INFLUENCE OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF MTN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The influence of diversity and inclusion (D&I) on organizational performance has become a critical area of study in today's competitive and globalized business environment. This research explore the dimensions of religion and ethnicity as a measure of D &I, and employee productivity and motivation to measure organizational performance. The study adopts a quantitative approach, collecting data through structured questionnaires distributed to 225 employees from MTN Nigeria in Taraba State. Using Pearson correlation analysis, the study investigates the relationships between religion, ethnicity, and employee outcomes. The results reveal significant positive correlations between religion and employee productivity (r = 0.731, p < 0.05), as well as employee motivation (r = 0.536, p < 0.05). Similarly, ethnicity was found to have a strong positive relationship with both employee productivity (r = 0.909, p < 0.05) and motivation (r = 0.490, p < 0.05). These findings suggest that fostering diversity and inclusive policies and programs can significantly enhance organizational performance by boosting employee engagement,

productivity, and motivation. The study concludes that organizations prioritizing D&I, particularly by cultivating inclusive policies, are better positioned to thrive in a dynamic market. The study therefore, recommended that government and firms should build an ethnically inclusive work culture through diversity training and cross-cultural teamwork, foster a unified organizational identity to enhance employee loyalty and reduce turnover.

1.0 Introduction

This study seeks to evaluate the impact of diversity and inclusion (D&I) in the current globalizing and competitive business world. In the context of promoting diversity, diversity means having people of different genders, ethnicities, ages, cultural backgrounds, and abilities (Nishii and Mayer 2020). While diversity acknowledges that these individuals are different and unique, inclusion assures that they are welcomed and appreciated within an organization to perform their optimum in their work tasks (Roberson & Perry, J. L. 2022). The outreach of diversity and inclusion in organizational performance has recently been of particular interest. Based on our literature review, companies with dedication to D&I ensure that they receive more innovation, better decision making, and increased employee satisfaction (Dueland, L. J. B. 2023; Mor Barak, et al., 2016). Given that, a diversified workplace introduces different ideas that allow businesses to be more responsive to change within markets across the globe (Ajgaonkar et al., 2022). Diversity means that everyone within the organization is encouraged to contribute ideas and talents towards the betterment of the company; thus, operational performance is improved by diversity (McKinsey & Company, 2020). Companies that adopt D&I have not only a heightened competitive edge but also enhance their companies' reputation and comprehensive customer relationships (Dara, F. 2022). However, the question then turns to how to successfully manage diversity and inclusiveness to gain the most benefit. Based on the above facts, the general objective of the study is to determine the influence of diversity and inclusion on organization's performance in MTN Nigeria. The study seeks to achieve the following specific objectives:

i. To determine the relationship between religion and employee productivity in the MTN, Nigeria.

ii. To determine the relationship between religion and employee motivation in MTN Nigeria.

iii. To determine the relationship between ethnicity and employee productivity in MTN Nigeria.

iv. To determine the relationship between ethnicity and employee motivation in fostering a collaborative work environment in MTN Nigeria.

1.1 Problem Statement

The role and significance of D&I are increasingly being understood in terms of its contribution to organizational performance. At the same time, most organizations experience a high degree of difficulty in building or enhancing proper D&I policies. This is because organizational decision-making processes, especially within selection and promotion, are indirectly influenced by prejudice and racism (**Dueland, L. J. B.** 2023). It is challenging for body talent to improve from across, thus restricting talent development in an organization.

Furthermore, culture-generated barriers in the mode of communication, such as religious or ethnic divergences, hinder collegiality; thus, cooperation among the team declines and resolves into conflicts. As two valuable diversity elements, religion and ethnicity can substantially impact organizational employee effectiveness and engagement levels. Lack of faith in the organization or management can produce religious prejudices that reduce motivation and collaboration and, in general, result in low performance; the same applies to ethnic prejudice in organizational culture. Moreover, organizational cultures that are skeptical of change are also problematic because they create a barrier to the effectiveness of D&I endeavors, notably religious and ethnic ones (McKinsey & Company, 2020). Of course, the business cannot achieve a worthwhile return on investments in diversity when the leadership is not fully committed to such efforts, and there are no proper ways to track how well these initiatives work, and therefore, impact organizational performance.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual framework

This research will explore the concepts of diversity and inclusion as independent variables and measures them against the outcome of employee productivity and employee turnover as dependent variables to assess the organization's performance.

