implications for Management and Employees Performance

By

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Abstract

The work environment is a social place and as such, it is becoming more culturally heterogenous than has ever been because of the sweeping wave of globalization in all spheres of human endeavour, which has now made the world a 'global village'. By this oneness and closeness of all, whereby different categories of people from all over are now forming a one body workforce (employees) in one organization, it is time to denounce discrimination, animosity or individuality or expressing the 'we' tendencies against the other. Promoting tolerance and providing constant support and counselling will enable workers cutting across cultural boundaries but leaving together in the work environment to have better understanding, good relationships and a more sense of communal atmosphere in the workplace. One sure way to navigating the turbulence workplace is embracing diversity consciousness, which is the critical consciousness that help workers to develop a more flexible, inclusive kind of thinking and awareness of the interconnectedness and interrelatedness of our world of works. It is that dynamic process of understanding, learning, adapting to while adopting the needed behavioural expectations that commit one to see things from others point of views with minimal personal biasness. Empirically, scholars agreed to the fact that, there is enormous unity in diversity in the world of works, and what is expected is the ability to explore the advantages found therein, to the overall benefits of all. Furthermore, workforce demographics and culturally different oriented workforce that is well managed have potential for collaborative competitiveness to the advantage of the organization. The

author used contents analysis through qualitative insight review to drive home his points. At this juncture, we shall turn to the objectives of this paper, which are amongst others to: present empirical literature review; cultural acclimatization and learning by employees in an organization; diversity consciousness and workplace mutuality, the challenges of workplace and diversity management, and finally, ways/means to managing cultural diversity. One of the recommendations is management should put in place a mechanism for workshop/training session as the case maybe where both old and new employees learn new cultural approach as a policy guide or watchdog against exhibition of one's bias cultural tendencies.

Keywords: Cultural differences, work environment, diverse workforce, employee's performance, diversity consciousness

Introduction

Seeing cultural differences in the work environment as an opportunity rather than as a serious threat inducer tendency obviously has intellectual, emotional, psychological and moral calling for the good of the organization. Practically speaking, being able to manage this dichotomy is necessarily required for getting the job done, having successful performance; whether in a daily contact with other co-workers, or in a cross-functional teams, or in cross-border alliances (Susan & Tean-Louis, 1997). It is worthy to note however, that it is easy to theorize about managing cultural difference at working environment than in a practical situation. In other words, managing employees having diverse cultural upbringing and background coupled with either well trained personnel or stack illiterates who may have properly been rooted in his/her belief system and understanding is not/has not been a simple task.

Using a multicultural team that pools expertise across functional boundaries is a pointer premise on a better decision making, greater creativity, more responsiveness to different approaches or issues confronting the working environment; deep insight into analyzing issues and easier implementation of strategy. Having this, Susan & Jean-Louis (1997); Suri & Sharma (2011) are of the opinions that achieving this means that the multicultural teams have to create the right tension between integration and differentiation in such a way that

expectations will mutually be shared while preserving the enriching cultural differences. Simply put, identifying cultural similarities and differences and resolving the two sets of the issues; task issues and process issues. Team members must therefore see to establishing how they will structure their work, how decisions will be made, how to define roles and responsibilities as well as how to assure participation, handle conflict and how to promote learning. The aim here is not in any way to see to neutralizing or containing cultural differences, but how to build on them for the common and greater good of the employees and the work environment. Meaning, the team must put effort into creating cohesion, understanding, synergy and solidarity upfront, otherwise, cultural differences at the work environment will become a liability and not an asset (Paine, 1994; Henry, Eze, Abiola, Adedoyin, 2020).

The work environment is a social place and as such, it is becoming more culturally heterogeneous than has ever been, because of the sweeping wave of globalization in all spheres of life which has now made the world a 'Global Village'. UNESCO (2013) has stated that workplace cultural differences have several components such as from ethnic to linguistic, national, sporting, economic, religious and organizational cultures. Of course, globalization as an ongoing process is seen linking people and organizations of completely different background and orientations together to achieving targeted ends. The fallout of this development is the mutually involvement of the lives of people from one part of the globe with another, through various medium of interactions and integration such as information sharing, ideas and ideals, music, food, cultural practices and exhibition, etc. Given the fact that working environment is becoming increasingly complex and sophisticated, coupled with the magnitude of work demands, pressure involving waves of strong competitive venture, Panda (2010) see this as a necessitating verbs for the building of a global culture fitting and inspiring in such a way and manner that will be attracting to employees from different angles and regions of the world to be suitable and accessible for employment in any organization without any biasness from the cultural point of considerations.

If there is one world that characterizes America's workplace, that word is nothing more than diversity of humans. The workplace is composed of more minorities, immigrants and women and this pattern is expected to continue in the years

ahead, and this is because businesses have become increasingly global not localize anymore. Therefore, it is expedient and challenging to deal effectively with a wide variety of people and customs to have a common/middle ground where all differences have to be agreeably resolved (Mor-Barak, 2013). And as a matter of fact, and as expected, the cross-cultural leaders are to be very patient, have understanding and flexible in dealings and the employees too should be ready to learn, tolerate and accommodate. All these characteristics are part of cultural sensitivity, which is an awareness of and a willingness to, investigate the reasons people of another cultural background act the way they do. A leader with cultural sensitivity will achieve a bond of trust and earned respect with people. This relationship is essential and appropriate for employee's satisfaction and effective performance (Morning, 2011).

