

# BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT AND ADAPTABLE WORKFORCE IN SELECTED NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

**AJAYI, Mobolanle Adunola**

**&**

**TONGO, Nancy Izegbuwa**

College of Management Sciences,  
Department of Business Administration, Bells  
University of Technology, Ota, Nigeria.

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# INTRODUCTION

- The advent of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has made the world to become a global village.
- It has also resulted in diverse employees in organisations.
- Hence, there is currently much attention on diversity as a crucial mechanism for strengthening business operations (Daniel, 2021).
- But overtime, discussions on diversity management has incorporated the concepts of inclusion and equity (Oswick & Noon, 2015).

# STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEM

- There is a huge dichotomy between a team and a high performing team (Newbould, Samsi and Wilberforce, 2022), which stems from the incorporation of inclusion and equity in the high performing team.
- Currently, there is limited knowledge of the import of inclusion and equity in the management of staff in Nigerian organisations.
- Particularly, this knowledge is almost completely absent within the Nigerian university system. This study seeks to fill this knowledge gap.

# OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- The broad objective of this study is to examine the impact of inclusive work environment on adaptable workforces of selected universities in Ogun State.
- However, the specific objectives include to;
  - i. assess the effect of cultural diversity on adaptive performance;
  - ii. examine the relationship between age diversity and task performance.

# RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

- **H01:** Cultural diversity does not have any significant effect on adaptive performance.
- **H02:** There is no significant relationship between age diversity and task performance.

# CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

- **Diversity** – The peaceful co-existence between and among people from numerous social, cultural and racial inclinations working within an organization (Agbim, 2019).
- **Age Diversity** – The age variations among an organization's workforce (Nevicka, Vianem, Hoogh and Voorn, 2018).
- **Cultural Diversity** – The reality of co-existing systems, such as, arts, beliefs, customs, morals, abilities, religions, languages, etc (Sindhu & Singh, 2021).
- **Employee Inclusion** – The process of harnessing diversity for innovation, well-being and effectiveness (Mafongosi, 2019).
- **Employee Performance** – The degree of accomplishment of tasks embedded in their job descriptions (Patiraja and Bhau, 2017).
- **Task Performance** – The effectiveness of a job serving as a performed activity with the aim of contributing to the organisation's overall technical goals.
- **Adaptive performance** - Employees' abilities in changing the behaviours and cognitive scope in adapting to changing surroundings or environments of work (Heinze and Heinze, 2020).

# THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

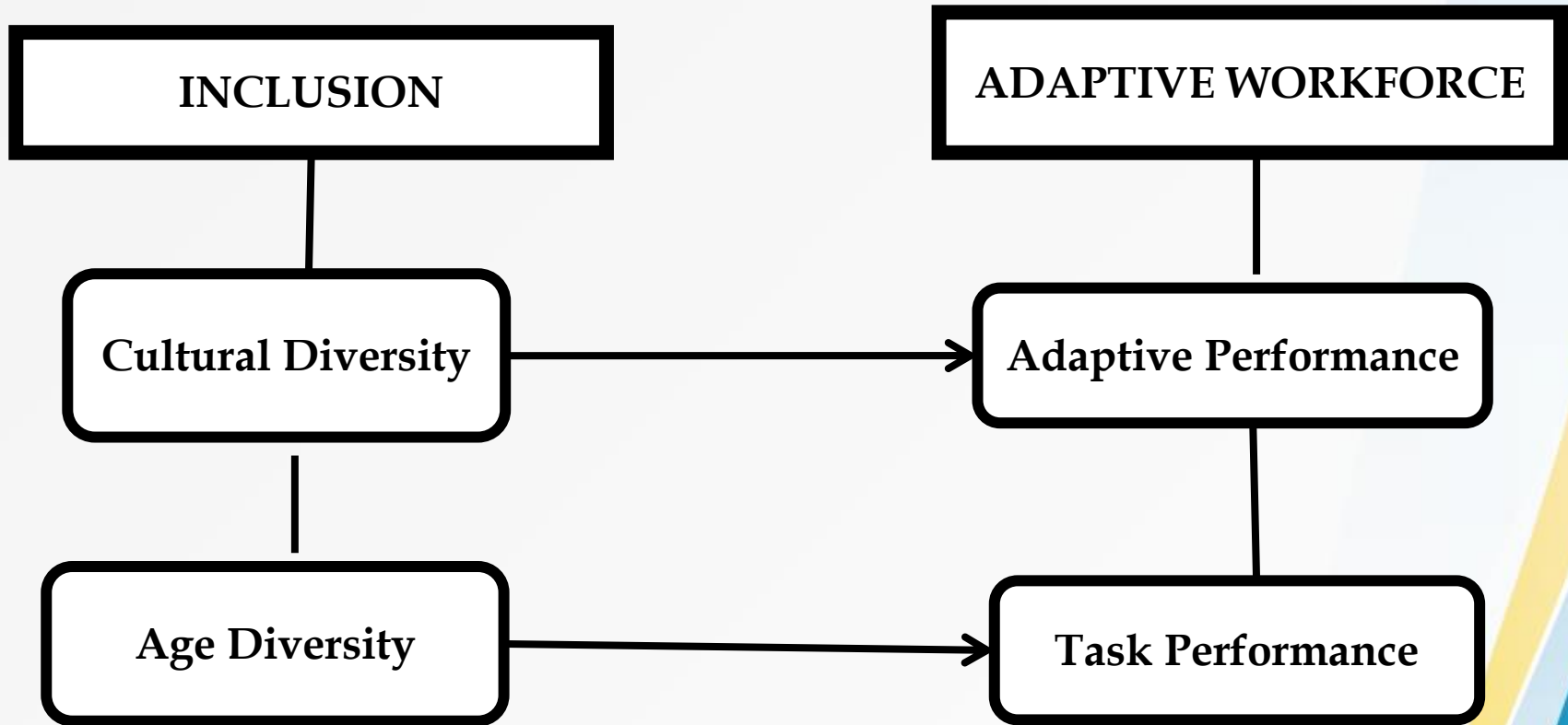
- **Social Identity Theory** – This theory was postulated by Tajfel (1978) which predicts the possibility of predicting certain behaviours within groups, due to the perception of group behaviour.
  - *The philosophy of this theory is that social groups are used by individuals in defining their diverse identities and such identifications aim at protecting and bolstering self identity.*
- **Similarity/Attraction Theory** – This theory assumes that individuals with similar attributes are attracted to each other and unattractive to those that are different from them (Acikgoz, 2019).
  - *It strongly upholds the proverbial saying that 'birds of the same feather flock together.'*