2.1.1   Concept of Diversity

As a concept, diversity is the existence of difference within a certain context, related to the biological characteristics as well as the nature of a person such as race, sex, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, income, and disability among others (Dara, F. 2022).Over the course of the last few decades, the topic of diversity in organizational environments has received considerable attention in the scientific literature because diversity adds different perspectives, ideas, and problem-solving strategies that could make volatile processes fecund (Martinez et al., 2017). The concept has been increasingly recognized over the past few decades, as it brings a variety of perspectives, experiences, and problem-solving approaches that can enhance innovation and improve decision-making processes (Martinez, et al., 2017).

In recent years, both academic and practical literature has expanded the conceptualization of diversity by adding cognitive and experiential diversity: the way in which people process and address challenges, respectively (Van Knippenberg, D., & However, I. J. 2023). Creating a diverse work force is very good, but they need to be managed properly because having diversity will lead to creativity as different views and experiences (Saxena, A. 2014). When individuals feel accepted in the workplace, they are committed to delivering organizational objectives, increased productivity, and innovation, as supported by Guillaume et al. (2017).

Nevertheless, mere diversity is not enough to produce positive results; the effectiveness of diversity enhancement strategies depends on the promotion of an inclusive environment that effectively integrates all employees, regardless of the sources of their diversity (Mor Barak, 2021). However, when diversity is not complemented by inclusion, it is likely that organizations may not reap the strengths of diversification, which may result in incidents such as tokenism or even conflict within teams, as highlighted by McKay et al. (2015).

2.1.2 Concept of inclusion

Organizational inclusion refers to the characteristics of practices and policies within organizations that make people feel welcomed, wanted, and included in the organization's environment (Haslam et al., 2021). Rather than just offering diverse opportunities in organizations, promoting the idea of organizational diversity puts a premium on how organizational members can contribute according to their potential. Inclusion is not merely the incorporation of diverse people, but they also get to nominate and vote and have equal chance at resources among other things (Nishii & Mayer, 2020). Contemporary scholars has also shown that diversity success requires the effective implementation of inclusion. If accommodative measures are not implemented, diversity becomes a source of friction, misunderstanding and non-commitment, which eliminates the possibility of a boost in productivity that diversity brings (Saxena, A. 2014).

Roberson, Ryan, and Ragins (2017) posit that integration enables managers to maximize organizational resources and capitalize on variety within the group to improve problem solving and decision making. The cooperation within such teams can result from cognitive diversity, enabling them to develop more effective strategies than competitors, which grants organizations the advantage they need in competitive and saturated markets (Zia-ur-Rehman, M., Imran, S., & Bokhari, Z. F. 2021). Inclusion creates a feeling that everyone within a group, diverse in one way or the other, feels comfortable to unmask their diversity, and brings ideas forward for consideration without feeling erased. This, in turn, promotes creativity, collaboration, and innovation within teams to enable organizations to tap into the full potential of their work force (Roberson & Perry, J. L. 2022).

However, the inclusion did not occur automatically with increased diversity. Leaders play a crucial role in establishing a foundation for inclusion by fostering open communication, demonstrating inclusive behaviors, and ensuring that all perspectives are heard and respected (Carmeli et al., 2021). Recent studies emphasize the necessity for continuous evaluation and implementation of tailored strategies that address the specific inclusion requirements of diverse demographic groups within organizations (Nishii & Mayer, 2020). Intersectionality, which acknowledges the multiple overlapping identities that individuals possess (e.g., race, gender, and age), is also increasingly considered essential in designing truly inclusive practices (Søraa, R. A., et al., 2020).

Moreover, the Social Identity Theory of Tajfel and Turner (1979), as cited by Carmeli et al. (2021), supports the proposition that inclusivity mitigates the risks of in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination, which are potential impediments to the cohesion and performance of diverse teams.

