



**AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AGREEMENT: A PANACEA
FOR ACHIEVING INCLUSIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT AND
ADAPTABLE WORKFORCE IN NIGERIA**

BY

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Introduction

Overview

- AfCFTA: One of the flagship projects of AU Agenda 2063
- Adoption of the Agreement Establishing AfCFTA
- Major Aim of AfCFTA
 - to create a single and liberal market that will facilitate the movement of goods, services and human resources across member states for the purpose of economic integration and development.

Introduction

- AfCFTA is Estimated to:
 - improve the productive capacity of African economy to 29 trillion dollars in 2050
 - increase trade among African countries to 52.3%
- The potential challenges of diversity arising from the implementation AfCFTA
- The need for managing diversity and achieving inclusive work environment and adaptable workforce

Problem Statement

- Economic Situations (Mono-product, Infrastructure deficit, inaccessibility to finance, obsolete technology, etc.)
- Diversity (religious, cultural, nationality, demographic etc.)
- Increasing number of migrant workers within the continent
- Lack of formal processes, policies and practices that ensures management of equality, diversity and inclusion
- Political uncertainty
- Lack of holistic institutional and legal framework that can address both internal and external barriers in implementing inclusive work environment.

Objectives

The main objective is to examine the implementation of AfCFTA and its implication for creating inclusive work environment and adaptable workforce in diversified Nigerian work environment.

- to examine the level of diversity and inclusion in the Nigerian work environment
- To ascertain the measures of inclusive environment
- To examine how labour migration policy will influence the inclusion of migrant workers in Nigeria
- to ascertain how inclusive work environment and adaptable workforce can be achieved in Nigerian work environment in the wake of AfCFTA.

Conceptual Review

➤ Work Environment: The Nigerian Context

- High level of diversity, low inclusive work environment (Society for Human Resource Management, 2009)
- Employment discrimination and inequality not properly addressed in Nigeria (Fajana et al., 2011; Hofstede Insights, 2022; Onwuamaeze 2023)
- Age policy in recruitment in Nigerian private sector (Nwakanma & Onyeonoru, 2021)
- Victimization and unfair treatment of migrant workers during recruitment process (Olayinka & Nwafor, 2021)
- Ineffectiveness of policies designed to deal with the issue of discrimination