In the enlightened workplace, there is a philosophy of pluralism and relentless effort to eliminate racism, sexism, ageism and other discriminations at work environment. Joshi, Liao & Roh (2011) are of the opinions that where and when this occurs, all the people at the workplace will have reasons to believe that they are accepted and respected and that their voices will be heard at all times or most of the times. This prescription here is simply to turn walls in our minds and hearts into bridges that join and make a structure that is stronger than its individual cells. The perception so created is to value diversity as strength, and to that end, everybody should be treated with respect and dignity; wherein, we must have an eyes-level approach where superiority or biasness must be countered in our dealings with people regardless of social status and in this manner, valuing diversity provides strength and a positive advantage for work organizations operating in a multicultural work environment (Richard & Miller, 2013).

Dealing with cultural differences at work place effectively means behaving in such a way that creates and ensures mutual trust and respect among people with different cultural background training and understanding, and thus gains insight benefits from their differences. An analogy can make for a clearer and insightful understanding thereto. Take for instance, if you were planting a garden and wanted to have a variety of flowers, you would never think of giving every flower the same degree of sun, same volume of water and perhaps, same soil types. Instead, you would cultivate each flower according to its needs, because neither

the rose nor the orchid is more or less valuable because both require unique or special kind of attention and treatment. Leaders of diverse work groups may wonder, how can I possibly learn about all these differents people, and the simple answer is that, although you cannot learn all there is to know about every culture of the people before fitting in, but the more you know about it, the more successful you will be, and the people you are working with, will surely appreciate your efforts of putting in more time to understanding them from their different cultural perspectives for easy and common coordination (Martin, 2014; Daft & Marcie, 2016).

The management of diversity approach concentrates on that of the individuals first, before thinking about the groups, to which they belong. The certainly will ensure improvement of opportunities for all individuals and not just those of the minority groups within the organisations. Hence diversity management involves everyone and also benefits everyone, which is the high point for all alike. The basic tenet in managing diversity lies in the fact that, the workforce consists of a diverse population of people consisting of both visible and non-visible differences…and it is founded on the premises that harnessing these differences will create a whole lots of opportunities from the productive workforce and the environment where everyone feel valued; and where all talents are fully utilized and in which organizational goals are met as well as that of the employees aspirations and needs. It is to note, with proper management of diversity approach reinforces a group-based stereotypes, when group-based characteristics are identified and used as a sources of advantage to the organization and those working and doing businesses therein. Irrespective of the approach adopted to manage the workplace diversity, the culture of the different groups within the organization can never be wished away, but must come first into play. For instance, recognizing that, even in the same group, men and women present and represent different cultures at work, and that this diversity needs to be addressed, managed and taken care off, is the very key to promoting a positive work environment of a balanced opportunity, where these diversities are seen as assets and not liability to the benefits of all (CIPD, 2006).

From the background analysis, it is clearly before us that diversity of people from different cultural background, different training and orientations, different

educational and professional calling converging at a particular workplace, occupying different work hierarchies with demonstrated enormous potentials either to grow or mar the progress of the organization. Suffice is to say, with the proper management and coordination of a diversely workforce, the chances are that, given divergent views on issues that are properly annexed and evaluated, will certainly manifest in the greater growth and development of the different stakeholders' interests and believe you me, the reverse optimally will be the case for the organization. At this point, we shall turn to the objectives of this paper, which are amongst others to: present empirical literature review; cultural orientation and learning by employees in an organization; diversity consciousness and workplace mutuality and finally, the challenges of workplace and diversity management.

Empirical Review

Empirically, several research works had been done by scholars regarding proven evidences that have shown that, there is the positive relationships of affective diverse workforce working in an organization and result also thereof, of ill-managed diversely oriented employees. Of notes, the work of Dike (2013) which has put forward by establishing how diverse workforce affect the performance of the employees in organizations. The study considered the effects of workplace diversity and its effects on organizations coupled with the challenges of employees from different social foundations and experiences and the consequential effectson the overall organizational performances. He put together five organizations in Finland and Ghana, using information contains and available from the Human Resource Management gaps. And after thorough investigation and examination, the outcome clearly demonstrated that workforce diversity certainly assumes a positively compelling part on organizations growth and development. Meanwhile, in the face of lack of proper coaching and mentoring to give direction and approaches needed, this could lead to low productivity. Addressing this therefore, constant training and change in approach with current realities to handle issues with diversities of opinions as the world is progressively moving on (Henry, Eze, Abiola, Adedoyin & Ayemi, 2020).

