

# An Assessment Of Gender And Ethnic Diversity Management On Organisational Performance: A Study Of National Assembly Service Commission, Abuja, Nigeria

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*Abstract: This study examined the effect of diversity management on organisational performance within the National Assembly Service Commission in Abuja, Nigeria, with the specific objective of analysing how gender and ethnic diversity management practices influence institutional outcomes. A total of 361 questionnaires were distributed across departments within the Commission, and 345 valid responses were retrieved, providing robust and representative primary data for the analysis. Structural Equation Modelling using STATA 17 was employed to evaluate the hypothesised relationships between each diversity management dimension and organisational performance. The results revealed that gender diversity management exerts a strong and statistically significant positive effect on organisational performance, recording a coefficient of 0.4424, a Z-score of 10.42, and a p-value of 0.000. This confirms that equitable gender inclusion, balanced representation across departments and leadership roles, and fairness in both recruitment and promotion processes substantially enhance productivity and institutional effectiveness within the Commission. Ethnic diversity management, by contrast, exhibited a negative and statistically insignificant effect on organisational performance, recording a coefficient of negative 0.0797 and a p-value of 0.163. This finding suggests that the current approach to managing ethnic diversity within the National Assembly Service Commission is inadequate and may be actively undermined by persistent ethnic bias, limited cultural integration among staff, and weak inclusion mechanisms that prevent the potential benefits of ethnic diversity from materialising in practice. The study concludes that gender diversity management significantly enhances organisational performance at the Commission, while ethnic diversity management requires substantially improved managerial strategies and institutional commitment to unlock its considerable potential value. The findings make an original empirical contribution to the literature by applying context-sensitive diversity measurement scales, rigorous validity and reliability checks, and an integrated SEM framework within a politically structured public institution in Nigeria that has received limited prior research attention.*

*Keywords: gender diversity management, ethnic diversity management, organisational performance, National Assembly Service Commission, structural equation modelling*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria presents a particularly challenging and complex context for organisational performance in the public sector.

Despite being Africa's largest economy by GDP, the country continues to grapple with governance inefficiencies, ethnic and religious tensions, institutionalised corruption, and security concerns, all of which undermine institutional

effectiveness and reduce the overall quality of public service delivery (Adebayo, 2020). Organisations in Nigeria's public sector have been widely criticised for low productivity, limited accountability, inadequate technological adoption, and weak leadership structures that perpetuate institutional inertia rather than driving the continuous improvement that citizens and stakeholders require.

Nigeria's unique socio-cultural environment, with over 250 ethnic groups, multiple religious traditions, and deeply diverse cultural backgrounds, creates additional complexity for public organisations that must recruit from and serve this diverse national population. Managing workforce diversity in this context becomes a central strategic and operational issue that directly shapes organisational outcomes at every level. Diversity management, defined as a systematic and planned approach to recognising, valuing, and leveraging workforce differences including gender, ethnicity, religion, educational background, and professional experience for organisational success (Cox, 2001), has emerged in recent years as a critical lever for institutional performance improvement in both developed and developing country contexts. When effectively managed, diversity reduces workplace conflict, builds genuine inclusiveness, and enhances employee commitment to institutional goals. Conversely, poorly managed diversity fosters discrimination, workplace hostility, and operational inefficiency, all of which measurably reduce organisational performance. The National Assembly Service Commission, as the administrative arm supporting Nigeria's legislature, mirrors these national complexities in microcosm. This study investigates the effect of gender and ethnic diversity management on organisational performance at NASC, contributing empirical evidence from a politically structured public institution that has received very limited dedicated research attention in the existing diversity management literature.

#### A. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Despite various policy efforts to promote diversity within public organisations like NASC, performance challenges related to inclusion and equitable representation persist. Weak diversity policies, ethnic favouritism in appointments and promotions, and inadequate gender inclusion mechanisms continue to limit the Commission's institutional effectiveness and undermine staff morale. The absence of robust empirical evidence on how specific diversity dimensions, particularly gender and ethnic diversity management, affect organisational performance in Nigeria's legislative support institutions represents a significant and practically important gap that this study seeks to address.

#### B. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What is the effect of gender diversity management on organisational performance at the National Assembly Service Commission? To what extent does ethnic diversity management affect organisational performance at NASC?

#### C. OBJECTIVES

To examine the effect of gender diversity management on organisational performance in NASC. To investigate the effect of ethnic diversity management on organisational performance at NASC.

#### D. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

HO1: Gender diversity management has no significant effect on organisational performance at NASC.

