MANAGING WORKPLACE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN NIGERIAN PUBLIC ORGANIZATION: STRATEGIES, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES.

ONUORAH, Onyeka Leo
Department of Political Science, Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna
olonuorah@nda.edu.ng

08037796279
NTAGU, Miracle Promise
Department of Political Science, Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna
pmntagu@nda.edu.ng
08064551670

ABSTRACT

Managing workplace diversity and inclusion is requisite for organisations' continued existence, especially in a globalised world. This study examines the management of workplace diversity and the promotion of inclusion within Nigerian public organizations. The concepts of diversity and inclusion are explored, encompassing various dimensions such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, and more. Theoretical frameworks, including Social Identity Theory (SIT), are applied to understand the dynamics of diversity management, intergroup relations, and identity formation within the context of Nigerian public organizations. Challenges such as cultural differences, religious diversity, gender inequality, lack of inclusive policies, and resistance to change are identified, alongside opportunities for growth and success including increased creativity, enhanced problem-solving abilities, and improved organizational performance. Based on these findings, recommendations are provided, emphasizing leadership commitment, comprehensive diversity training programs, inclusive policies and practices, and the promotion of Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) to foster a culture of inclusion and equitable opportunities for all employees. Overall, this study underscores the importance of diversity and inclusion in Nigerian public organizations and offers insights into effective strategies for managing workplace diversity and promoting inclusion to achieve organizational success.

Keywords: Workplace, Diversity, Inclusion, Public Organization, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria, as Africa's most populous country, boasts a rich tapestry of cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity. With over 250 ethnic groups and numerous languages spoken across its 36 states and Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria presents a unique mosaic of identities and perspectives. This diversity is further compounded by regional variations in socioeconomic development, historical legacies, and geopolitical dynamics (Adebayo, & Agbatogun, 2018). Within the context of Nigerian public organizations, which encompass governmental ministries, departments, agencies, and parastatals, managing this diversity presents both opportunities and challenges. Public sector institutions play a pivotal role in shaping national development agendas, implementing policies, and delivering essential services to citizens. Therefore, ensuring inclusivity and representation within these organizations is not only a matter of social justice but also a strategic imperative for promoting effective governance and sustainable development.

However, despite the cultural richness and diversity of Nigeria, public organizations often struggle to embrace and harness the full potential of their workforce. Issues such as ethnic nepotism, religious biases, tribal favouritism, and regionalism have historically plagued the Nigerian public sector, leading to inefficiencies, inequalities, and social tensions. Moreover, the legacy of colonialism and post-independence governance challenges have contributed to institutionalized barriers that hinder the advancement of marginalized groups and perpetuate exclusionary practices. Human resources are often considered the lifeblood of any organization. They play a crucial role in the success and functioning of a company. Human resources encompasses the people who work for an organization and according to Adegbite and Ibidunni (2020), they are responsible for managing various aspects related to employees, such as recruitment, training, benefits, performance evaluation, and employee relations. Management and inclusion of a diverse workforce have become a critical concern and significant problem in organisations across all sectors. In developing countries such as Nigeria, the benefits of diversity management and inclusion are yet to be fully established, especially in an archetypal public organisation where there is a multicultural workforce.

Despite the cultural richness and diversity inherent in Nigerian society, public organizations in the country continue to grapple with significant challenges related to managing workplace diversity and fostering inclusion. Ojo & Owoyemi (2018) pointed out that these challenges manifest in various forms and have far-reaching implications for organizational effectiveness, employee well-being, and societal cohesion. One of the primary challenges facing Nigerian public organizations is the prevalence of exclusionary practices and a lack of inclusive organizational culture. Deep-rooted biases, stereotypes, and discriminatory attitudes often permeate workplace interactions, hindering the full participation and engagement of employees from diverse backgrounds. Ethnic and tribal tensions represent another significant problem confronting diversity management in Nigerian public organizations. Nigeria's multi-ethnic society is characterized by historical grievances, power struggles, and identity politics, which frequently spill over into the workplace. Competition for resources, promotion opportunities, and decision-making authority along ethnic lines exacerbate inter-group conflicts and undermine cohesion within organizational settings. As a result, public organizations often struggle to cultivate a sense of unity and common purpose among their diverse workforce.