In examining the 'workforce diversity and organizational performance of IT industry in India', Kundu and Mor (2017) purpose to determine the extent to

which employee perceptions of diversity management influences performance as well as finding out whether their perceptions are in anyway related to their backgrounds on the IT industry. Using primary data to get information from 402 respondents, factor analysis, correlations, analysis of variance, means, grand means and regression were used to analyze the raw data. The final outcome indicated and proven that, there was no significant relationship between employees' backgrounds and diversity management, but perceived promotion of gender diversity by employees was found to have a significant positive influence on their performance.

Again, in another research conducted by Raise, Al Rawahi, Al Omorani, Al Hooti, & Porkodi (2019) on workplace diversity with specific reference to age and gender, it was discovered to have significant positive effect on teams as it increases the opportunity for creativity among members. Going further, the study also found out that, it negatively affects team members as it increases the likelihood that members would be dissatisfied and fail to identify with the group. In their conclusion, it is stated that in the short-term, there are various unfavourable consequences that accompanied workplace diversity and these are: lack of commitment from group members, lack of true identification with the group; perceived discrimination based on certain factors such as cultural identity and biasness, sex, etc., work related friction and role conflict. Furthermore, in the long-run they also predicted negative effects for organizational performance.

In the same vein, Karen (2013) did a case study on the benefits and challenges of workplace diversity management on 'consultative group on international agricultural research (CGIAR) centres in Kenya'. Objectively, the study was to establish the benefits thereof and also to determine the associated hindrances to managing a diverse workforce. Achieving these objectives, the study used a questionnaire and interview scheduling to collate primary raw data from 12 purposefully selected respondents at the CGIAR centres. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and the study found that high performance was shown where team have diversity factors such as that of age, ethnicity, nationality, gender bias, social issues and others. The report also found that employee from diverse background contribute significantly to enriching knowledge and skills, cohesion, mutual understanding in the organization as well improving organization

production profile. It was further discovered that the knowledge and understanding from the training has help the employees on how to live and work in a multicultural environment and in addition to impacting positively on the employee's career growth projection and as well as improved on their personal and interpersonal relationship and skills and techniques in dealing with colleagues and the environment (Emily & Stephen, 2018).

Also, Odita & Egbule (2015) in their research investigated workforce diversity and organizational effectiveness in Nigerian Breweries Industry with a view to assessing the effects of workforce diversity using selected breweries outlay. In their study, survey design and stratified random sampling methods was adopted to select desire respondents. Data gotten were analyzed using linear regression and correlation analysis. And their findings shown that workforce diversity and organizational effectiveness were positively related and the relationships derivable were more through team building and constant training on the issues relating to understanding one's differences and accommodating.

More research findings have suggested that several factors are responsible for the conflicts been provoked by diversity on team-work composition. For instance, Omankhanlen & Ogaga-Oghene (2011); Pelled, Cummings & Kizilos (1999) have stated that correlating individual group members with separate groups i.e. out-groups, in one way or the other disrupt the 'in-groups' dynamics. And in consonant with this finding, research on self-categorization theory has proven that out-group members usually elicit sense of dislikeness, distrust, uncompromising stance, and competition toward 'in-groups' than those of 'out-group' to which they belong. Affirming more, if out-group members come from cultures or sub-cultures with which in-group members seem to be very unfamiliar, such differences may inhibit miscommunication, misinformation, showing of ill-accommodating manners and such like negative tendencies just for the fact these are not your familiar members (Hambrick, Davison, Snell & Snow, 1998; Hogg, Cooper-Shaw & Holzworth, 1993). Generally, empirical evidences supporting the postulation that all categories of diverse workforce can actually led to either positive or negative effects on the wheel of progress of the organization. In tandem with this, is social categorization theory which emphasizes that similarities or otherwise can lead to classifications which in the long-run, can be favourable to

one else's in-group to the disadvantages of one or more out-groups of social categories. Going down the lane, on an intra-group bases, this strategy is commonly referred to as 'relational demograph'. That is to say, groupings within a work group that is essentially based attributes such as gender, race, age and this can bring about problematic formation of sub-groups (Jackson, Joshi, Erhardt, 2003; Omankhanlen & Ogaga-Oghene, 2011).

Researches have clearly demonstrated that managing a diversely workforce is part of employee retention and attraction with the intention to energize workplace productivity, thus increasing the organization's competitive edge. For instance, Ferreira & Coetze (2010) from the research conducted in an organization showed that production performance level and volume significantly increased from 38 to 45 million, which at some point in the year was just at a staggering 20 million per annum. According to them, the recorded achievement was directly linked to the diverse talents and innovations associated with the different employees having different socio-cultural, social lining, education and training and experiences working together. With respect to employee engagement, the survey has proven that the organization's fortune increased from 52% to 85% production growth in 2015, indicating increased in employee self-commitment and involvement. Ofnote therefore, since innovation and talents has been encouraged among team members, where different shade of opinions and contributions are being welcomed and accommodated, so also well-thought through solution to problems are easily arrived in the overall interest of the organization and its workforce.