HO2: Ethnic diversity management has no significant effect on organisational performance at NASC.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Organisational performance is a multifaceted concept that reflects how effectively an organisation achieves its stated strategic goals and responds to both internal operational demands and external stakeholder expectations. Recent scholarly work defines performance not exclusively in financial terms but also through a range of non-financial indicators including customer satisfaction, employee commitment, capacity for innovation, sustainability practices, and operational efficiency (Taskan et al., 2022; Moumin, 2024). This broader conceptualisation acknowledges that organisations operate in dynamic and complex environments where sustainable value generation depends on multiple and sometimes competing stakeholder groups. In public sector contexts specifically, non-financial measures such as service quality, institutional compliance, responsiveness, and social relevance frequently carry greater weight in performance assessment than financial returns alone (Moumin, 2024).

### B. GENDER DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

Gender diversity encompasses the equitable presence, meaningful participation, and genuine empowerment of individuals across the full spectrum of gender identities within an organisation (Speechley et al., 2024). Contemporary scholarly discourse on gender diversity acknowledges that numerical parity, while necessary, serves as an insufficient benchmark on its own. True and productive gender inclusion materialises only when structural barriers to advancement are identified and dismantled, gender stereotypes are actively challenged through leadership and policy, and the voices of all genders are deliberately solicited and integrated into decision-making at all levels (World Economic Forum, 2025). The strategic imperative for organisations to embrace gender diversity is grounded in empirical evidence demonstrating a consistent positive correlation between inclusive gender management practices and enhanced innovation capacity, superior problem-solving, and stronger institutional performance outcomes (WEF, 2025; Shore et al., 2022). McKinsey and Company (2020, 2023) consistently found that organisations in the top quartile for gender diversity were significantly more likely to achieve above-average

profitability and performance outcomes compared to less gender-diverse peers.

### C. ETHNIC DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

Ethnic diversity denotes the coexistence and productive interaction of multiple ethnic groups within a defined organisational context, encompassing distinct cultural practices, languages, historical narratives, and identity markers that shape individuals' worldviews and their group affiliations at work (Anderson and Jackson, 2023). Theoretical approaches to understanding ethnic diversity draw substantially on social identity theory, which explains the psychological mechanisms through which individuals categorise themselves into in-groups and out-groups, often leading to in-group favouritism, intergroup competition, and the marginalisation of those perceived as belonging to the out-group (Nguyen and Chen, 2023). In the Nigerian public sector context, the risks associated with poorly managed ethnic diversity are particularly acute. Ibrahim and Musa (2021) observed that ethnic favouritism and regional bias in appointment and promotion decisions negatively affect employee motivation and individual productivity in federal agencies. Eze and Olanrewaju (2022) found that ethnic diversity without proper cultural integration strategies reduces organisational synergy and inhibits collaborative working within Nigerian public institutions. Conversely, Akinola and Adeoye (2023) found that when genuinely inclusive practices support equitable representation and cross-ethnic teamwork, ethnic diversity can positively enhance both innovation and service delivery quality.

## III. METHODOLOGY

### A. RESEARCH DESIGN

The study adopted a survey research design, which enabled the collection of primary data directly from respondents on their perceptions, experiences, and daily practices relating to diversity management and organisational performance at NASC. A structured questionnaire served as the primary instrument for data collection, generating standardised and comparable responses that facilitated systematic quantitative analysis and formal hypothesis testing (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

### B. POPULATION AND SAMPLE SIZE

The study population consisted of all 3,720 staff of the National Assembly Service Commission in Abuja, drawn from management, senior, and junior cadres across the Commission's various departments and administrative units. Taro Yamane's formula was applied to determine the appropriate sample size from this target population at a 0.05 level of significance, yielding a required sample of 361 respondents. A total of 361 questionnaires were distributed and 345 valid responses were successfully retrieved, representing a 95.6 percent response rate. The sample was designed to cover different staffing cadres and demographic

groups to ensure broad representativeness, consistent with prior diversity management studies suggesting that samples above 200 respondents provide sufficient statistical power for structural equation modelling (Kline, 2016).

### C. DATA ANALYSIS

Structural Equation Modelling using STATA 17 was employed to evaluate the hypothesised relationships between the diversity management dimensions and organisational performance. SEM was selected for its demonstrated capacity to simultaneously assess multiple relationships between latent and observed variables while accounting for measurement error, making it particularly appropriate for the analysis of complex multi-dimensional constructs like diversity management across different organisational levels. Validity checks including convergent validity and discriminant validity were conducted prior to hypothesis testing, and reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with all constructs returning coefficient values above the accepted 0.70 threshold.