Furthermore, inequitable access to opportunities represents a systemic challenge in Nigerian public organizations. Despite policies aimed at promoting meritocracy and equal opportunity, nepotism, favouritism, and patronage continue to influence recruitment, selection, and career advancement processes (Ogbonnaya & Ukpabi, 2021). Additionally, Nigerian public organizations often lack the institutional support and resources necessary to effectively manage workplace diversity and inclusion. The absence of comprehensive diversity management policies, inadequate training programs, and limited accountability mechanisms impede efforts to create inclusive work environments and address systemic biases. Moreover, the volatile political climate and bureaucratic red tape further complicate diversity initiatives, leaving organizations ill-equipped to navigate the complexities of Nigeria's diverse workforce.

Against this backdrop, there is a growing recognition of the need to prioritize diversity and inclusion (D&I) initiatives within Nigerian public organizations. Efforts to enhance D&I not only align with global trends towards equality and social justice but also reflect Nigeria's aspirations for nation-building, unity, and prosperity. By fostering a culture of inclusivity,

respect, and belonging, public organizations can leverage the talents, perspectives, and experiences of all employees to drive innovation, enhance service delivery, and promote national cohesion. This research seeks to explore the management of workplace diversity and inclusion in Nigerian public organizations, examining the strategies, challenges, and opportunities inherent in this endeavour. By shedding light on the complexities of diversity management within the Nigerian context, this study aims to inform policy interventions, organizational practices, and scholarly discourse on D&I in public sector settings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical perspectives on diversity management provide frameworks for understanding and addressing the complexities of diversity within organizational contexts. Scholars have proposed various theoretical lenses to examine diversity management practices and their effects. Social Identity Theory (SIT) is a widely recognized theoretical framework in social psychology that seeks to explain intergroup behaviour and the formation of group identities. Developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s, SIT posits that individuals categorize themselves and others into social groups based on shared characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or organizational affiliation. These group memberships form an integral part of an individual's self-concept and influence their perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours.

According to SIT, individuals categorize themselves and others into social groups based on salient characteristics. This process of social categorization helps simplify the complex social world by reducing the cognitive load associated with processing individual differences. Once individuals categorize themselves as members of a particular social group, they develop a sense of belonging and attachment to that group. This process of social identification involves adopting the norms, values, and behaviours associated with the ingroup, which enhances one's self-esteem and social identity. SIT highlights the role of intergroup relations in shaping attitudes and behaviours. Intergroup conflicts, competition for resources, and perceived threats to group identity can lead to prejudice, discrimination, and ingroup bias. However, positive intergroup contact and cooperative efforts can reduce prejudice and improve intergroup relations. A further development of SIT, self-categorization theory extends the original framework by emphasizing the dynamic nature of social identity. According to this theory, individuals shift between different levels of identity (e.g., personal identity, social identity) depending on the context, salience of group memberships, and social comparison processes.

Applying Social Identity Theory (SIT) to diversity management in Nigerian public organizations provides a valuable framework for understanding the dynamics of intergroup relations, identity formation, and behaviour within the workplace context. By considering the implications of SIT, organizations can develop strategies to promote inclusivity, reduce intergroup biases, and foster positive intergroup relations. Nigerian public organizations comprise employees from diverse ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds. According to SIT, individuals categorize themselves and others based on these salient social identities. In the context of diversity management, organizations should recognize and celebrate the diverse identities of their employees while also promoting a shared organizational identity that transcends individual differences. By fostering a

sense of belonging and attachment to the organization, employees are more likely to identify with common goals and values, facilitating collaboration and cooperation across diverse groups.

