
Demographic Factors, Inclusiveness and Employee Performance in University of Abuja Nigeria

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Abstract: *Demographic factors and inclusiveness often inhibit open communication and thereby enhancing overall productivity and satisfaction. The paucity of empirical studies in this area prompts the need to examine the correlation between demographic factors, inclusiveness and its effect on employee performance. The hypothesis for this study is test using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient alongside descriptive statistics of percentage. According to the descriptive statistics, while the university benefits from a well-educated and experienced workforce, improving gender balance, retaining newer staff, and leveraging academic expertise could enhance employee performance and contribute to a more productive university environment. The findings indicate that demographic factors like age and education show slight positive correlations with employee performance, while inclusiveness—through diverse collaboration, leadership commitment, and openness to ideas—moderately enhances job satisfaction, engagement, and discretionary effort, highlighting the role of inclusive practices in boosting performance.*

Keywords: demographic factors, inclusiveness, employee performance, productivity

INTRODUCTION

An exploration of demographic factors, inclusiveness, and employee performance provides valuable insights into creating a conducive work environment for academic and administrative staff in universities. Workforce diversity, characterized by variations in age, gender, educational background, and experience, is increasingly recognized as essential in shaping employees'

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In the higher education sector, inclusiveness and diversity among faculty and staff are crucial for institutional effectiveness. Literature shows that demographic diversity in universities contributes to improved teaching quality, research outputs, and student satisfaction, as diverse representation better reflects and addresses the needs of an increasingly heterogeneous student body (Denson & Chang, 2009; Umbach, 2006; Herring, 2009). For instance, literature have demonstrated that institutions with diverse leadership and faculty teams are better positioned to understand and meet diverse student needs, a finding emphasized by the American Council on Education (ACE, 2022). Within the Nigerian context, the government has made strides to promote diversity and inclusion in the higher education system, but disparities persist in areas like gender representation and equitable career advancement (NUC, 2019). With respect to current realities threatening organisations today, it might be concluded that work force diversity may create opportunities or pose challenge to the workplace (Osita-Ejikeme & Ugwuzor, 2014).

Inclusive practices that prioritize respect for and appreciation of employees' unique backgrounds and contributions are fundamental to creating psychologically safe environments in educational institutions. Psychological safety, defined as employees' perception of being able to express themselves without fear of negative consequences, is increasingly recognized as essential for fostering engagement, creativity, and commitment in the workplace (Edmondson, 2018; Brown & Leigh, 2020). When employees feel psychologically safe, they are more likely to contribute innovative ideas and collaborate effectively, as they perceive that their individual perspectives are valued and respected (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). In the context of Nigerian universities, where diversity in age, gender, and ethnicity is significant, inclusiveness can reduce the cultural barriers that often inhibit open communication and collaboration, thereby enhancing overall productivity and satisfaction (Ayo & Uche, 2023).

Nigeria, home to over 250 ethnic groups, 500 linguistic dialects, and diverse religious backgrounds, faces unique challenges and opportunities related to workplace diversity and inclusiveness (Abdulkadir & Olaoye, 2023; Nwachukwu & Chukwuemeka, 2022). In such a multicultural society, fostering an inclusive and high-performing workforce requires a nuanced

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understanding of how demographic diversity impacts organizational dynamics. Within Nigeria's higher education system, inclusiveness and equity remain focal points of the national agenda, with policies and initiatives aimed at promoting a more inclusive environment (Adebayo & Salau, 2022). However, while affirmative action has promoted broader representation, challenges persist in ensuring that diverse groups feel genuinely included and valued within these institutions (Okonkwo & Bello, 2023).