Cultural Orientation/Adaptation and Learning

Attitudes and behaviours resulting from cultural orientation differ from those resulting from integrated mindsets in that they are deeply rooted in the complex identity of the organisations and people involved, and the uncertainty expected. Culture has been generally described as the norms, values, beliefs and attitudes of a group of people. These characteristics of culture are broadly based in society's culture (Hofstede, 1980) and in organizations (organizational culture) (Schein, 1985). Differences in cultural orientation have been associated with human resource issues and a better integration and understanding and managing these differences is critical to achieving favourable integration outcomes and organisations increased production profile.

Organizational culture has been defined as the special way an organization and its members think about what they do and why they do it (Bower, 2001) and what they consider to be appropriate business practices (Schein, 1985). Differences between organizational culture and that of the workforce are associated with anxiety, negative evaluations of counterparts and ethnocentrism between employees and management (Sales & Mirvis, 1984), which can lead to employee perceptions with the ideological thinking of 'us' and 'them' categories. Often members of one culture usually attempt to dominate members of the other, and this particularly always led to let down on employees of the other cultures and made to feel like second-class citizens in the organization (Ulrich, Cody, LaFasto & Rucci, 1989). This can lead to conflict and dysfunctional employee outcomes, including lack of trust in management, lack of commitment to the organization, lack of cooperation between/amongst employees thus make to lose interest and commitment to the work in the organization, thus may increase tureover rate of other employees leaving the organization (Lubatkin *et al.,* 1999; Nahavandi & Malekzadeh, 1988: Schweigcr & DeNisi. 1991).

The problems that differences in organizational culture by employees can create are too many to start mentioning them. Organizational culture with several cultural dissimilarities, if properly handled and assimilated positively, it increases the degree of integration positively (van Oudenhoven & de Boer, 1995). Managers, employers and employees with a greater a sense of willingness to diffuse diversely cultural orientations have the chances of having a better and sound organizational performance effects due to relatedness and understanding (King, Dalton, Daily & Covin, 2004). The benefits of common relatedness and synergy always exceed the greater costs of forceful implementation of diverse employee's cultural integration. Suffice is to say, simple understanding can easily proffer solutions to the impediments in this process that can cause the loss of anticipated synergies (Jemison & Sitkin, 1986; Larsson & Finkelstein, 1999).

The basis of most conflict between different workforce has been attributed to lack of knowledge and understanding of each partner's concerns and organizational culture (Arnold, 1983; Buono & Bowditch, 1989). Cultural conflict poses threatsto effective integration and occurs when employees have to work together without a shared understanding of their partner's culture (David & Singh, 1993). To

minimize cultural conflict, an understanding of culturally defined behavioural norms and procedural routines in the different shade of opinions that are expected and necessary where and when people of different backgrounds, orientations, training, education, converge in an organization of works (Pablo, Sitkin & Jemison, 1996; Schweiger & Goulet, 2005). Learning as a part of the integration processmust occur to bridge cultural differences that can lead to conflict and poor integration outcomes. This entails more than the simple communication of information and feelings to identify differences. Compatibility between partners is achieved through learning that results in the construction of an adequately 'shared set' of understandings (David & Singh, 1993). Learning in this manner supports the acculturation process, or the convergence of the employee's cultures into a new, unified culture. To achieve acculturation, the workforce must develop a mutuality of interest, but, more important, they must develop a common language and a shared understanding of the business reality (Sales & Mirvis, 1984).

To develop an accurate picture of the business reality, a deep form of learning is necessary; one that entails introspective learning in which both management and employee's learn not only about their cultures, but also about themselves by understanding what each truly values and how these can truly be transformed into a culture of team by stepping outside of one's own cultural believe systems and embrace that of organizational culture is necessary before one can discover the limitations of one's own present culture and the possibilities inherent in other cultures. This deep form of cultural learning ensures that key elements necessary for all will be valued and preserved in the ultimately new organization were identifying cultural differences and learning from them are the building blocks behind shared understandings, a common focus for the new organization and a shared identity. What is good from here is simply that other cultures should win acceptance in the new organization's culture on its own account, rather than be forced (Mayo & Hadaway, 1994). Employees within organization shpere should be more accepting of change as a result of different cultural integration, because the proposed change will be framed more as an addition to or an extension of existing cultural elements of their own. This new synthesis that retains the old with the new establishes a form of partial stability to allow change to occur (Schein, 1985) and acculturation to begin.

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Convergence on a shared culture offers the greatest opportunity for synergy realization (David & Singh, 1993), because it involves the highest form of integration. Interventions that promote cultural learning are critical to the effective management of the integration process, and to the realization of better solutions for the new anticipated cultural orientation in the organization. Collaborative problem solving and inter-group mirroring workshops between the management and employee's teams have been found to facilitate integration by reducing misperceptions and inter-group conflict (Blake & Mouton, 1984; Blumberg & Weiner, 1971). Engaging employees to participate jointly in determining best practices for the organization have also been found to result in enhanced teamwork, cooperation and commitment to cultural change and integration (Leroy & Ramanantsoa, 1997). However, these interventions should be complemented and preceded by deep cultural learning interventions that help employees truly understand culture. These interventions have been found to help employees learn about each other and the organizations, to break down stereotypes and minimize conflicts (Schweiger & Goulet, 2005). In this case, inter-group cultural mirroring exercise and weekly follow-up meetings is necessary. The inter-group cultural mirroring exercise is designed to help employees constructively explore cultural similarities and differences among themselves, and to discuss how they could be managed. Through mirroring and discussion, tangible cultural similarities and dissimilarities can be identified and inaccurate stereotypes can be clarified and eliminated. Those aspects of culture from diverse employees that would best serve in the organization and those actions necessary to converge these cultures are jointly determined. These deep cultural learning interventions have been found to be an effective means to resolve cultural differences between/amongst different employees thereby enables organisations to overcome several dysfunctional outcomes associated with cultural misalignments.