In Nigerian public organizations, intergroup biases and conflicts may arise due to historical, cultural, and socio-political factors. SIT suggests that individuals engage in social comparison processes to maintain a positive social identity by favouring their ingroup over outgroups. To mitigate intergroup biases, organizations can promote positive intergroup contact and cooperation through initiatives such as diversity training, cross-cultural exchanges, and collaborative projects. Okechukwu & Essien (2021) assert that by emphasizing shared goals and fostering mutual respect among employees from different backgrounds, organizations can reduce prejudice and improve intergroup relations. SIT emphasizes the importance of addressing structural inequalities that perpetuate intergroup disparities and exclusion. Nigerian public organizations must examine their policies, practices, and systems to identify and mitigate barriers to inclusion. This may involve implementing diversity-sensitive recruitment and promotion practices, establishing diversity committees or task forces, and creating avenues for employees to voice concerns and provide feedback on diversity-related issues. By addressing systemic inequalities and promoting fairness and equity, organizations can create a more inclusive and supportive work environment for all employees.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Diversity

Diversity is a multifaceted concept that encompasses differences in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, socioeconomic status, and more. Various authors have provided definitions of diversity from different perspectives: according to Robbins and Judge (2019), diversity refers to the presence of individual differences based on a variety of characteristics within a group or organization. They emphasize that diversity includes both visible traits such as race and gender, as well as invisible characteristics like values and attitudes. Cox and Blake (2019) define diversity as the presence of differences among members of a social unit in terms of attributes such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, education, and tenure. They argue that managing diversity involves creating an inclusive environment where these differences are valued and leveraged for organizational success. Gardenswartz and Rowe (2023) define diversity as the full range of similarities and differences among people in society. They stress the importance of recognizing and respecting these differences to create a culture of inclusion where all individuals feel valued and empowered.

Diversity refers to the presence of a wide range of different elements within a group, organization, or society (Johnson, 2021). This can include differences in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, religion, physical abilities, and more. Embracing diversity involves recognizing, respecting, and valuing these differences to create a more inclusive and equitable environment. Diversity, according to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (2021), refers to the similarities and differences among individuals in terms of age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, education, physical abilities, and other attributes. It encompasses the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment.

Embracing diversity involves recognizing the unique perspectives and experiences that each individual brings to the table and leveraging these differences to foster innovation, creativity, and success within organizations. In the context of workplaces and organizations, diversity is often seen as a strength that can lead to increased creativity, innovation, and problem-solving (Thomas, 2022). By bringing together individuals with diverse backgrounds and perspectives, organizations can benefit from a variety of ideas and approaches that can drive success and growth. However, diversity is not without its challenges. To truly harness the benefits of diversity, it is important for organizations to actively promote inclusivity and equity. This may involve implementing policies and practices that support diversity, providing training on unconscious bias and cultural competence, and fostering a culture of respect and openness.

Concept of Inclusion

Inclusion is a multifaceted concept that has been defined and interpreted by various authors within the context of organizational management, education, social sciences, and diversity research. Inclusion refers to the practice of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all students through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education (Johnstone & Muchmore, 2019). Inclusion is characterized by a culture of psychological safety, where every individual feels valued, respected, and able to bring their authentic selves to work. It involves fostering a sense of belonging and acceptance among employees, regardless of their identity or background (Garcia et al., 2021). Inclusion requires systemic change across all levels of an organization, including policies, processes, and practices. It involves dismantling barriers to participation and addressing structural inequalities that perpetuate exclusion and marginalization (Johnson & Williams, 2021).

Brown and Smith, (2021) defined inclusion as a process of cultural transformation within organizations, whereby norms, values, and practices are redefined to embrace diversity and create environments that are welcoming, supportive, and empowering for all individuals. Chen and Wang (2021) stated that Inclusion goes beyond mere representation and encompasses principles of equity and fairness in the distribution of opportunities, resources, and rewards within organizations. It involves creating a level playing field where all employees have equal access to advancement and recognition. Another perspective frames inclusion as requiring systemic change across all levels of an organization. This viewpoint emphasizes the dismantling of barriers to participation and the addressing of structural inequalities that perpetuate exclusion and marginalization. Inclusion, from this perspective, involves reshaping policies, processes, and practices to promote fairness, accessibility, and belonging for all employees (Johnson & Williams, 2021). These diverse perspectives reflect the multifaceted nature of inclusion in the workplace and underscore its significance for organizational culture, employee well-being, and performance. By considering these various conceptualizations, organizations can develop holistic approaches to foster inclusive environments where every individual can thrive and contribute effectively.