At the University of Abuja, one of Nigeria's premier public universities, the workforce's diversity reflects the country's ethnic and cultural mosaic, yet the relationship between demographic factors, inclusiveness, and employee performance is still underexplored (Brown, 2022; Kim & Ahn, 2023; Zhao et al., 2023; Babatunde et al., 2023; Ayo & Uche, 2023). Applying social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and the relational demography perspective (Tsui & O'Reilly, 1989), this study aims to bridge this gap, offering insights that may inform policies to enhance workforce inclusiveness, engagement, and performance in University of Abuja, strengthening their role in national development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Clarification

Demographic factors encompass the various social and personal characteristics of individuals that influence their behaviors, experiences, and perspectives within an organization. These factors include age, gender, education level, ethnicity, and length of service, among others, and play a significant role in shaping workplace dynamics and outcomes (Kulik et al., 2021). In the context of employee performance, demographic factors can impact how individuals engage with their roles, adapt to organizational culture, and interact with colleagues (Sung & Choi, 2022). Studies have shown that diverse demographic backgrounds contribute to a broader range of ideas and experiences, which can enhance creativity and problem-solving within teams (Guillaume et al., 2017). However, these factors can also pose challenges, as differences in age, cultural background, and educational level may lead to misunderstandings or conflicts if inclusivity is not prioritized (Roberson et al., 2020).

Inclusion is described as the removal of barriers to enable full participation and contribution of employees (Shore et al., 2010). It involves allowing diverse individuals to participate and contribute fully (Shore et al., 2010). It goes beyond mere representation and emphasizes creating a culture where diverse perspectives and experiences are integrated into the organization's operations and decision-making processes (Nishii, 2013; Shore et al., 2018). Recent research highlights that inclusiveness enhances psychological safety, encouraging employees to participate

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According to Okoro and Washington (2012), employee performance refers to the effective discharge of duties for which an employee is hired. In other words, it represents how well an employee is fulfilling the requirements of their job. Building on this, Tinofirei (2011), as cited by Zhuwao (2017), defines employee performance as the successful completion of tasks by a selected individual, as set and measured by a supervisor or organization, to pre-defined acceptable standards, while efficiently and effectively utilizing available resources within a changing environment. Furthermore, Mwatumba (2016) conceptualizes employee performance as a self-perceived evaluation of an employee's ability to carry out their day-to-day activities effectively.

Theoretical Review

This study is anchored on social identity theory (SIT) explains how membership in social groups influences individual behavior. In the context of demographic factors, inclusiveness and employee performance, this theory can help understand how group identities affect interaction dynamics in the workplace (Sreedhar & Nayak, 2023). According to SIT, individuals derive a sense of identity and self-esteem from their membership in social groups, such as those defined by gender, age, ethnicity, or professional role (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In diverse settings like Nigerian universities, these group memberships can influence employees' behavior, interactions, and overall commitment to their institution (Brown, 2022). Inclusiveness within the university environment can strengthen social identity by fostering a sense of belonging, which is crucial for enhancing job satisfaction and performance (Kim & Ahn, 2023). When employees feel valued and recognized across demographic divides, they are more likely to engage positively with their work and with colleagues, leading to improved productivity and collaboration (Zhao et al., 2023). According to literature, inclusivity initiatives can bridge demographic gaps, reducing biases and promoting cohesion, which ultimately enhances institutional performance in higher education (Oladipo et al., 2023).

Empirical Review

Extant literature emphasized that inclusion plays a significant role in enhancing the effects of demographic factors on employee outcomes. Specifically, when employees feel genuinely included, demographic factors are more likely to lead to positive outcomes such as increased trust and engagement (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016). For instance, Marcus and Gopinath (2017) examine

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how demographic factors, specifically age and gender, affect employee engagement among IT workers in South Chennai. Through a structured questionnaire, the study measured key engagement drivers, including supervisor influence, performance appraisals, and recognition, analyzing responses with statistical tools. Findings indicate that age significantly impacts engagement levels, with younger employees displaying lower engagement levels compared to older employees, potentially due to differing employment opportunities and perceptions. Gender showed no significant impact on engagement, though female employees appeared more receptive to engagement initiatives. Vincent, Okeowo and Bilau (2024) investigates how socio-demographic factors influence workplace performance and professional experience among recent graduates in the building technology sector. Employing a correlational design, the study analyzed data from 155 graduates using regression analysis to explore relationships between age, gender, education level, and their impacts on both occupational experience and workplace performance. Findings revealed that age positively correlated with workplace performance but negatively with occupational experience, while education level positively correlated with both.