Conceptual Review

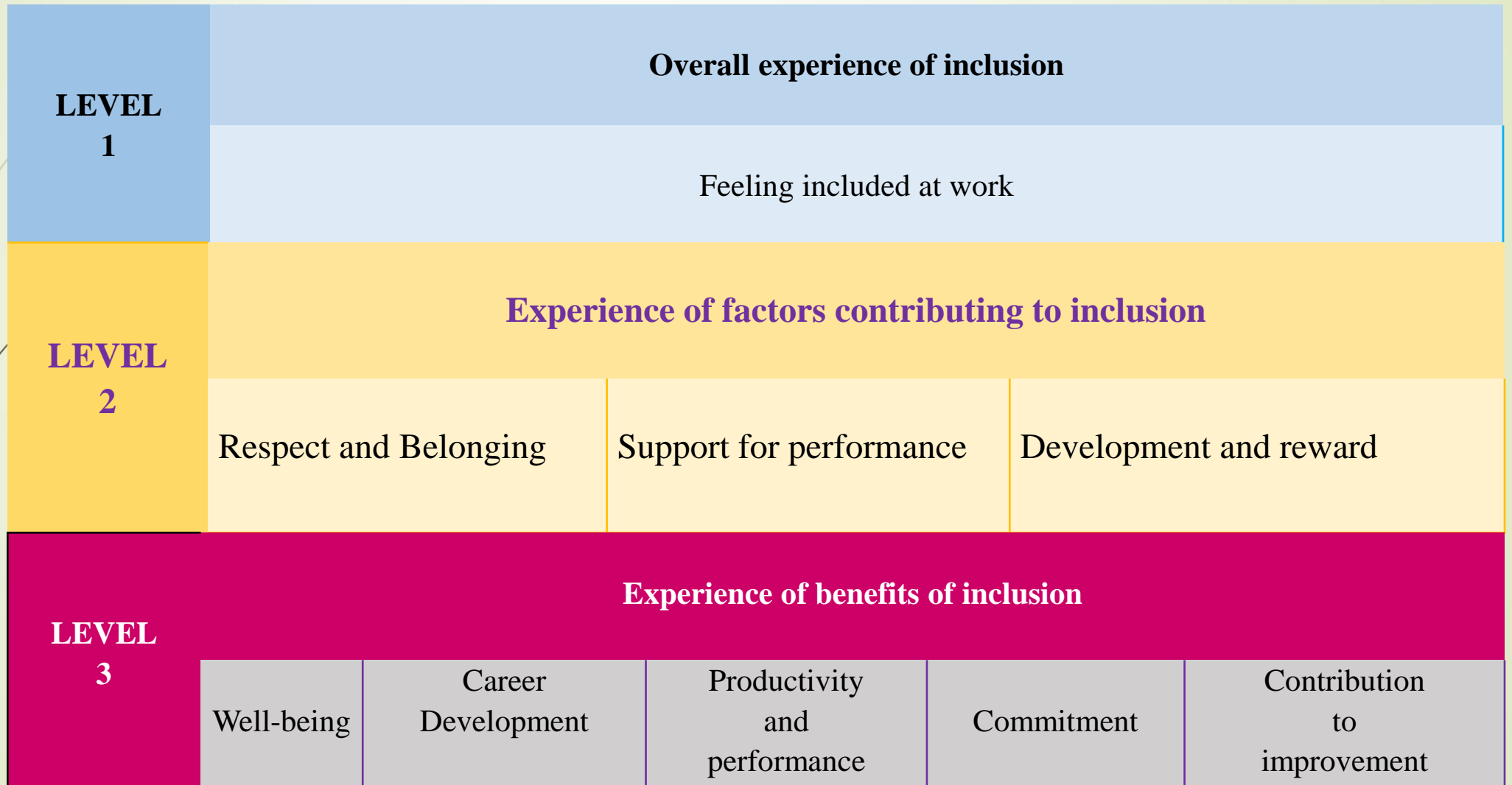
► Inclusive Work Environment

- The term "inclusion" describes the experiences employees have at work, the degree to which they feel appreciated for who they are, the talents and experience they contribute, and the degree to which they feel a sense of belonging with other employees there (International Labour Organization, 2022).
- Inclusion has also been described as a contextual, individual, momentary and transient concept, which occurs at both the individual and organizational level (O'Donovan, 2017).

Conceptual Review

► Measures of Inclusive Work Environment

Figure 1: A framework for measuring inclusion



Adapted from ILO (2022)

Theoretical Framework

- This paper builds on the work of Thomas and Ely (1996) and adopts inclusive model by Shore et al (2011).
- Thomas and Ely (1996) developed three paradigms for understanding of diversity:
 - the discrimination and fairness paradigm (Focuses on assimilation)
 - access and legitimacy paradigm (Focuses on Differentiation)
 - learning and effectiveness paradigm (Combination of assimilation and differentiation)
- Expanding learning and effectiveness paradigm, Shore et al (2011) added the concepts of uniqueness and belongingness in achieving inclusion.

Shore et al (2011) Inclusion Framework

► Figure 2: Inclusion Framework

	Low Belongingness	High Belongingness
Low Value in Uniqueness	<p>Exclusion</p> <p>Individual is not treated as an organizational insider with unique value in the work group but there are other employees or groups who are insiders.</p>	<p>Assimilation</p> <p>Individual is treated as an insider in the work group when they conform to organizational/dominant culture norms and downplay uniqueness</p>
High Value in Uniqueness	<p>Differentiation</p> <p>Individual is not treated as an organizational insider in the work group but their unique characteristics are seen as valuable and required for group/ organization success.</p>	<p>Inclusion</p> <p>Individual is treated as an insider and also allowed/encouraged to retain uniqueness within the work group.</p>

Adapted from Shore et al (2011)

Methodology

- This paper adopted exploratory design through integrative desk review method.
 - It involved the review of relevant literature and records of relevant institutions, government agencies/ministries and corporate organizations
 - Both qualitative and quantitative data were used in this paper
 - Descriptive statistics was used to analyze quantitative data from secondary source
 - These data were used to explain the current state of Nigerian work environment in relation to its level of inclusivity
 - The data also provided information on how Nigeria can leverage on the commencement of AfCFTA to build inclusive work environment and adaptable workforce.