Strategies for Managing Workplace Diversity and Inclusion in Nigerian Public Organizations

Diversity and inclusion in the workplace are crucial aspects of organizational success, fostering innovation, creativity, and a positive work environment. In Nigerian public organizations,

managing workplace diversity and promoting inclusion is essential for ensuring equal opportunities for all employees regardless of their background (Ojo, 2019). Several strategies can be implemented to effectively manage diversity and promote inclusion in Nigerian public organizations:

Leadership Commitment: Top management's commitment to diversity and inclusion is crucial for creating a workplace culture that values differences and promotes equality. When leaders actively promote diversity initiatives, they set the tone for the organization and inspire others to embrace inclusivity (Okoli, 2021). By fostering a diverse and inclusive environment, organizations can benefit from a wide range of perspectives, experiences, and ideas, leading to increased innovation, employee engagement, and overall success. To demonstrate a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion, top management should lead by example and champion diversity initiatives within the organization. They should prioritize diversity in hiring practices, provide training on unconscious bias, create inclusive policies and practices, and ensure that all employees feel valued and respected regardless of their background (Adeyemi, 2018). Furthermore, leaders should strive to create a culture that celebrates differences and encourages open dialogue about diversity and inclusion. Smith (2019) opined fostering an inclusive environment where all voices are heard and respected, organizations can cultivate a sense of belonging among employees from diverse backgrounds.

Diversity Training: Diversity training programs for employees play a crucial role in fostering an inclusive and respectful work environment. These programs are designed to raise awareness about different cultures, beliefs, and perspectives, ultimately helping employees develop cultural competence and sensitivity towards others. Through providing employees with the necessary knowledge and skills to navigate diverse environments, organizations can promote understanding, collaboration, and mutual respect among their workforce. One of the key benefits of diversity training programs is that they help employees recognize and appreciate the value of diversity in the workplace.

Through interactive workshops, seminars, and activities, employees can learn about different cultural norms, traditions, and communication styles. This exposure not only enhances their understanding of diverse perspectives but also encourages them to embrace inclusivity and empathy in their interactions with colleagues from various backgrounds. Moreover, diversity training programs can help mitigate unconscious biases and stereotypes that may impact decision-making processes within the organization. By addressing implicit biases through education and reflection, employees can become more mindful of their assumptions and behaviours towards individuals from different cultural backgrounds. This heightened awareness can lead to more equitable treatment, improved communication, and enhanced teamwork across diverse teams.

Inclusive Policies and Practices: Implementing inclusive policies and practices that promote equal opportunities for all employees is crucial in creating a diverse and equitable workplace environment. By ensuring fair recruitment processes, equal pay, flexible work arrangements, and support for work-life balance, organizations can foster a culture of inclusivity and provide a level playing field for all employees. Fair recruitment processes are essential in ensuring that all candidates are given equal opportunities to compete for job positions based on their qualifications and skills, rather than factors such as gender, race, or ethnicity. Organizations

should strive to eliminate bias in recruitment by implementing standardized procedures and training hiring managers on diversity and inclusion (Smith, & Johnson, 2020). Equal pay is another key aspect of promoting equality in the workplace. Organizations need to ensure that employees are compensated fairly for their work, regardless of their gender or other characteristics. Pay equity policies can help address wage gaps and promote a more equitable distribution of compensation within the organization (Williams & Lee, 2019).

Employee Resource Groups: Establishing employee resource groups (ERGs) based on common interests or backgrounds is a valuable strategy for fostering a sense of community and inclusivity within an organization. These groups provide employees with a platform to connect, share experiences, and support each other in both personal and professional capacities. By creating a space where individuals with similar backgrounds or interests can come together, ERGs contribute to a more inclusive workplace culture. Additionally, ERGs can serve as advisors to management on diversity and inclusion issues, offering insights and recommendations that can help shape organizational policies and practices (Mor Barak et. al, 2019). Employee resource groups play a crucial role in promoting diversity and inclusion within companies. They provide a safe space for employees to discuss their experiences, challenges, and successes, ultimately fostering a sense of belonging and support within the organization. Furthermore, ERGs can offer valuable perspectives to management on how to create a more inclusive work environment that celebrates diversity (Oyejide, 2020).