Religion

Religion plays a significant role in shaping the values, behaviors, and attitudes of individuals, including those within the workplace. Its impact on employee productivity and motivation can be both positive and negative depending on how religious diversity is managed.

On the positive side, organizations that create an inclusive environment where employees' religious beliefs are respected and accommodated tend to experience higher levels of employee engagement and motivation (Zia-ur-Rehman, M., Imran, S., & Bokhari, Z. F. 2021). The authors further posited that employees who perceive their religious practices, such as prayer times or religious holidays, as recognized by their employers, are more likely to exhibit higher job satisfaction and commitment to their work. This sense of inclusion can enhance motivation and productivity, as employees feel supported by aligning their personal values with organizational goals.

Research suggests that employees who perceive their workplace as respectful of their religious identities demonstrate increased engagement and motivation, leading to improved performance (Shrestha, P., & Parajuli, D. 2021). However, when religious diversity is not effectively managed, it can lead to conflict, alienation, and reduced motivation (Sharmaa & Singh, R. K. 2021). Moreover, religious conflicts in the workplace, stemming from differing beliefs or practices, can undermine team cohesion and collaboration, resulting in decreased overall productivity (Jelil, A., Sunday, O., & Rufus, A. 2018).

Organizations must implement inclusive policies and practices to harness the positive aspects of religious diversity. These include allowing flexible work schedules to accommodate religious practices, offering prayer spaces, and promoting open dialogue about religious diversity. By doing so, organizations can foster an environment that not only respects religious differences, but also utilizes these differences as a source of motivation and increased productivity (Shaari, N., Subramaniam, G., & Hassan, R. 2020).

Ethnicity

Ethnicity may be conceptualized as a shared cultural, linguistic, or ancestral characteristic that unifies a group of individuals. It encompasses various elements such as nationality, language, religion, and customs. Ethnic groups frequently share a common history, cultural traditions, and sense of identity that distinguishes them from other groups (Guillaume et al., 2017). Employees

from diverse ethnic backgrounds have unique perspectives that can lead to more comprehensive strategies and improved work processes. Ethnic diversity fosters a sense of inclusiveness and equity, which motivates employees to engage more fully in their roles, leading to enhanced performance and overall productivity (Cox & Blake, 2020).

However, inadequately managed ethnic diversity can result in challenges that adversely affect employees' motivation and productivity. Issues such as ethnic stereotyping, discrimination, and exclusion may arise if ethnic differences are not addressed appropriately in the workplace. Such negative experiences can demoralize employees from minority groups, resulting in decreased motivation, increased absenteeism, and ultimately reduced productivity (Zia-ur-Rehman, M., Imran, S., & Bokhari, Z. F. 2021).

Concept of organization's performance

The concept of organizational performance, also the dependent variable, has gained significant attention from profit and non-profit organizations. Organizational performance refers to how effectively an organization meets its objectives, and is often measured in terms of financial outcomes, operational efficiency, market position, and customer satisfaction. It reflects the capacity of an organization to utilize its resources and capabilities to achieve goals and maintain competitiveness. The concept has evolved to include not only financial metrics but also non-financial dimensions, such as employee well-being, innovation, and sustainability.

Recent research has emphasized the multidimensional nature of organizational performance. For instance, (Donbesuur, F., et al., 2020) argued that performance is increasingly linked to innovation, particularly in dynamic environments, as organizations must adapt to technological advancements to sustain competitive advantage.

Employee Productivity

Employee productivity refers to the efficiency with which employees complete tasks and contribute to organizational goals. It is often measured by output per employee over a specific period; however, modern assessments of productivity also consider quality, creativity, and alignment with strategic objectives. This concept has evolved with the rise of remote work, technological advancements, and changing workforce expectations.

Recent studies have highlighted the significance of workplace environment and employee engagement in boosting productivity. According to Yost, M. R. (2024), providing employees with

autonomy, flexibility, and adequate resources significantly enhances their productivity, especially in remote or hybrid work setups. The shift to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about new challenges and opportunities for maintaining productivity, with technology and communication tools becoming essential for collaboration and task completion. Moreover, performance management systems (PMS) play a vital role in enhancing productivity. Real-time feedback, goal alignment, and personalized incentives have been shown to improve employee output and engagement (Mbugua, L. M. (2021).