Daya and April (2014) investigates how demographic characteristics influence employees' perceptions of inclusiveness in the workplace. Using survey data from a large South African organization, the study employed structural equation modeling (SEM) and analysis of variance (ANOVA) to examine differences in perceptions of inclusion across variables such as race, age, gender, tenure, and organizational position. Key findings reveal that race, position, and location were significant predictors of inclusion perception, with minority and lower-level employees reporting lower levels of perceived inclusion compared to their counterparts. Hanafi and Syah (2021) explore how demographic factors, specifically gender and work duration, moderate the relationships between job satisfaction, work environment, work motivation, and employee performance. Conducted among telecommunications employees in Jakarta, the study finds that job satisfaction, work environment, and motivation significantly influence employee performance. Notably, demographic factors such as gender and work duration have varying effects; for instance, female employees and those with longer tenure exhibit different performance levels relative to satisfaction and motivation factors.

Mansoor, French and Ali (2020) examine the impact of diversity at individual and group levels. Reviewing 51 empirical studies, the authors utilized theories such as information elaboration, social categorization, and social identity to explore how demographic diversity influences outcomes. They found that while diversity can enhance information processing and broaden perspectives within groups, it may also trigger negative social categorization, impacting group cohesion and individual performance. Yildırım and Uysaloglu (2012), investigates how demographic factors such as gender, age, education level, and job position influence employees' perceptions of workplace mobbing within a Turkish logistics company. Using survey data from

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100 employees, the study employed frequency analysis and ANOVA to assess variations in mobbing perceptions across demographic groups. Results indicate no statistically significant differences in mobbing perceptions based on demographic characteristics, suggesting that mobbing experiences were broadly similar across different employee groups. Vásquez-Colina (2005) examines how demographic factors, organizational culture, and interpersonal self-efficacy contribute to perceived job performance among nonprofit human service workers. Utilizing a sample of 607 full-time workers across various service organizations, the study employs hierarchical regression to assess the relationships among these variables. Findings reveal that interpersonal self-efficacy is a key predictor of job performance, while factors like organizational culture and demographic variables also play significant roles in influencing workers' perceptions of their effectiveness.

Agbator and Olori (2020) explores how demographic characteristics influence employees' decisions to remain with an organization within the maritime sector in Nigeria. Using a sample of 305 employees selected from 10 maritime firms, the study found significant variations in intention to stay based on age, gender, educational qualifications, and marital status. Results indicated that younger employees and those with higher qualifications exhibited a lower intention to stay, while female and less qualified employees showed a higher retention tendency. Kalia and Bhardwaj (2019) examines the effects of demographic and organizational variables on contextual and task performance among hotel employees in Himachal Pradesh, India. Using data from 350 hotel employees, the study identified that age positively influenced task performance, with performance peaking among employees aged 40-50. In contrast, education level and job security were strong predictors of both contextual and task performance, indicating that highly educated and salaried employees exhibited higher job performance.

Literature Gap

The existing literature reveals a gap in research on how demographic factors and inclusiveness impact employee performance within Nigerian universities, especially in higher education. While studies have addressed demographic influences like age, gender, and education on performance across varied industries (e.g., IT, logistics, hospitality, maritime) (Marcus & Gopinath, 2017; Vincent et al., 2024; Yıldırım & Uysaloglu, 2012), research specifically focusing on Nigerian universities is limited. Although work by Daya and April (2014) and Hanafi and Syah (2021) underscores inclusiveness as a mechanism to reduce social categorization in diverse workplaces, few studies examine this within Nigeria's unique educational setting. Moreover, while Mansoor, French, and Ali (2020) propose multilevel frameworks for demographic diversity, the role of inclusiveness in enhancing demographic diversity's effects on performance in Nigerian higher education remains underexplored. This leaves a gap in understanding how inclusiveness could foster positive performance outcomes in Nigeria's culturally diverse university workforce.

METHODOLOGY

The study population included both academic and administrative staff at the University of Abuja, Nigeria. To assess demographic factors, inclusiveness, and their impact on employee performance, a questionnaire was developed based on tools previously utilized by Chew et al. (2011). University of Abuja has a staff strength of 3,362 comprising of academic and non-academic staffs (University of Abuja Website, 2024). Using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling approach, a sample size of 345 is recommended for a population of 3,362. This sample size provides a reliable representation of the population with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. Stratified sampling was applied to ensure adequate representation from various staff categories within the university.

