

Research Article

Workplace Diversity and Organizational Effectiveness: Empirical Insight from Telecom Enterprise

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Abstract

This study fills gap in literature, and make empirical contributions. Dimensions of methodology engaged include survey research design, population (400 employees of a telecom company called Mobile Telephone Network. situated in Lagos State); Taro Yamane's formular (sample 200); questionnaire; simple random sampling; data analyses (SPSS). Results indicate weak positive, but, significant relationship between gender diversity and organizational effectiveness. Outcomes also show strong positive, and significant relationship between cultural diversity and organizational effectiveness. Moreover, results reveal moderate positive, and significant relationship between age diversity and organizational effectiveness. In line with findings, this study concludes that there is statistically significant relationship between workplace diversity and organizational effectiveness in Mobile Telephone Network situated in Lagos State, and Nigeria is its host country. Sequel to findings, the study recommends that the company should consider career development programs to support underrepresented gender, and implement flexible work policies to engage diverse gender.

Keywords: workforce, organizational, empirical, telecom

INTRODUCTION

The existing reports indicate that Mobile Telephone Network (a Telecom Company to which Nigeria serves as a host country), is being proclaimed the largest telecom company in the country. However, organizational effectiveness of telecom companies in Nigeria deserves to be monitored, more so, there is a general belief that telecoms play roles in driving economic development. Accordingly, investigating variables that have relationship with the diversity in telecom industry becomes vital. While benefits of diversity management are obvious in other industries, dearth of insight on gender diversity, cultural diversity, and age diversity management has been preventing Mobile Telephone Network, Lagos State from maximizing improvement and secure competitive edge in highly dynamic and competitive telecom industry.

Darmawan (2024) defined gender diversity as the inclusion and representation of various gender identities, particularly focusing on the differences between men and women in an organizational context. It recognizes not only the physical distinctions but also the psychological and sociocultural experiences that influence how individuals of different genders interact in the workplace. These differences can manifest in various ways, including communication styles, problem-solving approaches, leadership

behaviours, and decision-making. They noted that fostering gender diversity in an organization can foster improvement in decision-making, innovation, and organizational performance by incorporating diverse viewpoints and problem-solving approaches. Additionally, they observed that organizations often face challenges in achieving true gender diversity due to entrenched stereotypes, biases, and cultural norms that influence how individuals perceive and interact with one another. These factors can impact hiring practices, promotions, and overall workplace dynamics. The authors advocate for the implementation of policies and practices that promote an inclusive environment where individuals of all genders feel valued and empowered to contribute their unique perspectives.

Abou-El-Sood (2021) viewed gender diversity as a framework outlining traits and characteristics associated with masculinity and femininity, emphasizing that these roles are socially constructed and evolve over time. They introduce the concept of ‘hegemonic masculinity,’ which refers to the dominant form of masculinity that marginalizes other gender expressions and femininities, characterized by traits such as assertiveness and competitiveness, often rewarded in organizational contexts. In contrast, femininity is typically associated with nurturing and cooperation, which can be undervalued in professional environments. The authors highlighted the intersections of gender with other social categories, including race, class, and sexuality, illustrating that gender identities are complex and contextually shaped.

Ethnic diversity refers to the range of different ethnic groups, cultures, languages, and religions present within an organization (Pitts & Jarry, 2007). It embodies the unique characteristics and perspectives that employees from various backgrounds bring to the workplace. They suggest that a diverse workforce can lead to a rich exchange of ideas and perspectives. AlShebli, et al. (2018) averred that ethnic diversity positively impacts productivity by enhancing employees’ motivation, operational efficiency, job satisfaction, and the quality of goods and services produced. They argued that ethnic diversity can enhance creativity and innovation, as individuals from varied backgrounds contribute unique insights that facilitate problem-solving.

