

ABSTRACT

This research examined Managing Diversity in Multinational Organization with special reference to Unilever Nigeria Plc. The research adopted survey research design. Data were gathered through primary source with the aid of a well-structured questionnaire. Simple random sampling technique was adopted in the selection of sample, this was used to eliminate biasness in the selection process of the respondents.

Data garnered were presented on table using percentage and the formulated hypotheses were analysed with the use of Chi-square statistical method. The result of the analysis shows that there is no significant relationship between recruitment and diversity management. Also, Communication plays an effective role in managing diversity and there is a correlation between diversity management and organizational productivity.

Based on the conclusion of the analysis, recommendations were proffered to the staff and management of Unilever Nigeria Plc.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Managers are increasingly being asked to boost productivity, quality and customer satisfaction while also reducing costs. These goals can only be met, however, through the cooperation and effort of all employees. By creating positive work environments, where people feel valued and appreciated, organizations are more likely to foster the employee commitment and performance necessary for organizational success.

Considering the following examples by *Kreitner, Kinicki and Buelens (2002)*, which are in contrast with the above statement, taken from three different work environments. “*Ade Arogundade*, a finance manager with Springboard Southward Trust has received racist literature telling him he is not wanted at the organization and has been the subject of

anonymous petition sent to managers demanding that all black employees be removed from the workforce".

Also, a report revealed appalling behaviour in the Dutch police force: "79 percent of female employees had been confronted with pin-ups, 55 percent with "dirty gestures", 38 percent with blue films and 44 percent had the feeling of male colleagues "undressing them with their eyes (Hooghiemstra 1998).

Finally another example cited by *Kreitner et al (2002)* described *Sarah Locker*, "a woman police officer, received pornographic magazines on her desk and literature making derogatory reference to her Turkish background: she decided to take her complaints to court. She won her case, but met even more hostility on her return to work. The episode finally ended in a serious suicide attempt.

Sandra Valentine, a woman pilot claimed that she was told by a male colleague, "Women should not be let loose with anything more technical than a knife and fork. Once a senior pilot had announced to passengers. "The first officer is *Ms. Valentine* and yes, ladies and gentlemen, she is a woman we have then in the front as well as the back these days as, do not blame me".

Managing diversity however is a sensitive potentially volatile and sometimes uncomfortable issue. In Europe, as well as in the USA, creating a diverse workforce is increasingly considered a necessity. *Jitan Patel*, race equality manager with HSBC, a major UK bank, declares "for us the idea is true diversity, which means that we value every individual for who and what they are and we provide them with the opportunities to meet their full potential within the organization.

However, diversity represents the multitude of individual difference and similarities that exist between people (*Kreitner et al, 2002*). This definition underscores three important issues about managing diversity. First, there are many different dimensions or components of diversity. This implies that diversity pertains to everybody. It is not an issue of age, race or gender. It is not an issue of whether one is heterosexual, gay or lesbian; or indeed Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, Celestian or Muslim etc. Diversity also does not pit 'White males' against all other groups. Diversity pertains to the host of individual differences that makes all of us unique and different from others. Secondly, diversity is not synonymous with "differences".

Rather, it encompasses both differences and similarities. This means that managing diversity entails dealing with both simultaneously.

As Price, (2004) puts it, people are different. They vary in gender, culture race, social and psychological characteristics. He affirmed that our attitudes towards their differences could be negative or positive depending upon individual perspectives and prejudices.

As members of organizations, it is difficult to challenge the often sub-conscious actions and elaborately entrenched justifications for unfairness. Not least, because discrimination and prejudice are expressions of power entailing the ability to prevent, inhibit or punish critical comment. Yet, if people are the key assets of a business, it is important to realize the maximum benefit from their human capital. True competitive advantage, requires the best from everyone, without restrictions, it demands a prejudice-free inclusive attitude towards actual and potential employee. It requires diversity.

Nevertheless, fairness, justice, or whatever we call it, it is essential and most companies in general and most multinational firms in particular do not have it. Everybody must be judged on his performance, not on his looks or his manners or his manners or his manners or his personality or whom he knows or is related to (Townsend, 1970). Why should multinational organizations and their managers offer equal opportunities to a diverse range of employees? The judgmental perspectives are indefinable which can be related to different models of Human Resources Management (Goss, 1994). These are Human Capital and Social Justice. Human capital, which artificially blocking the progress of any group results in less than optimal use of an organization's human capital. Discrimination is irrational since it limits the resource value of employees. On the issue of social justice, a moral or ethical interest in social equality, compatible with soft or social market Human Resources Management (HRM). Economic benefits are secondary to this social duty.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Diversity as it is, is a sensitive potentially volatile and sometime unconformable issue. It is therefore not surprising that organization encounter significant problems when trying to move forward with managing diversity directly. The following is a list of the most common problems to implementing successful diversity programmes.

