



## WORKPLACE DIVERSITY: IS IT JINX? A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF INCLUSIVITY ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

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**ABSTRACT: Purpose:** This study aims to investigate workplace diversity. Is this Jinx? Theoretical investigation of the impact of inclusivity on organizational performance. Diversity refers to a wide range of opinions. By contrast, inclusion occurs when all members of a varied community feel a sense of belonging and cultural identity. Empowering each individual and recognizing their unique characteristics are critical for having an inclusive workplace. **Design/methodology/approach:** A comprehensive investigation using a historical approach spanning 2013-2024 was done to generate reliable information concerning the existence or lack of a relationship between the research variables. This research was discovered after reviewing over 150 academic papers from many databases. Of these, 38 were deemed appropriate for our review. **Findings:** The study found that inclusion and workforce diversity have a significant impact on how well a business operates. A lack of diversity and inclusion can make a firm slow and ineffective. This study proposes that organizations should provide opportunities for social networking through social support and good communication to offset the factors contributing to diversity prejudice. **Originality/value:** This review of learning styles was conducted between 2013 and 2024. These inquiries gave rise to the job of persevering and determining whether workforce diversity was a jinx. To the best of the writer's knowledge, no research has looked at the impact of inclusion on organizational performance or whether workplace diversity is the "Jinx."

**KEYWORDS:** Workforce Diversity; Jinx; Inclusivity; Organizational Performance.



## INTRODUCTION

A diverse workforce can be extremely beneficial for increasing the productivity and profitability of enterprises. Adopting an inclusive mindset is comprehensive; however, enforcing workplace diversity guidelines in business contexts may be risky, controversial, and confrontational. The underrepresentation of certain groups in organizational jobs is a serious problem. According to Tanimu (2024), a diversified workforce comprises a wide spectrum of employees. Thus, her success relies heavily on the organization's management's rigorous planning and knowledge utilization (Omale & Gurin, 2024) and commitment to hiring, recognizing, and advancing a diverse workforce. Diversity seeks to leverage these differences to create a productive work environment where individuals are appreciated, their skills are fully utilized, and organizational goals are met.

Organizational culture is important in understanding how individuals behave in different companies (Omale, et al. 2021; Ugwuzor, 2020; Omale, 2016). Diversity in the workplace can manifest in more nuanced ways than just surface-level traits such as socioeconomic status, physical handicap, personality type, race, ethnic importance, and gender. Although variety is frequently connected with contrasts, it can also refer to similarities, particularly those features that people share. Given the current reality that these organizations must face, it is possible to claim that worker diversity can bring both possibilities and challenges to an organization's operations and general functioning.

While individual differences can encourage innovation and increase job satisfaction, they can also be a source of conflict and discontent within organizations (Rijal, 2023). As a result, some corporate executives are unaware of how employees interact with one another, both individually and in groups, and how employee behavior may influence organizational success (Ugwuzor, 2021). When managers lack the requisite abilities or do not understand how to deal with employee diversity, organizational performance suffers.

According to Choi et al.'s (2016) study, diversity has a favorable impact on all parameters, including the innovative climate, employee satisfaction, and staff competency, all of which promote creativity and operational efficiency. The study also investigated the impact of educational diversity on employee competency and innovation climate. Other research showed variations in outcomes. Prasetyo et al. (2021) found a positive association between functional diversity and individual and group performance but a negative correlation with bonus results. As a result, successfully managing the diversity within an organization's personnel is critical to enhancing productivity.

According to Yvette (2023), diversity and inclusion are critical components of the modern workplace because they promote improved decision-making, increased creativity, and higher output. Establishing a diverse and inclusive workplace is challenging, as firms must overcome stereotypes, advance equity, and develop an inclusive culture that recognizes and respects all individuals. Effective diversity management and business process reengineering can foster collaborations and improve organizational performance (Thanseer et al., 2020; Kunda & Mor, 2016; Omale, & Oriaku, 2017).