Age diversity encompasses the generational differences among employees in an organization, as well as the distinct values and perspectives associated with each generation. Kunze, Boehm and Bruch (2013) defined age diversity as the variances in age and the resultant implications for workplace dynamics. Individuals typically identify with their generational cohort, regardless of their specific experiences (Fuchs et al., 2024). Waligóra (2024); Bellotti et al. (2022) noted that a generation is composed of individuals born during the same time period who share common attitudes, preferences, and experiences that shape their values, beliefs, and behaviours. Pitts and Jarry (2007) categorized the workforce into six distinct age groups: Traditionalists (born before 1946), Older Boomers (born 1946–1954), Younger Boomers (born 1955–1964), Older Generation X’ers (born 1965–1971), Younger Generation X’ers (born 1972–1980), and Millennial or Generation Y (born after 1980).organizational effectiveness

Furthermore, Kanyika and Hapompwe (2025) highlighted the importance of organizational culture and leadership in determining effectiveness. Their research shows that companies with a strong culture of trust, inclusivity, and shared values tend to outperform those lacking these qualities. The authors argue that transformational leadership styles, which encourage innovation and inspire employees to go beyond their basic responsibilities, are critical for achieving and sustaining effectiveness. This perspective integrates the role of leadership and culture, thus adding another layer to the

definition of effectiveness. Synthesizing these perspectives, it is evident that organizational effectiveness is not a one-dimensional construct. It encompasses various elements, including goal attainment (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004), employee well-being and engagement (Drouvelis & Pearce, 2025). An effective organization, therefore, is one that not only meets its strategic objectives but also fosters a positive work environment, embraces technological advancements, and is guided by strong leadership.

Chepkemoi et al. (2022) indicated that organizations with greater gender diversity tended to perform better, particularly in countries with advanced economies, where there is a stronger emphasis on justice, equality, and inclusivity. Similarly, Razaqat et al. (2022) indicated that gender diversity, in particular, plays a crucial role in driving positive changes, while also strengthening the influence of workplace diversity on organizational strategies and promoting a productive work environment. Furthermore, Khasawneh and Mohammad (2025) reported significant influence of workforce diversity on organizational performance. Diam (2022) found that cultural diversity was indicated having significant impact on organizational performance.

Liu et al. (2023) reported that workforce diversity comes with a specific challenge (interpersonal conflict among the stakeholders). Similarly, Bruk-lee and Spector (2006) highlighted occurrence of conflicts between supervisors and subordinates. Hence, challenges could inhibit effective diversity incorporation, issues such as subconscious biases and employee resistance to diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds could arise. These challenges can create barriers to establishing an inclusive work environment. More so, Shakir and Khalaf (2025) remarked that ethnic diversity can be a natural and positive phenomenon, serving as a source of social, cultural, intellectual, and economic enrichment for the state if managed through appropriate policies and strategies.

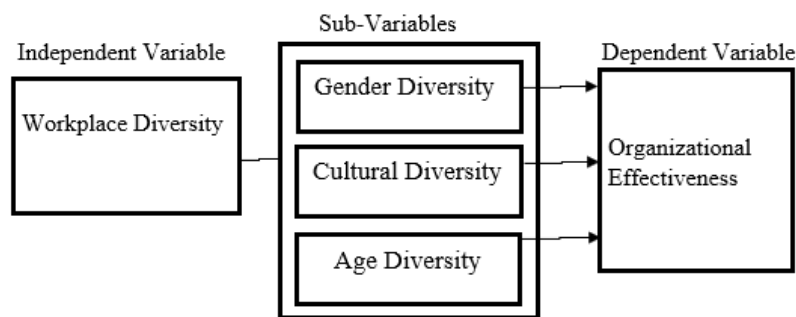
Similarly, AlShebli et al. (2018) reported that ethnic diversity had statistically significant correlation with economic impact. Pitts and Jarry (2007) conducted a test of relationship between ethnic diversity and organizational performance and found that manager diversity is routinely non-significant in predicting organizational performance, while teacher diversity has a consistently significant, and negative, impact on performance. In an investigation by Morales and Marquina (2009), these authors reported that age play a significant role in enhancing the performance of a team in an organization. Moreover, Waligóra (2024) found that age diversity influences organizational identification. More so, Kunze et al. (2013) reported that age serves as a predictor of job performance. Also, Bellotti et al. (2022) argued that age-related diversity affects work-related outcomes.

Notwithstanding the enduring benefits of diversity, there remains a significant gap in understanding the extent of relationship of various dimensions of diversity as relating to efficiency of organizations in the telecom industry, particularly in view of Mobile Telephone Network, Lagos State, Nigeria. Being the largest telecom operator in Nigeria, Mobile Telephone Network serves as most ideal organization to use as case study for this investigation. The company has a very diverse workforce. This study addresses the gap identified above by exploring relationship between (gender diversity, cultural diversity; age diversity) and organizational effectiveness, using Mobile Telephone Network, Lagos State as case study. Knowledge arising from this investigation become useful not only to the management of Mobile Telephone Network, Lagos State, but, also to other players in Nigerian telecom industry.