Challenges in Managing Workplace Diversity and Inclusion in Nigerian Public Organizations

Managing workplace diversity and inclusion in Nigerian public organizations presents several challenges due to the country's diverse cultural, ethnic, and religious composition. These challenges can hinder organizational effectiveness, employee satisfaction, and overall productivity. Some of the key challenges in managing workplace diversity and inclusion in Nigerian public organizations include:

Cultural Differences: Nigeria is a country located in West Africa known for its rich cultural diversity, with over 250 ethnic groups, each possessing unique languages, customs, and traditions. This diversity presents both opportunities and challenges when managing a workforce with such varied cultural backgrounds. Misunderstandings, conflicts, and communication barriers can arise if not properly addressed and managed. In Nigeria, the major ethnic groups include the Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, Igbo, and Ijaw, among others. Each of these groups has its own distinct language, cultural practices, and social norms. When individuals from these diverse backgrounds come together in a workplace setting, differences in communication styles, work ethics, and approaches to problem-solving may lead to misunderstandings and conflicts..

Religious Diversity: Nigeria is a country located in West Africa known for its religious diversity, with a significant Muslim and Christian population. This diversity can sometimes lead to tensions in the workplace if not managed effectively. Islam and Christianity are the two dominant religions in Nigeria, with Muslims making up about half of the population and Christians comprising nearly half as well. The coexistence of these two major religions has historically led to occasional tensions and conflicts, particularly in regions where the two communities intersect. In the workplace, these religious differences can manifest in various ways,

such as conflicts over prayer times, dress codes, or holidays. Employers need to be aware of these potential issues and implement policies that promote respect and understanding among employees of different religious backgrounds.

Gender Inequality: Gender inequality in Nigerian public organizations remains a significant issue, with women frequently encountering discrimination and limited opportunities for career progression. Despite efforts to promote gender equality in the workplace, women continue to face challenges such as unequal pay, limited access to leadership positions, and cultural biases that hinder their professional advancement. One of the key factors contributing to gender inequality in Nigerian public organizations is the persistence of traditional gender roles and societal norms that prioritize men's roles in leadership and decision-making positions. Additionally, women often face barriers such as lack of access to education and training opportunities, as well as discriminatory practices that limit their ability to advance in their careers. Furthermore, institutional policies and practices within Nigerian public organizations may also perpetuate gender inequality by favouring male employees over their female counterparts. This can manifest in various forms, including biased recruitment and promotion processes, unequal pay scales, and limited support for work-life balance initiatives that disproportionately affect women.

Lack of Inclusive Policies: In Nigeria, many public organizations struggle with implementing inclusive policies and practices that promote diversity and inclusion within their workforce. This lack of inclusivity can lead to a hostile work environment for minority groups, hindering their professional growth and overall well-being. One of the primary reasons for this issue is the historical and cultural context of Nigeria, where societal norms and biases can influence organizational practices. Additionally, there may be a lack of awareness or understanding among leadership about the importance of diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Without proper policies and practices in place, minority groups may face discrimination, exclusion, and limited opportunities for advancement within these organizations.

Resistance to Change: Implementing diversity and inclusion initiatives in Nigerian public organizations can indeed be met with resistance from employees who may be resistant to change or uncomfortable with embracing diversity. This resistance can stem from various factors such as fear of the unknown, lack of understanding of the benefits of diversity, unconscious bias, or even a sense of threat to one's position within the organization. In Nigeria, where cultural norms and traditions play a significant role in shaping societal attitudes, introducing diversity and inclusion initiatives in public organizations can face challenges. Some employees may resist these initiatives due to ingrained beliefs or prejudices, while others may simply be hesitant to step out of their comfort zones. Additionally, organizational structures and leadership styles that do not prioritize diversity and inclusion can further exacerbate resistance among employees.

Opportunities in Managing Workplace Diversity and Inclusion in Nigerian Public Organizations

Managing workplace diversity and inclusion in Nigerian public organizations presents numerous opportunities for growth, innovation, and success. Diversity refers to the presence of differences among individuals in an organization, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, and physical abilities. Inclusion, on the other hand, involves creating

a supportive and respectful environment where every individual feels valued and can fully contribute to the organization's goals and objectives. This study puts forward the following as opportunities in managing workplace diversity and inclusion in Nigerian public organizations:

Increased Creativity and Innovation: Embracing diversity in the workplace can lead to increased creativity and innovation. When employees from different backgrounds come together, they bring unique perspectives and ideas to the table. This diversity of thought can spark creativity and drive innovation within the organization.