Similarly, managing diversity is critical for achieving corporate goals, improving efficiency and corporate initiative via strategic knowledge transfer (Omale et al., 2017), making sound judgments, and expanding and developing firms. This holistic approach takes into account a variety of factors that influence an organization's effectiveness, including, but not limited to, job diversity, task and relationship diversity, and demography (Hussain & Farooque, 2021).

According to the literature reviewed, no studies have looked into the impact of inclusion on organizational performance or whether workplace diversity is the "Jinx." Employers should create a healthy and productive workplace that values diversity and inclusion, which would benefit both employees and the company. Thus, the current study's goal is to investigate workplace diversity. Is this Jinx? A theoretical investigation on the impact of inclusivity on organizational performance. A theoretical study seeks to present the most effective ways to improve current processes.

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Behavioral attitudes, diversity and inclusion, perceived behavioral control, individual preferences, and behavioral beliefs can all influence a person's desire to participate in various activities. All of these variables have a significant influence on actual behavior and organizational success (Omale et al., 2024). Gautam (2020) describes workforce diversity as an all-encompassing mix of workers with various human qualities, including racial, cultural, religious, ethnic, and gender components. According to Cletus et al. (2018), workplace diversity refers to the broad range of people who work for a company. These distinctions include complex physical, social, or psychological characteristics that define a person or group, such as gender, race, sexual orientation, and political or religious beliefs. Roberson (2023) described diversity as a fundamental variance among employees within a work unit.

According to this study, democratic opinions, cultural and ethnic inequities, and diversity can manifest in various ways, including gender identity, sexuality, religion, and class. In contrast, inclusion occurs when all members of a diverse group feel included, valued, treated equally, and a part of your culture. Creating an inclusive workplace entail empowering each individual and valuing their unique skills.

De-Meulenaere, Boone, and Buyl (2016) employed panel data estimation methodologies with 5892 organizational observations to investigate the effects of age diversity in Belgium. According to the study's findings, age diversity improves performance in large companies with high job security. Gender diversity boosts business unit performance, according to Badal and Harter's (2014) review of data from over 800 business units in two different organizations in the retail and hotel sectors. However, a survey found that 69% of American executives regarded diversity as a critical concern in 2017, a 32% increase from the previous year. Also, a 2013 survey by the Center for Talent Innovation found that 48% of US organizations with a diverse senior leadership team increased their market share over the preceding year. In comparison, low-diversity management groups' market share climbed by only 33% every year. According to the Harvard



Business Review, diverse firms in the United States generate 19% (percent) more revenue through innovation.

Still, Turi et al.'s (2022) recent research presented two opposing views on diversity. Diversity is considered an asset with the potential to generate creativity and competitive advantage in the workplace, while an opposing viewpoint sees it as a symptom of bias, a restricting factor, and a hindrance to the workings of organizations. Odazie et al. (2024), who researched Diversity and Inclusion: Deploying Technology to Drive Organizational Performance, found a link between organizational performance and the perceived contribution of technology to diversity and inclusion programs. The high agreement proportions in the organizational performance survey indicate that respondents who believe technology can improve D&I outcomes are also more confident in the organization's ability to meet its intended objectives.

According to Mary et al.'s (2023) study in India, firms with employees from various backgrounds perform better. The link between diversity and performance encompasses a wide range of organizational outcomes, including enhanced productivity, greater ability to innovate, and higher levels of employee satisfaction. A varied workforce improves organizational performance by increasing innovation, problem-solving, interpersonal interaction, and production as compared to a homogeneous one.

Even with these benefits, many organizations have been unwilling to diversify their workforces. Wigert (2022) reports that 13,085 American workers have complained about diversity difficulties. This worry may stem from a misunderstanding of what inclusion entails for businesses and how it benefits every area of a firm. Certain firms are experiencing negative consequences as a result of their support for demanding work environments. According to a global poll performed by the Harvard Business Review in February 2021 (Schwartz et al., 2021), 89% of employees thought their work life was worsening, 85% thought their well-being had deteriorated, and 56% said their job obligations had gotten worse.