METHOD

This study adopts survey research design. Population (1,824) for the study comprises employees of Mobile Telephone Network, Nigeria, with a particular focus on those (400 employees, constituting about 22% of Mobile Telephone Network’s total workforce) based in Lagos State. Lagos State, being Nigeria's commercial hub, is home to a substantial portion of Mobile Telephone Network’s workforce. The study adopted convenience sampling technique. Taro Yamane’s formula for sample determination was applied to derive a sample size of 200. The study utilized primary data collected through a questionnaire distributed to Mobile Telephone Network employees in Lagos. A correlation analysis was adopted in testing the hypothesis (see Figure 1).

Figure 1
Conceptual framework



RESULT

The results section presents the findings of the study in a clear, logical, and objective manner, without interpretation. For quantitative studies, include relevant descriptive statistics (e.g., means, standard deviations) and inferential statistics (e.g., t-tests, ANOVA results, regression analyses), along with effect sizes and confidence intervals where appropriate. The result of hypothesis testing is provided in Table 1.

Table 1
Hypothesis testing

	Relationship	B	P-values	Decision
H ₁	Gender Diversity → Organisational Effectiveness	0.295	0.000	Confirmed
H ₂	Cultural Diversity → Organisational Effectiveness	0.614	0.000	Confirmed
H ₃	Age Diversity → Organisational Effectiveness	0.496	0.000	Confirmed

Test of Hypothesis I

The Spearman correlation coefficient between gender diversity and organizational effectiveness is 0.295, which indicates a weak positive relationship. The result is statistically significant ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). Since the p-value is less than the significance level of 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis, which states that gender diversity significantly influences organizational effectiveness in Mobile Telephone Network, Lagos State.

Test of Hypothesis II

The Spearman correlation coefficient between cultural diversity and organizational effectiveness is 0.614, indicating a strong positive relationship. The result is statistically significant ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). Since the p-value is less than the significance level of 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis, which states that cultural diversity significantly influences organizational effectiveness in Mobile Telephone Network, Lagos State.

Test of Hypothesis III

The Spearman correlation coefficient between age diversity and organizational effectiveness is 0.496, indicating a moderate positive relationship. The result is statistically significant ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). Since the p-value is less than the significance level of 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis, which states that age diversity significantly influences organizational effectiveness in Mobile Telephone Network, Lagos State.

DISCUSSION

The first finding indicates a positive correlation between gender diversity and organizational effectiveness in Mobile Telephone Network, Lagos State, with a Spearman correlation coefficient of 0.289 and a p-value of 0.000. Therefore, the hypothesis is supported, demonstrating that gender diversity contributes positively to organizational effectiveness in Mobile Telephone Network, Lagos. This finding aligns closely with the research of Zhang et al. (2020), who also reported that gender diversity has a substantial positive impact on organizational performance. Their study emphasized that organizations with greater gender diversity experience enhanced decision-making, employee engagement, and innovation, all of which contribute to superior performance. Although their research spanned multiple global regions, including developed economies where there is a stronger emphasis on diversity, it implies that gender diversity's benefits are not solely confined to advanced economies, as similar outcomes have been observed in Nigeria.

Chew et al. (2011) further corroborate this finding, showing that gender diversity positively correlates with employee performance across various demographics. Additionally, Ranta and Ylinen (2023) support the positive influence of gender diversity, highlighting how it strengthens workplace inclusivity, decision-making quality, and innovation in Finnish organizations. Although conducted in a specific cultural and national context, the findings resonate with the outcome observed at Mobile Telephone Network, Lagos. Both studies reveal that gender diversity enhances organizational outcomes and aligns with Mobile Telephone Network's effectiveness, suggesting that inclusivity fosters an environment where diverse perspectives enhance productivity.