Another intervention to achieve deep learning during the cultural identity-building process involves the use of metaphors. For instance, in a study of a Finnish-Swedish organizations merger, for example, Vaara *et al.* (2003) found that a special metaphor exercise aided the culturally diverse organizations to understand images of us' and 'them' and to construct images of a common future. Metaphors are important linguistic vehicles that allow for effective

communication of meaning that is difficult or impossible to express otherwise. They are a figurative comparison: for example, an organization as a 'home or a spider's web'. The images are produced in a process of interpretations that involves not only employees' first-hand experiences, but also the reconstruction of historical stereotypes, myths and legends from different social domains. As a result, they reveal cognitive, emotional and political aspects of the cultural identity-building process that characterize the merger context. More traditional approaches to identity building tend to focus on the cognitive aspects of these processes, whereas the metaphor perspective also allows one to see the emotional and political elements.

As a part of the metaphor exercise, participants from the merging organisations were asked to write down metaphors that best described their view of the acquirer, the target and the merged organization in the future. A summary of the individually produced metaphors was given to the participants in the exercise along with other materials, including readings on Finnish- Swedish cultural differences, which were used to reflect on cultural issues inherent in the merger. The metaphors offered insights into the cultural identity development challenges and suggested new ways of building mutual value base, trust and commitment. Finally, sound human resource management policies that hitherto frequently neglect workers feelings should, as a matter of expediencies, put in a place a functional strategy to help organisations draw up those salient but core policies framework associated with business strategy, structure, market selection and product development and as well as accommodating employee's cultural differences through synergy (Faulkner *et al*., 2002).

Diversity Consciousness and Workplace Mutuality

An integral part of developing diversity consciousness is to develop diversity skills; which are those competencies that allow people to interact with others in such a way and manner that respects and values differences. Diversity skills such as mode of communication, teamwork and self-evaluation are key components of diversity consciousness. Diversity consciousness is more than just being knowledgeable or aware of differences in workplace environment or among people. It is the awareness, understanding, and the skills that allows us to think through and value human differences (Richard,2004). Put differently, as our

awareness and understanding expand, so do our diversity skills; and similarly, so, as we keep developing and refining our diversity skills so also do we increase our awareness tolerance, patience and understanding situations.

Been that it is something that develops overtime, Barbara & Politechnika (2010) opined, as it grows, we all are better up and able to deal with members in the organization and adaptive to, and as well adopt measures that respect diverse views; since in all likelihood, wide range or variety of values, personalities, behaviours, and abilities abound. Diversity consciousness makes one open and inviting to the distinctive qualities offered by different people at workplace. This is generally regarded as seen from the advantage or positives point of views because with employees' variance in age, gender, race, ethnicity and culture, one gets a broader range of perspectives; for instance, in a team, this will certainly lead to more ideas and more thorough discussions of opportunities and challenges. This also makes organizations or businesses to be able to meet the needs of the workforce and the market (Burcher, 2000). From the paragraph, it is quite obvious that different thinkers with good thinking faculty abound in a situation of diverse workforce which present numerous advantages that can only be drivable when critical and evaluative mindsets are opened to learn and free self from the bondage of oriented cultural upbringing, that has made he/her to see the world only from his/her own cultural perspectives.

Diversity consciousness as the gateway to social imagination and integration, it is interpreted as the critical consciousness about diversity that helps workers develop a flexible, inclusive kind of thinking and awareness of the interconnectedness of our world's view of different people and cultures while simultaneously understanding the value of developing such an awareness in their personal life, career and the working environment (Bucher, 2000). Developingthis critical consciousness is vital because workplace environments are getting more 'heterogenous' and so in a working environment devoid of means and strategies to cultivate diversity consciousness, management and workforce might experience this 'melting pot' of cultures and perspectives as threatening, confusing, and difficulty in understanding and accommodating (Vander Veen, Marjolein & Bert, 2017). Accordingly, one way to combat this diversity anxiety and the associated fear/threat to work and its workforce is a breakthrough the 'inertia of habit' and

'poke around' the world of works by paying attention to diversity consciously undertaking, redeveloping and refining behaviours that extol social integration and build the capacity to direct vision and mission of what should be and what might not be. In that vein, diversity consciousness has become the precursor and gateway to re-cultivate social imagination (Greene, 1995).