Data on Labour Migration in African Continent

Table 1: Estimates of Migration Stocks Within, Out of and Into Africa, 1960 - 2017

Year	Intra-Africa Migration	African Emigration to the rest of the world	From the rest of the world into Africa
1960*	6,176,385	1,830,776	2,811,930
1980*	7,966,359	5,418,096	1,872,502
2000	12,413,437	9,098,838	2,836,869
2005	12,746,503	11,675,679	2,715,803
2010	13,666,144	14,390,051	3,314,105
2015	18,214,050	16,255,185	5,222,038
2017	19,274,433	16,868,723	5,375,790

Source: UN DESA, 2017 Trends in International Migration Stock: 2017 Revision,

*2016 Evaluation of the Migration Policy Framework for Africa

Data on Labour Migration in African Continent

- More than half (53%) of Africa's international migrants in 2017 remained on the continent (Economic Development In Africa Report, 2018).
- The number of female migrant workers within the working age have been on the increase.
- The number increased from 5.6 million male and 4.7 million female in 2008 to 10.7 million male and 9.0 million female migrants in 2017 (African Union, 2017).
- There is social protection deficit for migrant workers
- The number of migrant workers within African continent will continue to rise especially following the implementation of AfCFTA
- Managing diversity and creating inclusive work environment for these growing stocks of migrant workers are paramount.

Labour Migration Policy and the Inclusion of Migrant Workers

- Nigeria has developed National Policy on Labour Migration aimed at regulating migration and its attendant employment issues.
- Part of the specific objectives of the policy among others include:
 - Promote right to decent work, including access to social protection for female and male migrant workers.
 - Ensure non-discrimination and equality of treatment for all workers, migrants, and nationals abroad and at home.
 - Ensure that all employment of migrant workers is subject to labour standards and code of ethics
 -
- These objectives are designed to achieve social protection and inclusion for the migrant workers.

Labour Migration Policy and the Inclusion of Migrant Workers

- ▶ Achieve freedom of association for migrant workers through:
 - ▶ belonging voluntarily to unions of their choice
 - ▶ negotiating by collective bargaining
 - ▶ equality of wages and conditions with citizens
 - ▶ freedom of movement
 - ▶ freedom to earn, spend and remit their incomes
 - ▶ formal contracts and conditions of service, written in a language the migrant worker understands.

Policy Recommendations for Achieving Inclusion and Workforce Adaptability

- ▶ Harmonizing ideological differences held by different competing trade blocks within African continent
 - Economic Community of West African States
 - South African Development Community
 - Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
 - Economic Community of Central African States
 - Arab Maghred Union
 - East African Community
 - Community of Sahel-Saharan States

Policy Recommendations for Achieving Inclusion and Workforce Adaptability

- Acceptability of certifications and technical qualifications by different examination bodies within the continent in the continental labour market.
 - West African Examination Council (WAEC) for ECOWAS member states
 - Independent Examination Board (IEB) of South Africa
 - National Examination Council (NECO)
 - Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC)
 - National Examination Council of Tanzania (NECTA)
 - Central Africa Examinations Council (CAEC).

Policy Recommendations for Achieving Inclusion and Workforce Adaptability

- Policy that promotes gender equality and women and youth empowerment.
- This policy will help in closing the gender wage gap and also result to 1.2% increment in youth employment within the continent (Songwe, Macleod & Kiringi, 2021).
- Tying the affirmative action policy to the implementation of the objectives of AfCFTA
- Development and implementation of good policy on diversity management
- Workforce adaptability assistance programs/practices

Conclusion

- The current challenge is “weak frameworks for recognition and compatibility of skills, educational qualification and experience across national borders” of member states.
- Developing a strong framework which would harmonize the varying capabilities, different skill-mix and experience will aid the achievement of inclusive work environment and adaptable workforce.
- The implementation of existing policies such as quota system, affirmative action, National Policy on Labour Migration among others together with adherence to the objectives of AFCFTA is capable of arresting the increasing gap of discrimination and exclusion within Nigerian work environment.



Thank you for listening