# EMPIRICAL REVIEW

- **Okwurume and Onuoha (2020)** examined the extent in which cultural diversity management strategies affected organizational performance of multinational companies in Nigeria. They found that cultural diversity has a great impact on organizational performance.
- **Iheriohanma and Ukachukwu (2013)** investigated the extent in which organisations adapted cultural diversity management using the Food and Beverage industry in Lagos, Nigeria. Findings revealed that there was a high correlation between cultural diversity management and adaptive style of organizational performance.
- **Darwin (2019)** studied the impact of age diversity on task performance in selected organizations. Findings from this study validated other studies in the eastern part of Asia, whose submissions brought to the fore that age diversity associates with creatively performing tasks.



# CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



- Source: Researcher's Framework (2022)

# RESEARCH METHODS

- **Research Design** - This study adopted a descriptive survey design.
- **Scope of Study** - The study covered three selected universities in Ogun State, Nigeria - Babcock University, Bells University of Technology and Crawford University.
- **Population** – The population was eight hundred and eighty six(886) as obtained from the Human Resource Unit of the various institutions.
- **Sampling Techniques** - The study employed a multi stage sampling technique which included non-probability sampling technique (purposive and convenience) and probability sampling technique (stratified and simple random sampling techniques).
- **Sample size determination** – Using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table at 95% confidence level and 5% rate of error, the sample size for the study became four hundred and ninety two (492).

# RESEARCH METHODS CONT'D

- **Method of Data Collection** - Primary data was obtained using a well-structured questionnaire divided into sections A and B.
- **Validity of Research Instrument** - The validity of the questionnaire for this study was tested using construct, face and content validity.
- **Reliability of Research Instrument**- The reliability of the questionnaire was determined using the analysis of a pilot study conducted among 60 employees from two pharmaceutical firms which are May & Baker and Topway Pharmaceuticals situated in Ogun State, Nigeria. It was ensured that the reliability test result yielded nothing less than 0.70 co-efficient.
- **Method of Data Analysis** - The study employed descriptive and inferential statistics analytical tool which involved the use of frequency distribution tables and simple percentages with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.0. Statistical tool for analysis of the two stated hypotheses for the study included correlation and regression analysis.

# RESEARCH FINDINGS

- For H01 (hypothesis one) which says that cultural diversity does not have any significant effect on adaptive performance, result revealed that cultural diversity has significant effect on adaptive performance.
- While H02 (hypothesis two) which says that there is no significant relationship between age diversity and task performance, findings showed that there is a significant and positive relationship between age diversity and task performance.

# CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that:

- Diversity is a fulcrum for development as it allows for exchange of ideas and facilitates comprehensive understanding of people's opinions to life and work.
- Age diversity also allows for sharing of ideas because while the newbies have contemporary knowledge, a lot is still required of them to align and blend with what the organization truly represents.

*Therefore, for effective organisational performance, there is need for full implementation of inclusion and equity in its management mechanism for a positive work environment and effective delivery.*

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- Management of institutions should come up with motivational programmes to give recognition to youngsters in a team to make them succeed.
- Management of the selected institutions should develop supporting structures for facilitating diversity management and using the concept of the melting pot to enhance and strengthening relationships among employees within the academia.

*Thank you for listening!*