To emphasize the point, Nigeria has one of the most diverse cultures. This diversity can be attributed to ethnic, religious, geographical, and historical influences. More than 200 million people live in Nigeria. It has around 520 languages, 300 ethnic groups, countless dialects, and many religions. Because of this unique demographic makeup, the challenges of coexistence in organizations as well as the impact of these differences have remained.

Social identity theory, which emerged from 1970s minimal-group studies, can assist organizations in promoting inclusiveness, equity, and respect for social identities. This includes enacting bias-reduction policies, providing diversity training, and fostering a welcoming work atmosphere. This method improves organizational outcomes while leveraging the talents of diverse teams. In an increasingly global market, firms with a diverse workforce are better positioned to serve a wide range of external clients. These groups are more aware of the requirements in terms of legislation, money, education, economy, and culture (Thanseer et al., 2020).

According to a Walker report from 2018, certain organizations have been successful in implementing policies and initiatives that promote workplace diversity and inclusivity. Companies that promote and sustain diversity in the workplace will recruit and retain top talent, as well as



improve customer loyalty. According to the findings, workplace diversity has enhanced productivity; nevertheless, some variables, such as unequal treatment, may make it more difficult to execute the policy and ensure economic success (Thanseer et al., 2020). Rafaqat (2022) claims that there is a strong link between labor diversity and organizational success. However, the study concludes that workforce diversity has a more significant beneficial impact on organizational performance than a negative impact. Furthermore, a diverse staff can be productive if it is balanced properly (Rafaqat 2022).

Diversity alone does not guarantee workforce satisfaction or organizational performance (Oriaku et al., 2022), and it may not result in increased levels of employee engagement. To encourage participation in a diverse workforce, supportive aspects such as an inclusive culture, effective leadership, and information and communication technology development are required (Oriaku et al., 2022). However, having a diverse workforce may not always lead to increased levels of inclusion (Nnabuike & Madu, 2020). According to Balogun (2020), workplace diversity initiatives and aligning diversity policies with specific corporate objectives involve significant effort; unfortunately, there is no roadmap from which to choose. Organizations in underdeveloped countries such as Nigeria frequently face diversity, equity, and inclusion issues. Nigeria has numerous chances to enhance workplace diversity and inclusivity. Akinsanya (2019) thinks that rather than following a Western management trend, it is critical to make the necessary efforts to develop truly extraordinary businesses.

According to Omale et al. (2021), a leader's ability to manage a team and develop a collaborative culture at work are critical variables in determining an organization's effectiveness. For cooperation to be effective, individuals must be emotionally committed and compassionate and address problems as expertly as possible. Organizational performance refers to how well a corporation uses its financial, human, and informational resources to compete in the market. The difference between an organization's actual outputs or achievements and those planned is referred to as organizational performance, often known as goals and objectives. It is a broad notion that incorporates everything that businesses produce, do, and accomplish for the many communities in which they operate.

According to recent studies, a firm might become sluggish and unproductive if it lacks diversity, and vice versa for inclusion and diversity. A varied workforce, on the other hand, increases employee cultural variety, entrepreneurial attitudes, and values (Lamichhane, 2021), as well as innovation, creativity, productivity, and strategic management (Khadka & Sunam, 2018; Omale, 2016; Omale & Idodo, 2016).





## METHODOLOGY

The study's objective is to investigate workplace diversity: Is it Jinx? A theoretical investigation into how inclusion influences organizational effectiveness. Age, gender, culture, color, poverty, and ethnic variety are just a few of the factors that affect workplace diversity. To determine whether there is a link between workforce diversity, inclusion, and organizational success, a critical review of literature from 2013 to 2024 was conducted. It may be difficult to stay current with conventional techniques, remain at the forefront of research, and analyze the body of evidence available in a certain subject of business research.

As a result, the literature review is more valuable than ever as a research tool (Snyder, 2019). More than 150 journal papers from several databases, including Science Direct, Elsevier, and others, were searched to find studies on worker diversity and organizational effectiveness. 38 of the publications were found suitable for this review.

## DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The findings of this study demonstrate that workforce diversity and inclusion have a significant impact on organizational success. A corporation that lacks diversity may become slow and ineffective, and the opposite is true for inclusion and diversity. These data confirm Putnam's (2007) contention that variety, workforce diversity, and inclusivity all have a good relationship, albeit one that is complex. The discovery that inequalities in workforce diversity and inclusion are produced by a variety of equally relevant factors is consistent with other studies, like Putnam's (2007), which emphasizes the importance of other local characteristics connected to diversity, particularly poverty.

The findings of this study were consistent with those of Akpoviroro, Owotutu, and Kadiri's (2018) analysis of the impact of staff diversity on the operational performance of certain frozen fish firms in Nigeria. Ethnic diversity has been demonstrated to have a beneficial and negative impact on firms that specialize in frozen seafood. The findings showed that cultural diversity had an impact on employee behavior and organizational performance in the frozen fish businesses studied. Companies were asked to establish a system that would promote moral behavior among employees and managers at all levels.

Akpakip (2017) discovered a similarly strong positive link between age diversity and employee performance in his study of the impact of workforce diversity on employee performance in Nigeria's banking sector. According to this study, bringing together people from various generations improves an organization's effectiveness.

Furthermore, this study's findings are consistent with those of Akpoviroro, Owotutu, and Kadiri's (2018) analysis of the effects of cultural diversity on the organizational effectiveness of certain frozen fish firms in Nigeria. The sources of information were sought.

The investigation was conducted quantitatively using standardized questionnaires. A stratified random sampling technique was utilized to choose the fifty (50) respondents, who were



management staff from the selected frozen fish enterprises and represented Nigeria's six (6) geographic zones. The questionnaire, which had four items in total—two from each component relevant to the study's objectives—was designed using a Likert scale. Ethnic diversity has been demonstrated to have a beneficial and negative impact on firms that specialize in frozen seafood. The findings showed that cultural diversity had an impact on employee behavior and organizational performance in the frozen fish businesses studied. Companies were urged to establish a system that would support moral behavior among employees and management at all levels.

## **PRACTICAL IMPLICATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE**

This work has numerous practical applications. By learning more about the impact of workforce diversity on organizational performance and thus expanding the body of literature on this topic, which has recently received international attention, the study has demonstrated how diverse workforces and/or organizational behaviors affect worker satisfaction and overall organizational performance. Academic research indicates that having a diverse workforce can help a company accomplish its performance goals. There has been some interest in determining the relationships between employee performance and factors of workforce diversity. A diverse, integrated workforce appears to be more likely to go above and beyond the bare criteria to improve company efficiency.

This research can also help practitioners and organizations enhance performance by ensuring that people, regardless of background, are satisfied with their jobs. Corporate companies, the government, and affiliated agencies can use the study's conclusions to motivate their staff. According to this study, it may be possible to quantify and explain to individuals involved in education the significance of various workforce factors in terms of worker dedication and productivity. The study's findings will assist company leaders in developing HR strategies that promote a diverse and successful staff.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

According to the findings of this study, a firm might become sluggish and unproductive if it lacks diversity, and vice versa for inclusion and diversity. Employees are an organization's most valuable asset, so many firms are constantly seeking new and inventive ways to build a fascinating and functional working environment. Promoting diversity in the workplace is one effective strategy that has various benefits. Creating an inclusive workplace where people feel encouraged to contribute and belong is the foundation of a successful workforce diversity plan.

This is more than just having a diverse workforce; it also entails providing equitable opportunities and creating an environment in which everyone feels welcomed and valued. To mitigate the influence of elements that contribute to diversity prejudice, this study recommends



that the organization promote social networking opportunities through social support and effective communication. This will enable employees to share information and new ideas.

## **LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

To collect data from previously published papers, the study conducted a comprehensive literature review using a secondary data research technique. Future research projects should investigate undertaking an in-depth survey study on the components, as this has the potential to yield fascinating results. Despite the limitations, this paper presents a rigorous theoretical analysis that advances the research design's goal.

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## **Conflicting interest**

There are no competing interests.

## **Data Availability**

The data supporting the research is accessible.

## **Ethical Approval**

The manuscript does not require ethical review because the study does not involve human beings, human data or tissue, or animals.

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## **Metadata**

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