Another scholar, Eranpalo & Jorgenson, (2018) said that diversity consciousness is the basic recognition that communities and workplace are becoming more and more divers and by being aware of the impacts and effect of this diversity, the organization is then more prepared to take advantage of the diversity benefits and take charge of counter potential conflicts that can result when people with different cultural backgrounds come together. In other words, the authors are saying that organizations and businesses been aware of the diversity reality of the workforce at the workplace, should take advantage of it by proactively building teams that have diverse qualities and backgrounds. Training that offers employees familiar insights and understanding of different cultures will be more beneficial to parties in work environment. Diamond (1996) adding his voice, diversity consciousness positioned an organization to develop and maintain a non-alliance tendencies or discriminatory posture to ensuring work environment operates a fair hiring processes that will lead to the most qualified and capable people actually getting the opportunity. That is to say, diversity discrimination should be played down maximally to create rooms for right peg to fit into the structural components of the organisations for better optimum performance and outputsby the diverse workforce.

Diversity consciousness is not just but an ideal level of awareness and understanding that we reach, and after which we remain static or immutable to change. Rather, it is that dynamic process of understanding, learning, adapting to, and adopting the needed behavioural expectations. In this case, one is involved and committed to constantly learning and changing to see things from otherspoint of views with minimal personal biases George (1985) in Richard (2004:122-123), we understand others or at least try to do so by stepping outside ourselves; that is, we try to put ourselves in their shoes, so to speak. In effect, we 'simulate' how we would feel, what we would perceive and how we would respond in a given situation. In surviving in many worlds; that is, living with people having different

cultural upbringing at workplace, Terry Tafoya describes this ability as being 'able to borrow other people's eyes, to see to learn, and learn to see'. This ability to putting ourselves in somebody else's situations increases our awareness, understanding, and diversity skills- our diversity consciousness. By stepping outside of ourselves and our culture, we can gain a deeper appreciation of other people's experiences, and as such, our ability to think flexibly and to communicate effectively with others. Stepping outside of ourselves also helps in increasing our awareness of our own frame of reference and how this shapes what we see, and by adopting another perspective, we become more aware of our own and thus begin to realize that our own perspective was just one of the many that abound (Timmermans and Ostergaard, 2011).

Furthermore, in another contribution to diversity consciousness and workplace, Benaus & Berry (2004) opined that it is not simply awareness of ourselves and others, but extends to how we behave and interact with others. And in order to apply our knowledge and awareness to real-life situations, we need to practice, practice and practice again. We can only apply this by developing and refining the skill through constant use and self-evaluation. Self-examination is an ongoing thing, since our work environment is constantly changing, our awareness and understanding of others need to be constant to keep pace. We need to grow and adapt as our world and life experiences expand. Here comes in critical thinking which is the ability to freely question and evaluate ideas and information about others. It is the diversity consciousness skill that helps us to recognize our biases and those of others. It reveals jobs or inconsistencies in our assumptions in dealings with diversely co-workers at workplace. Research has shown that one key factor in reducing bias is the ability to think critically. In general, people who question what they hear from others and think things through show less prejudice than those who simply accept things at face value (Richard, 2004; Salami, 2010). Regardless of our education or career plans, our failure to develop diversity consciousness, according to Richard (2004) will in all likelihood, have far-reaching and serious negative consequences for ourselves and the organisations. Organizationally speaking, people who lack diversity consciousness will strain the interpersonal relationships, threaten team spirit, and waste lots more of tie addressing issues that ordinarily would have been handled with less stress with common but mutual understanding of all.

In course of the discuss on diversity consciousness and workplace, the relationship between or among colleagues has been touched. Through our findings, personal characteristics and perspectives in handling issues relating to diverse workforce attest to the critical importance of this specific variable. Therefore, through constant education and learning, constant practice and open mind to accepting other's differences, this particular skill and rare quality of humans would have improved on one's understanding and knowledge; one would have become a better employee, more valued employee in the workplace. On the contrary, ignoring or downplay on it, will be most costlier in the wheel of progress, development and growth of any organization.

Challenges of Workplace Diversity Management

Insofar as different people having different characteristics and as well been unique in their own way from their cultural perspectives have merged at a certain work location, bounded by certain work rules of engagement, stereotyping which is natural to anywhere social being gathers, must exist; but what matters is how it is been managed in the interest of all. Generally speaking, it is most often an established fact that human being are more comfortable and being accommodated by those sharing same values, views and norms from their own perspectives. Adewor & Aluko (2007) has said, in the circumstance, those found within this arena, are always not very comfortable where issues of diverse work are being envisaged, because, it undermines there believe. They see multicultural workforce as that tending to disrupt the status quo of how organization would have functioned primarily from the of view of just one ethnic nationality and have thus created some level of fears amongst organizational stakeholders and this is responsible why some workforce categories are usually not comfortable with it (Ajiri & Hillary, 2018).