The questionnaire is structured to gather insights into the relationship between demographic factors, inclusiveness, and employee performance at the University of Abuja, Nigeria. The first section collects basic demographic data, including gender, age, educational level, faculties, and length of service. The second section assesses inclusiveness perceptions through statements on equal opportunity, respect, a sense of belonging, and support for diversity initiatives within the university, with respondents indicating their level of agreement. This section also captures how comfortable employees feel in expressing themselves and collaborating with diverse colleagues. The third section addresses employee performance, examining satisfaction, productivity, motivation, engagement, job satisfaction, and recognition within the workplace. The study used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from undecided, strongly disagree, disagree, agree and strongly agree. Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), with descriptive statistics of percentage and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to examine correlation between demographic factors, inclusiveness, and employee performance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Characteristics

The demographic profile of University of Abuja staff reveals a diverse workforce with distinct characteristics that can impact employee performance in a Nigerian university setting. Male staff constitute 61.7%, compared to 38.3% female, highlighting a gender disparity that may influence workplace inclusiveness and diversity outcomes. The age distribution is relatively balanced, with the majority (25.8% and 26.1%) in the 30-39 and 40-49 age brackets, suggesting a workforce with a mix of youthful energy and experienced personnel, which can foster knowledge sharing and innovation. Educational attainment is high, with 25.5% holding doctoral degrees and 27.5% with master's degrees, a strong indication of qualified academic and professional staff likely to contribute positively to research and teaching standards.

Non-academic staff represent 57.7% of the workforce, indicating substantial support for academic activities but possibly creating a heavier administrative focus. The length of service distribution shows a notable percentage (19.7%) with less than one year of tenure, which may affect institutional continuity and employee engagement. Conversely, 24.9% with 6-10 years of service and 20.9% with 11-20 years suggest a stable core of experienced staff. These demographics imply that while the university benefits from a well-educated and experienced workforce, improving gender balance, retaining newer staff, and leveraging academic expertise could enhance employee performance and contribute to a more productive university environment.

Table 1. Demographic Information

VARIABLES	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGES
Gender	Male	61.7
	Female	38.3
Age	18-29years	12.2
	30-39years	25.8
	40-49years	26,1
	50-59years	19.1
	60 and above	16.8
Educational Level	ND/Diploma	9.6
	HND Degree	15.4
	Bachelor Degree	22.0
	Master Degree	27.5
	Doctorial	25.5
Department	Academic Staff	42.3
	Non-Academic Staff	57.7
Length of Service at University of Abuja	Less than 1 year	19.7
	1-5 years	19.7
	6-10 years	24.9
	11-20 years	20.9
	More than 20 years	14.8

Source: *Extract from Field Survey, 2024*

To assess the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach Alpha, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy, and Bartlett Test of Sphericity were utilized. Cronbach Alpha evaluates the internal consistency of a test or scale (Taber, 2018) and is represented by a value between 0 and 1. A reliability coefficient of 0.7 or higher is considered acceptable. The Cronbach's

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Alpha value of 0.810 indicates that our instrument is reliable (Mohajan, 2017), as shown in Table 3. The KMO and Bartlett Test were used to examine sampling adequacy, determining if the data were suitable for factor analysis. Table 4 displays a KMO measure of 0.740, which is close to 1, indicating good sampling adequacy. Also, Bartlett Test of Sphericity yielded a significant value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05.

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.810	19

Source: *Extract from SPSS Result*

Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.740
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	534.323
	df	171
	Sig.	.000

Source: *Extract from SPSS Result*

Demographic Factors and Employee Performance

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted on demographic factors, inclusiveness and employee performance in order to establish the relationship among the variables.

Table 4: Demographic Factors on Employee Performance

	GENDER	AGE	EDUL	DEPT	LSUA
SOJP	0.013167	-0.08859	-0.04583	-0.00338	-0.02519
PIIWE	-0.09841	0.093102	-0.03899	0.019822	-0.02568
MCPGU	-0.0064	0.020763	-0.02376	0.014476	-0.07877
DIPEEC	-0.10464	0.061269	-0.05192	-0.07844	-0.08878
GBRCDS	-0.08679	0.077079	0.07947	-0.03077	-0.08984
BIUPI	-0.07179	-0.06157	-0.0494	0.011357	-0.03965
PRAU	-0.05478	0.055727	0.025418	-0.03499	-0.03496