Also, the second finding shows a positive correlation between cultural diversity and organizational effectiveness in Mobile Telephone Network, Lagos State, with a Spearman correlation coefficient of 0.614 and a p-value of 0.000. Consequently, the hypothesis is strongly supported, emphasizing the vital role of cultural diversity in enhancing organizational effectiveness at Mobile Telephone Network, Lagos. This finding aligns with previous research that links cultural diversity with positive organizational outcomes. For example, Onwuzu and Nnamani (2023) found that ethnic

diversity at Nigerian Breweries positively influenced organizational efficiency, illustrating how a workforce with diverse backgrounds can enhance decision-making processes and boost productivity by bringing in a variety of perspectives and skills. However, as Nyagadza et al. (2022) observed in Zimbabwe, practical barriers like gender wage disparities and conflicting traditional cultural practices can undermine the benefits of diversity. Although their findings underscore the potential challenges in translating diversity into effectiveness, Mobile Telephone Network's significant positive correlation shows that these challenges can be mitigated, especially in environments that support inclusivity and equality. The findings in Mobile Telephone Network are consistent with broader research, emphasizing that cultural diversity can enhance organizational effectiveness when supported by an inclusive culture and effective management practices.

The last hypothesis reveals a positive correlation between age diversity and organizational effectiveness at Mobile Telephone Network, Lagos State, with a Spearman correlation coefficient of 0.496 and a p-value of 0.000. This finding is consistent with previous research on the impact of age diversity on organizational performance. For instance, Kirop and Egessa (2017) found a positive effect of age diversity on organizational performance in Kenya's Elgeyo Marakwet County, highlighting that employees from different age groups contribute to improved productivity and decision-making. Their study suggests that age diversity can be particularly valuable in complex organizational settings where diverse perspectives lead to better outcomes. However, Gellner and Veen (2013) suggested that age diversity can sometimes reduce individual productivity, especially in routine work environments where diverse ages may not necessarily enhance performance. In contrast, Mobile Telephone Network's positive correlation suggests that age diversity is particularly beneficial in the Nigerian telecommunications sector, where the fast-paced and dynamic nature of the industry requires diverse perspectives and adaptability.

Winnie (2008) further supports the positive impact of age diversity, noting that different age groups bring complementary skills to the workplace. Older employees contribute stability and experience, while younger employees bring innovation and adaptability. This synergy can create a more dynamic and effective organizational culture, likely observed at Mobile Telephone Network, where a wide range of perspectives enhances the company's resilience and responsiveness to industry demands. Apparently, significant positive correlation between age diversity and organizational effectiveness at Mobile Telephone Network aligns with broader research, showing that well-managed age diversity enhances organizational performance. This impact is particularly beneficial in dynamic industries, where diverse perspectives drive innovation, responsiveness, and overall organizational success.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study underscores that workplace diversity has a statistically significant relationship with organizational effectiveness at Mobile Telephone Network, Lagos State. By fostering an inclusive environment that embraces diverse gender, cultural, age, and educational backgrounds, organizations can achieve better performance, innovation, and collaboration. In line with these findings, researchers propose recommendations which include, management of Mobile Telephone Network should implement targeted recruitment and mentorship programs to attract and retain employees of diverse genders. This could include initiatives like flexible work policies, gender sensitivity training, and

career development programs tailored to support underrepresented genders. Also, management of Mobile Telephone Network should actively embrace cultural diversity by creating an inclusive work environment. This can be achieved through diversity awareness campaigns, cross-cultural training, and encouraging collaboration among employees from different cultural backgrounds to harness their unique perspectives for organizational growth. In addition, management of Mobile Telephone Network should develop policies that encourage intergenerational collaboration, such as mentorship programs pairing younger and older employees. This fosters knowledge transfer and innovation, ensuring that age diversity becomes a strategic asset for improved organizational effectiveness.

Implication

This research provides new insight on effect of various aspects of workplace diversity including gender, cultural, age, and educational diversity in enhancing organizational effectiveness. Second, by focusing on MTN in Lagos State, the study offers practical insights into managing workplace diversity in the telecommunications industry, helping organizations develop strategies that improve business outcomes and performance. In addition, findings from this study offers practical evidence on the importance of diversity in organizational success. Policymakers can use this data to promote diversity and inclusion within the telecommunications sector and beyond, fostering long-term growth and competitiveness.

Limitation and Future Direction

This study faced the following limitations: First, the study focused solely on Lagos State and MTN thus limiting the generalizability of findings. Second, the use of only questionnaire for data collection did not give room to obtain detailed and elaborate insight from the respondents that would have been obtainable if interviews were combined to arrive at mixed method.

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