Employee Motivation

Employee turnover refers to the rate at which employees leave an organization and are replaced by new hires. High turnover can disrupt operations, increase recruitment and training costs, and affect overall organizational performance, whereas low turnover can signal employee satisfaction and organizational stability. Recent research has highlighted the key factors influencing employee turnover, particularly job satisfaction, organizational culture, and leadership. Asiedu-Appiah et al. (2015) found that turnover is closely linked to job dissatisfaction, lack of career advancement opportunities, and poor work-life balance. Employees who feel undervalued or unsupported are likely to leave, particularly in highly competitive industries. Work environment and organizational culture are additional key factors. For example, Saxena, A. (2014) points out that inclusive, diverse, and positive workplace environment tend to retain employees longer by creating a sense of belonging. It is a critical element in enhancing organizational performance, productivity, and employee satisfaction. Motivation is often categorized into intrinsic motivation (driven by personal satisfaction or interest in the work) and extrinsic motivation (driven by external rewards, such as money, recognition, or promotions).

Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation is closely tied to employees' sense of purpose and personal fulfillment. Gagné and Deci (2020) highlight that employees who find meaning in their work are more likely to stay motivated, exhibit creativity, and perform well, even in the absence of external rewards. This sense of purpose can be fostered by providing employees with autonomy, skill-development opportunities, and challenging work that aligns with their values. In contrast, extrinsic motivation often revolves around tangible rewards such as salaries, bonuses, or promotions. Although extrinsic factors can boost short-term performance, their effects on long-term motivation are debated. Judge et al. (2021) argue that heavy reliance on extrinsic rewards, without attention to intrinsic factors, can lead to burnout or decreased engagement over time. Thus, a balance between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations is necessary for sustained employee commitment.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

Social Identity Theory (SIT), developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s, as cited by Ashforth and Mael (2020), provides a framework for understanding how individuals derive their self-concept from their membership in various social groups. These social groups can include

demographic factors, such as ethnicity and gender, as well as professional or organizational affiliations. In the workplace context, SIT offers valuable insights into how group memberships influence employee behavior, motivation, and perceptions. By recognizing the role of social identity, organizations can better understand the dynamics that shape employee interactions and their impact on organizational performance.

In organizational settings, SIT explains the phenomena of in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination, where employees may favor colleagues who share their group identity, such as department, gender, or cultural background (Ashforth and Mael 2020). In addition, SIT sheds light on team dynamics, highlighting how a strong shared identity within teams can enhance cohesion and cooperation. However, excessive identification with subgroups can create internal divisions that detract from the overall organizational objectives (Rink & Ellemers, 2021). Leadership is also crucial in shaping social identity within organizations; transformational leaders can promote collective organizational identity, reduce intergroup conflict, and enhance unity and performance (Haslam et al., 2021).

The practical applications of SIT in the workplace are extensive. For instance, it can be used to manage and mitigate intergroup conflict by addressing the underlying in-group and out-group dynamics, thereby promoting cross-group collaboration and unity (Ashforth & Mael, 2020). Lastly, SIT underscores the importance of promoting inclusivity within organizations. By encouraging employees to identify with the company as a whole, rather than smaller subgroups, organizations can reduce the negative effects of in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination, ultimately improving overall organizational performance (Rink & Ellemers, 2021).

2.3 Empirical Review of Literature

Guchait, P., & Namasasu, M. (2022) investigated the Role of Religion in Shaping Employee Motivation and Job Performance in Multinational Companies in Africa. This qualitative study employed interviews and focus groups with employees of various multinational companies across Africa to examine the influence of religion on motivation and performance. The research findings indicate that religious beliefs significantly impact employee motivation and job performance, with religion often providing a framework for ethical behavior and teamwork. However, this study also notes potential conflicts arising from divergent religious practices and beliefs. The authors

concluded that comprehending the role of religion in the workplace is essential for enhancing employee motivation and performance. This study recommends that organizations cultivate an inclusive culture that respects religious diversity and facilitates open dialogue about religious beliefs to enhance workplace harmony and productivity.