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. GENDER DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE

The empirical findings confirmed the study's a priori expectation that gender diversity management would have a significant positive effect on organisational performance at NASC. The SEM results showed that gender diversity management exerts a strong and statistically significant positive effect on organisational performance, recording a coefficient of 0.4424, a Z-score of 10.42, and a p-value of 0.000. This result indicates that equitable gender inclusion, balanced representation across departments and leadership positions, and demonstrated fairness in recruitment, promotion, and career development processes substantially enhance productivity, institutional cohesion, and overall effectiveness within the Commission. The null hypothesis  $H_0$  is therefore rejected.

This finding implies that when both male and female employees are fairly represented and equally empowered within the organisation, teamwork quality, creative problem-solving, and the quality of decision-making all improve, fostering a more innovative and genuinely collaborative working environment. The result supports Social Identity Theory, which emphasises that inclusive practices reduce inter-group bias and improve collective cohesion, and is consistent with the Resource-Based View of strategic management, which positions diverse human resources as strategic assets that strengthen organisational resilience and competitive performance. It is also consistent with Akinola and Chukwu (2023), who reported superior performance outcomes in gender-diverse Nigerian public institutions, and with Ahmed and Bello (2022), who found that gender-balanced leadership enhances communication quality, organisational creativity, and measurable productivity outcomes in Nigerian government agencies.

## B. ETHNIC DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE

The empirical findings for the second hypothesis contradicted the a priori expectation. The SEM analysis revealed that ethnic diversity management has a negative and statistically insignificant relationship with organisational performance at NASC, recording a coefficient of negative 0.0797, a Z-score of negative 1.39, and a p-value of 0.163. Since the p-value substantially exceeds the 0.05 significance threshold, the null hypothesis HO2 is not rejected. This indicates that ethnic diversity, as it is currently being managed within the Commission, does not contribute significantly to enhancing organisational performance and may in fact be associated with marginal negative effects on institutional outcomes.

This finding suggests that challenges including persistent ethnic bias in appointment and promotion decisions, the favouring of co-ethnic staff members, or simply the absence of deliberate and well-resourced inclusion mechanisms are limiting the potential benefits that a genuinely well-managed ethnically diverse workforce could deliver. The result aligns with Social Identity Theory's consistent warning that when group identification along ethnic lines becomes stronger than employees' identification with the organisation as a whole, it produces inter-group divisions and reduced collaborative behaviour that negatively affects performance. It is consistent with Eze and Olanrewaju (2022), who found that ethnic diversity without proper integration strategies reduces organisational synergy in Nigerian public institutions, and with Ibrahim and Musa (2021), who observed that ethnic favouritism negatively affects both employee motivation and individual productivity in federal agencies.

## V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. CONCLUSION

This study assessed the effect of gender and ethnic diversity management on organisational performance within the National Assembly Service Commission. The findings confirm that gender diversity management plays a vital and statistically demonstrable role in enhancing organisational performance at NASC. Its strong and significant positive effect indicates clearly that when gender inclusion, equitable representation, and genuine fairness in human resource processes are actively promoted and embedded in institutional practice, they foster collaboration, creativity, and measurably improved overall productivity. In contrast, ethnic diversity management does not significantly influence organisational performance at NASC in its current form. The negative and statistically insignificant effect observed suggests that the current approach to managing ethnic diversity is inadequate and that persistent issues such as subtle ethnic bias, insufficient cultural integration among staff groups, and weak formal inclusion practices are actively preventing the potential benefits of Nigeria's rich ethnic diversity from being realised within the institution.

### B. RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ NASC should further and actively promote gender-balanced recruitment at all levels, equitable career advancement opportunities across departments, and genuinely unbiased representation of women in decision-making roles and leadership committees. Gender-inclusive work policies including gender-sensitive leadership development programmes, robust anti-discrimination frameworks with clear enforcement mechanisms, and formal mentorship platforms should be institutionalised to reinforce and sustain the significant performance gains associated with effective gender diversity management.
- ✓ NASC should substantially strengthen its ethnic inclusion strategies by implementing comprehensive anti-bias sensitisation programmes for all staff and managers, enforcing equal-opportunity policies with transparent accountability mechanisms, promoting deliberate multi-ethnic team collaboration in project assignments and departmental work, and ensuring the fair representation of all major ethnic groups in senior committees and leadership positions. Transparent communication strategies should be formally adopted to minimise the well-documented perceptions of ethnic favouritism that this study finds are currently limiting the potential performance contribution of the Commission's ethnic diversity.
- ✓ Future research should adopt mixed-method approaches combining both quantitative and qualitative methods, as well as longitudinal research designs capable of tracing the long-term effects of sustained improvements in ethnic diversity management on organisational performance at NASC and in comparable public institutions across Nigeria.

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