Enhanced Problem-Solving Abilities: A diverse workforce can indeed enhance problem-solving abilities within an organization by bringing together individuals with varied backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. When employees with different cultural, educational, and professional backgrounds collaborate, they are likely to approach challenges from various angles, leading to more effective and comprehensive solutions. This diversity of thought can foster creativity, innovation, and critical thinking within the organization, ultimately improving problem-solving capabilities.

Improved Employee Engagement and Retention: Creating an inclusive work environment where all employees feel valued and respected can improve employee engagement and retention rates. When employees feel included and appreciated, they are more likely to be motivated, productive, and committed to their work.

Better Decision-Making: Diversity in the workplace has been recognized as a crucial factor in improving decision-making processes within organizations. When a diverse group of individuals is involved in decision-making processes, it brings together a variety of perspectives, experiences, and ideas that can lead to more well-rounded and informed decisions.

SUMMARY

The study explores the concepts of diversity and inclusion within the context of Nigerian public organizations, focusing on the challenges, opportunities, and strategies for managing workplace diversity and promoting inclusion. Diversity is defined as the presence of differences among individuals based on various characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, and more. Inclusion, on the other hand, refers to creating a supportive and respectful environment where every individual feels valued and can fully contribute to organizational goals. Theoretical frameworks such as Social Identity Theory (SIT) are applied to understand the dynamics of diversity management, intergroup relations, and identity formation within Nigerian public organizations. SIT emphasizes the role of social categorization, social identification, and intergroup relations in shaping attitudes and behaviors towards diversity.

The study identifies several challenges in managing workplace diversity in Nigerian public organizations, including cultural differences, religious diversity, gender inequality, lack of inclusive policies, and resistance to change. Despite these challenges, there are significant opportunities for growth and success, including increased creativity and innovation, enhanced problem-solving abilities, improved employee engagement and retention, better decision-making,

greater market reach, enhanced reputation and brand image, compliance with legal requirements, and overall organizational performance. Strategies for managing workplace diversity and inclusion in Nigerian public organizations include leadership commitment, diversity training, inclusive policies and practices, employee resource groups, and addressing structural inequalities. By implementing these strategies, organizations can create inclusive work environments that foster innovation, engagement, and organizational success. Overall, the study highlights the importance of diversity and inclusion in Nigerian public organizations and provides insights into effective strategies for managing workplace diversity and promoting inclusion to achieve organizational success.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, managing workplace diversity and inclusion in Nigerian public organizations presents both challenges and opportunities. By recognizing the importance of diversity and inclusion, addressing systemic barriers, and implementing effective strategies, organizations can create inclusive work environments that foster innovation, engagement, and organizational success. Through leadership commitment, diversity training, inclusive policies, and leveraging the benefits of diversity, Nigerian public organizations can position themselves as leaders in promoting diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the recommendations below were profrred for managing workplace diversity and promoting inclusion in Nigerian public organizations are:

i. Senior management of Nigerian public organisations should demonstrate a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion by visibly championing initiatives, allocating resources, and holding themselves and others accountable for progress.

ii. There is a need to implement comprehensive diversity training programs for all employees, including senior management, HR personnel, and frontline staff. These programs should focus on raising awareness about unconscious bias, cultural competence, inclusive leadership, and effective communication across diverse backgrounds.

iii. There is a need for Nigerian public organisation top management to encourage the formation of Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) or affinity networks that provide support, networking opportunities, and advocacy for employees from diverse backgrounds.

iv. There is a need for Nigerian public organisations to develop and implement inclusive policies and practices that promote equal opportunities, fair treatment, and respect for all employees. This includes fair recruitment and promotion processes, equal pay, flexible work arrangements, support for work-life balance, and accommodations for individuals with disabilities or special needs.

REFERENCES

Adebayo, S. B., & Agbatogun, F. A. (2018). *Managing diversity for organizational effectiveness in Nigeria*. In T. K. Ojokuku, A. A. Oyeniyi, & A. J. Idowu (Eds.), Strategic Management and Leadership for Systems Development in Emerging Markets (pp. 189-209). IGI Global.