Previous researches have posited that in a diversely workplace, the issue of race in most cases lead to several other issues such as communication breakdown and low cohesion among the workers, and accordingly, this in no small measure have restricted employees' abilities, capacities and has hinders the motivational force for collective performance and thus result in low performance and production profile. It is to be noted, this occurs when management mismanage the diversity issue, hence formed the baseline for conflicting situation which, when eventually

arise, it is usually to the detriment and neglect of the organizational objectives and focus (D'Netto, Shen, Chellian, 2013; Rashidat, 2018).

Again, another major challenge directly impinging the wheel of progress of a diverse workforce in an organization is the issues of decision and implementation. In this case, diversity management appears to just be right when decision have been concluded on papers and at board meetings, but however, many organizations have faced and are still facing challenging time and situation attempting to execute those decisions reached perhaps because of certain favourites characteristics (Ajiri & Hillary, 2018). Overcoming this barrier therefore, it is expected of management and all concern to work out a workable model for effective strategic implementation, make provision for constant monitoring and evaluation to ensure full compliance and equally see to ensuring that those working against the mid-way approach are correspondingly dealt with to set as deterrents to others who may have been thinking of exhibiting such unwholesome behaviours.

Furthermore, certain ethnic based groups or individuals may not be at ease but may feel threatened working together with people. Having different characteristics such as age, sex, culture, educational background and aspirations. Agolla & Ongori (2007) have said, diverse work environment can lead to lack of acceptance, due to sometimes certain unethical comments that are in themselves provoking prejudices and cause ill-feelings to others, which in turn creates negative tendencies, ethnocentric behaviour and clashes of cultural orientationsof workplace amongst the workforce. Additionally, those from the minority group have often times feel cheated by their majority counterparts on issues bordering on them, such as promotion, postings, career pack development, etc.

Language spoken in an organizations have high tendencies to creating problems and challenges to multi-ethnic workforce. Although it may be stated in the body documents of the organization that English language will be the common medium of communication, and of course, it is expected that everyone speaks. There are times or there may be time where, consciously or unconsciously; mails may be written in majority based ethnic groups and in meetings too, intermittently, some may speak in their own languages passing information to would-be based ethnic

groups and claims to be a mistake, meanwhile some important information may have been passed already within that short while. This can happen at a point when/where major decisions are about to be decided upon, and the acclaimed mistaken ethnic language spoken may have had severe adverse effects or has turned down the mindsets of those from the particular region to whom the massage was passed to change from perhaps, the initials course of action/understanding. In this situation, other staff or co-workers may certainly feel they are being left out or shortchanged.

Finally, according to Wambui, Wangombe, Muthura, Kamau & Jarkson (2013), diversity biasness at workplace is rooted in three basic assumptions and these are: superiority which is triggered upon one's conviction or thinking that he/she is better off than the other person. This could be directly related to all factors or variables surrounding the social existence of the being (the worker at workplace) such as his religion, cultural background; education background, race, thinking ability and the likes; next is correctness, wherein, someone is believing that all he/she is doing in the work environment are the best and hence should be yardstick or model to be applied. In this type of situation, such people will not see anything good in what others have done and will want at all times to re-do them or think or want to correct others to follow his/her approaches and this kind of person or behaviour in the workplace will bring about demotivation, dissatisfaction and killing of moral to putting in efforts on the part of fellow co-workers. The last of the assumption is the 'universality' issue which applies to or false believes that all are the same and have equal rights. Needless to say, it is not entirely true, because all 'animals are not and can never be equal, and the misapplication of this by some may outrightly lead to insubordination, disobedience, refusal by some workers to carry out certain assigned job, perhaps by a superior from another culture and this invariably will negatively down play in the performance and production profile of the organization (Leanard, Levine & Joshi, 2004).

Ways/Means to Managing Cultural Diversity

With the increasing importance of international businesses as well as the culturally diverse domestic workforce, what can organizations do to manage cultural diversity can be looked at under the following concepts:

Building Cultural Intelligence in the Employees:

This is a person's capability to understand how a person's cultural background influences one's behavior. Developing cultural intelligence is important, because the days when organizations could prepare their employees for international work simply by sending them to long seminars on a particular culture are gone. Presently, international business is not necessarily conducted between pairs of countries. A successful domestic manager is not necessarily assigned to work on a long-term assignment in other Countries before expected to know and understand other peoples culture. Of course such assignments still happen, but it is more likely that the employees will continually work with others from diverse cultural backgrounds. This means employees will not necessarily have to become experts in one culture. Instead, they should have the ability to work with people from many diverse backgrounds all at the same time. For these types of assignments, employees will need to develop an awareness of overall cultural differences and learn how to recognize cultural principles that are operating in different situations. In other words, employees will need to be selected based on cultural sensitivity and understanding and trained to enhance such qualities (Fowler, Steinberg, & Patrick, 2007).