Source: *Extract from Correlation analysis*

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Table 5: Inclusiveness and Employee Performance

	UPEO	FVIC	UFIWE	UCSD	ECCDB	LIAPI	FCEID
SOJP	0.020343	-0.02068	-0.1202	0.025464	0.114776	-0.00367	0.010378
PIIWE	0.020197	-0.05997	0.061962	0.025614	0.056379	-0.00865	0.019221
MCPGU	0.068903	-0.03439	-0.01322	-0.09414	0.026261	-0.05548	0.008159
DIPEEC	-0.04574	-0.02853	0.057274	0.00112	0.078242	0.020659	0.018521
GBRCDS	-0.02369	-0.01031	-0.00061	-0.07594	0.015884	0.022253	0.106468
BIUPI	-0.00732	-0.05942	0.090098	-0.03457	0.100847	0.103215	0.007279
PRAU	0.00855	-0.0557	-0.04697	-0.08017	-0.00323	-0.06004	0.049072

Source: *Extract from Correlation analysis*

The correlation analysis on Table 4 shows generally weak associations between demographic factors (gender, age, education, department, & length of service) and employee performance. Notwithstanding, literature emphasized that age diversity may slightly influence workplace behavior, as older employees bring experience that can enhance team commitment and productivity in inclusive settings (Lawrence et al., 2023; Truxillo & Fraccaroli, 2022). This is consistent with this study findings where age shows slight positive correlations with productivity (PIIWE at 0.0931) and commitment to departmental success (GBRCDS at 0.0771). Also, the weak but positive association between educational level and going beyond responsibilities (EDUL and GBRCDS at 0.0795) echoes findings from Meta et al. (2022), who indicate that higher education levels can modestly enhance commitment and job engagement. This finding reinforced the idea that age contributes to marginal productivity increases in inclusive settings (Oludayo et al. 2022; Adewale & Anthonia, 2021) but contrary to the result by Akinnusi, Sonubi, and Oyewunmi (2020).

Table 5 represent the correlation analysis between inclusiveness and employee performance. The finding shows that there is a modest positive correlation between inclusiveness factors and employee performance. Finding show a modest correlation between collaboration with diverse colleagues (ECCDB) and job satisfaction (BIUPI at 0.1008) and employee engagement (DIPEEC at 0.0782). This finding corroborates with that of Nishii (2022) asserting that collaborative engagement with diverse colleagues significantly enhances employee performance and satisfaction. The result on Table also reveals that leadership commitment to inclusiveness (LIAPI) moderately correlates with job satisfaction (BIUPI, 0.1032) as earlier emphasized in literature (see, Jones & Cromwell, 2023). Also, finding reveal that expression of ideas (FCEID) is associated with exceeding basic responsibilities (GBRCDS at 0.1065). According to Okeke and Adebayo (2023), employees' freedom of expression of ideas, irrespective of background, encourage discretionary behaviours, such as going beyond core duties. These findings suggest that inclusiveness—whether through collaboration, leadership commitment, or open expression—

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK plays a meaningful role in enhancing satisfaction, engagement, and the willingness to contribute extra effort in diverse workplaces.

CONCLUSION RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings reveal slight positive correlations between demographic factors (age & educational level) and employee performance. Specifically, age showed a minimal correlation with productivity in inclusive settings and commitment to departmental success. Also, educational level exhibits weak positive association with exceeding responsibilities, which stand to enhance overall employee performance. Also, findings on inclusiveness indicate modest correlations between collaboration with diverse colleagues and job satisfaction, as well as employee engagement. Leadership commitment to inclusiveness also showed a moderate correlation with job satisfaction, while expression of ideas by employee was linked to discretionary effort, underscoring the importance of inclusive practices in stimulating job performance.

The findings suggest that inclusiveness factors, particularly leadership support, collaboration with diverse colleagues, and open expression, play a meaningful role in enhancing job satisfaction, engagement, and discretionary effort. Policies promoting inclusive leadership, fostering collaborative environments, and encouraging the expression of ideas may help improve employee performance and workplace satisfaction. This calls for organizational frameworks that support diversity and inclusivity as a strategic approach to enhancing workplace productivity and commitment.

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