Adegbite, A. E., & Ibidunni, A. S. (2020). Workplace diversity management and employees' performance in Nigerian tertiary institutions. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, 28(1), 157-173.

Adeyemi, O. (2018). Diversity Management in Nigerian public sector. Abuja: Print (Book)

Brown, A., & Smith, J. (2021). Redefining Inclusion: A Cultural Transformation Perspective. *Journal of Diversity Management*, 16(2), 45-58.

Chen, L., & Wang, Y. (2021). Toward Equity and Inclusion: Reconceptualizing definitions and measures. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 32(6), 1297-1315.

Cox, T., & Blake, S. (2019). Managing cultural diversity: Implications for organizational competitiveness. *Academy of Management Executive*, 5(3), 45-56.

Garcia, M., et al. (2021). Inclusion as psychological safety and belonging: A multidimensional framework. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 42(3), 301-320.

Gardenswartz, L., & Rowe, A. (2023). Diverse teams at work: Capitalizing on the power of diversity. *Society for Human Resource Management Foundation.*

Johnson, A. G. (2021). "*Diversity.*" In The SAGE Encyclopedia of Social Science Research Methods. SAGE Publications.

Johnson, R., & Williams, K. (2021). Inclusion in practice: strategies for systemic change. *Human Resource Management Review*, 31(1), 100790.

Johnstone, C. J., & Muchmore, J. A. (2019). Revisiting inclusive education: Examining implementation, international perspectives, and controversies. *Education and Treatment of Children*, 42(3), 265-293.

Mor Barak, M. E., Travis, D. J., Pyun, H., & Xie, B. (2019). The promise of diversity management for climate of inclusion: a state-of-the-art review and meta-analysis. Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance, 33(2-3), 217-249.

National Association of Colleges and Employers (2021). Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. https://www.naceweb.org/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/

Nwankwo, Godwin. (2018). Strategies for managing workplace diversity in Nigeria." *International Journal of Business Management*, 15 (3), 112-128.

Nweke, A. E., & Ezejiofor, R. A. (2019). Managing diversity in Nigeria: the role of the civil service. *African Journal of Management Research*, 5(1), 1-17.

Obasan, K. A., & Akinlolu, A. O. (2016). Managing workplace diversity: A study of Nigerian public Service. *International Journal of Advanced Academic Researchm Social Sciences* and Humanities, 2(12), 78-95.

Ogbonnaya, U., & Ukpabi, D. C. (2021). Managing diversity and organizational performance in the Nigerian banking industry: the mediating role of innovation. *Journal of African Business*, 22(1), 89-112.

Ojo, A. (2019). Promoting workplace inclusion in Nigerian public rganizations. Journal of African Public Administration, vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 45-62.

Ojo, O. A., & Owoyemi, O. J. (2018). Diversity management practices and organizational effectiveness in Nigerian banking sector. *Journal of African Business*, 19(3), 317-337.

Okechukwu, C. E., & Essien, E. A. (2021). Managing diversity for organizational effectiveness: A study of selected Nigerian organizations. *Journal of Diversity Management*, 8(1), 35-44.

Okoli, C. (2021). Managing Diversity in Public Organizations. Lagos: Print

Oyejide, T. A. (2020). Organizational strategies for managing workplace diversity in Nigeria. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 4(3), 189-196.

Robbins, S. P., & Judge, T. A. (2019). Organizational behaviour (18th ed.). Pearson Education.

Smith, A. (2019). "Creating a Culture of Inclusion: The Importance of Leadership Commitment." Harvard Business Review, vol. 78, no. 4, pp. 56-67.

Smith, J., & Johnson, A. (2020). Promoting inclusivity in the workplace: strategies for success." *Journal of Diversity Management*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 45-60.

Smith, T., & Jones, R. (2021). Inclusion in the workplace: moving beyond representation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 106(5), 753-769.

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). *An integrative theory of intergroup conflict*. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (pp. 33–47). Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Thomas, R. (2022). *Diversity in Organizations*. In The Oxford Handbook of Organizational Psychology: Volume 2: Macro Approaches. Oxford University Press.

Williams, K., & Lee, C. (2019). Flexible work arrangements: A win-win solution for employers and employees. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 30 (3), 187-202.