i). Inaccurate stereotypes and prejudice-this problem manifests itself as weaknesses. In

turn, this promotes the view that diversity hiring will mean sacrificing competence and quality.

ii) The problem of ethnocentrism, which represents the feeling that one's culture rules and norms are superior or more appropriate than the rule and norms of another culture.

iii). Poor career planning which is associated with the lack of opportunities for diverse employees to get the type of work assignments that qualify them for senior management positions.

iv) An unsupportive and hostile working environment, which excludes diverse employees from social events and the friendly camaraderie, that takes place in most offices.

v) Fear of reverse discrimination. Some employees believe that managing diversity is a smoke screen for reverse discrimination. This belief leads to very strong resistance because people feel that one person's gain is another's loss.

The need to revamp the organization's performance appraisal and reward system. Performance appraisals and reward system must reinforce the needs to effectively manage diversity. This means that success will be based on a new set of criteria. Employees are likely to resist changes that adversely affect their promotions and financial rewards.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study is aimed at managing diversity in multinational organization. Hence the following are the specific objectives:

i). To determine the techniques that lower costs and improve employees' attitude in multinational organization.

ii) To improve multinational organization's recruiting efforts from enhanced productivity.

iii) To increase group problem solving and productivity.

iv) To increase sales, market share and corporate profits

vi) To deal with those problems encountered in the process of managing diversity and to show the relationship that exists between diversity management and organizational productivity.

1.3 STATEMENT OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

i) What role does communication play in managing diversity effectively?

ii) How can diversity be effectively managed?

iii) Is there any significant relationship between diversity management and multinational organizations?

iv) Can diversity management contribute to multinational organization?

v) Can equal opportunities and the management of diversity be distinguished in any organization?

1.4 STATEMENT OF RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

H1: H_0 : There is no significant relationship between recruitment and diversity management.

H_1 : There is no significant relationship between recruitment and diversity management.

H2 H_0 : Communication does not play an effective role in managing diversity

H_1 : Communication plays an effective role in managing diversity

H3: H_0 : There is no correlation between diversity management and organizational productivity.

H_1 : There is a correlation between diversity management and organizational productivity

1.5 RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

The following segments of this proposal would elaborate on the significance of the study. However, the study emphasizes on the awareness, recognition, understanding and appreciation of human differences.

It revolves around creating an environment in which employees feel valued and accepted. In essence, valuing diversity shows another important factor that entails a cultural change geared towards viewing employee differences as a valuable resource that can contribute to the organization's success. This generally takes place through a series of management education and training programmes that attempt to improve interpersonal relationships between diverse employees and to minimize blatant expressions of sexism and racism.

However, the significance of this study will bring to limelight the inadequate level of magnifying diversity in multinational firms, in general and in Nestle Nigeria Plc in particular, with the hope that this will ginger all parties connected to rise up and correct this anomaly.

The conclusions and recommendations that will be coming out at the end of the study will assist in defining a new method of managing diversity in multinational organizations, with a view to improving the employees' productivity.

The outcome of the study is also expected to go a long way in addressing the problem of individual differences and similarities in the company and in multinational organizations general.

1.6 SCOPE AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study would cover all aspects of organizational performance with particular emphasis on diversity management. It will determine those factors that lowers costs as well as improving organization's recruiting efforts in order to enhance productivity in multinational firms/ organizations.

However, the study is limited to business environment precisely multinational organization, using Unilever Nigeria Plc.

Also data will be collected from all employees in the hierarchy of authority. It is limited to the multinational companies alone.

1.7 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Diversity: This represents the multitude of individual differences and similarities that exist between people.

Managing Diversity: This entails enabling people to perform up to their maximum potential. It focuses on changing an organization's culture and infrastructure such that people provide the highest productivity possible

Affirmative Action: This focuses on achieving equality of opportunity in an organization and it often mandated by national or super national laws.

Recruitment Practices: This focuses on attracting job applicant at all levels who are willing to accept challenging work assignment. This focus is critical because people learn the leadership skills needed for advancement by successfully accomplishing increasingly challenging and responsible work assignment.

Discrimination: This refers to unfair treatment of an individual or group on grounds of their sex or race.

Culture: This is predominant value-system or ethos of an organization usually a mixture of implicit beliefs, values and explicit statement.

Performance Appraisal: The process of assessing the performance of an employee in his job, appraisal can be used for salary review, training, needs analysis and job improvement

plan for example

Management: The process of working with the through others to achieve organizational objectives effectively and ethically.

Diversity management and growth of Unilever Nigeria Plc

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