Ethnocentrism:

leads organizations to adopt universal principles when doing business around the globe and may backfire. Here, we will highlight research findings showing how culture affects employee expectations of work life such as work–life balance, job security, or the level of empowerment. Ignoring cultural differences, norms, and local habits may be costly for businesses and may lead to unmotivated and dissatisfied employees. Successful global organizations modify their management styles, marketing, and communication campaigns to fit with the culture in which they are operating. For example, Apple Incorporation famous PC versus Mac advertising campaign was reshot in Japan and the United Kingdom using local actors. The American advertisements were found to be too aggressive for the Japanese culture, where direct product comparisons are rare and tend to make people uncomfortable. The new advertisements feature more friendly banter and are subtler than the U.S. advertisements. For the British market, the advertisers localized the humor (Fowler, Steinberg, & Patrick, 2007).

Listen To Local:

When doing cross-cultural business, locals are a key source of information. To get timely and accurate feedback, organisations will need to open lines of communication and actively seek feedback. For example, Convergys, a Cincinnati-based call-center company, built a cafeteria for the employees in India. During the planning phase, the Indian Vice president pointed out that because Indian food is served hot and employees would expect to receive hot meals for lunch, building a cafeteria that served only sandwiches would create dissatisfied employees. By opening the lines of communication in the planning phase of the project, Convergys was alerted to this important cultural difference in time to change the plans. (Fisher, 2005).

Recognise That Culture Changes:

Cultures are not static—they evolve over the years. A piece of advice that was true five years ago may no longer hold true some years later. For example, showing sensitivity to the Indian caste system may be outdated advice for those internationals doing business in India today. 18. The belief that one's own culture is superior to other cultures one comes across, have changed due to the dynamic nature of social interactions and complex network of integration. Attributing all misunderstandings or failures to culture may enlarge the cultural gap and shift the blame to others. In fact, managing people who have diverse personalities or functional backgrounds may create misunderstandings that are not necessarily due to cultural differences. While familiarizing employees about culture, emphasizing the importance of interpersonal skills regardless of cultural background will be important. With the increasing prevalence of international business as well as diversification of the domestic workforce in many countries, understanding how culture affects organizational behavior is becoming important. Individualism-collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity–femininity are four key dimensions in which cultures vary. The position of a culture on these dimensions affects the suitable type of management style, reward systems, employee selection, and ways of motivating employees (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004).

The Role of Ethics and Culture:

Diversity and Ethics when managing a diverse group of employees, ensuring the ethicality of organizational behavior will require special effort. This is because employees with different backgrounds or demographic traits may vary in their standards of ethics. For example, research shows that there are some gender differences when it comes to evaluating the degree of ethicality of hypothetical scenarios, with women utilizing higher standards. Men and women seem to have similar standards when judging the ethicality of monetary issues but differ on issues such as the ethicality of breaking organizational rules. Interestingly, gender differences seem to disappear as people grow older. Age is another demographic trait that influences the standards of ethics people use, with older employees being bothered more by unethical behaviors compared to younger employees. Similarly, one study showed that older respondents found some questionable negotiation behaviors such as misrepresenting information and bluffing to be more unethical compared to younger respondents. In addition to demographic diversity, cultural diversity introduces challenges to managing ethical behavior, given that cultures differ in the actions they view as ethical. Cultural differences are particularly important when doing cross-cultural business. For example, one study compared Russian and American subjects on their reactions to ethics scenarios. Americans viewed scenarios such as an auditing company sharing information regarding one client with another client as more unethical compared to how Russian subjects viewed the same scenarios. (Beekun, Stedham, Yamamura, & Barghout (2003).

Summary/Conclusion

Navigating through the paper, we found out that workplace is a social community of people with divergence views on things; different cultural orientations, different educational background and several other variables as the component parts of who an individual is, that drives the thinking and behavioural pattern of one group towards the other either in a negative or positive fashion in the same workplace. This multicultural and heterogeneous workforce has a better and beneficial advantage in the organization only when and if, management and the workforce have been able to discover the positive endowments in the divergence opinions. Put it differently, accommodating each other's strength and weaknesses on all fronts, is an enabler of a coordinated togetherness towards having success, because there is power in unity and common understanding. Since diversity is

seen or likened to the state of unlikeness or the condition that manifest differences in individual, groups, and understandings. This show of attributable cultural differences requires a great deal of attention to unlock the inherent potentials cutting across all shade of opinions, views, contributions and ideas from different perspectives. In this kind of situations, the consequential effects can be devastating on all, and what is needful therefore is to finding a common ground where views and perceptions from all concern can fully be synergistically annexed for the greater good of everyone, and including meeting up the objectives of the organization and also see to maximizing the opportunity for the future.

Recommendations

Management should create a mechanism where either monthly or bi-monthly where all staffers will be given different languages training by experts in the field, as the case may be. Through this medium, overtimes, languages and cultural barriers associated with it would have gradually been reduced to the minimum.

Diversity of different shades have been from time immemorial among humans; but what matters most is the ability to respond to it with ease and competence. It goes therefore to mean, diversity consciousness which is more than merely feeling good about self and others, but rather, having a deeper thought and in more critical thinking and understanding, skills and the mind to accommodate others should constantly be preached through newsletters, in general meetings, department and unit meetings.

Again, management should put in place a mechanism/workshop/training where both old and new employees learn new cultural approach as a guide or watchdog against exhibition of one's bias cultural tendencies that views the world through just one len.

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