Ede, A. J., & Eweoya, I. O. (2019) conducted a study on Ethnic Diversity, Workplace Conflict, and Employee Performance in Nigeria: The Mediating Role of Employee Motivation. This research employed a mixed-method approach that incorporated quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews with employees in various organizations in Nigeria. The data were analyzed using structural equation modeling. These findings indicate that ethnic diversity is associated with workplace conflict, which negatively affects employee performance. However, this study also revealed that employee motivation can mediate this relationship, mitigating the adverse effects of ethnic conflict. The authors concluded that managing ethnic diversity is crucial for enhancing employee performance, and that motivation can help mitigate conflict. The study proposed that organizations implement policies that promote cultural understanding and provide motivation-enhancing incentives such as recognition programs and career development opportunities.

Luu, T.T., et al. (2019) conducted a study on addressing employee diversity to foster work engagement, using 31 Vietnam-based manufacturing firms with 200 employees each that had established HR systems. The study utilized multilevel structural equation modeling for data analysis and found that diversity-oriented HR practices foster employee work engagement by cultivating a positive diversity climate. The study concluded that there is a positive relationship between diversity-oriented HR practices and employee work engagement, demonstrating the importance of diversity-focused initiatives in improving organizational outcomes. The study recommends that organizations, particularly in the manufacturing sector, should actively implement diversity-oriented HR practices. These could include diversity training programs, inclusive recruitment policies, and equitable promotional pathways. By cultivating a positive diversity climate, companies can enhance employee engagement, leading to improved productivity and job satisfaction.

Binsiddiq, Y. A., and **Alzahmi, R. A.** (2013), in their paper titled **"Work Engagement and Group Dynamics in Diverse and Multicultural Teams"**, conducted a critical literature review published in the *Review of Management Innovation & Creativity*. The study aimed to explore how

group dynamics influence work engagement in diverse teams and identify gaps in the existing literature. The authors reviewed literature in three areas: work engagement, group dynamics, and how the latter mediates engagement in multicultural teams. The paper found that **group dynamics**—including communication, collaboration, and conflict management—play a key role in shaping engagement. Multicultural teams present both opportunities (creativity, innovation) and challenges (conflict, communication barriers), with **contradictory findings** across studies. Some research highlighted the benefits of diversity, while others emphasized the challenges it creates for engagement. The authors concluded that more **empirical research** is needed to test the theoretical models discussed. They recommended conducting real-world studies using **multilevel analysis** and focusing on specific organizational contexts, like multinational corporations, to better understand how group dynamics influence work engagement in diverse teams.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a **quantitative research approach** to investigate the influence of diversity and inclusion on organizational performance.

3.2 Sampling

The target population for this study was employees from MTN Nigeria in Taraba State. The participants were selected from three branches representing the three zones in Taraba: Jalingo, Mutan Biyu, and Wukari, with 125, 47, and 53 employees, respectively, totaling 225 employees (sourced from their respective offices in August 2024). Because of the manageable size of the population, a census approach was employed. A structured questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data on employee demographics, organizational diversity, inclusion practices, and perceived organizational performance. Responses were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = agree to 5 = strongly disagree).

3.3 Data Analyses

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, where the minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation were employed to provide an overview of the contingency table. Inferential statistics were also used, where Pearson correlation analysis was employed to determine the relationship between the variables under study.

3.4 Research Philosophy

The research is grounded in a positivist philosophy for the quantitative aspect, as it seeks to objectively measure the relationships between variables such as the level of diversity, inclusion practices, and organizational performance. Simultaneously, an interpretivist approach was adopted for the qualitative portion to understand employees' subjective experiences and perceptions regarding diversity and inclusion.

3.5 Validity and reliability

Internal consistency of the survey items was assessed using Cronbach's alpha (target ≥ 0.70). Test-retest reliability was used to ensure stability over time. The result is displayed below.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

S/N	Variable	Cronbach's Alpha Value
1	Religion	0.79
2	Employee productivity	0.75
3	Employee motivation	0.78
4	Ethnicity	0.81

Source: SPSS V24, 2024

The survey was reviewed by experts in human resource management and organizational behavior to ensure it covers all relevant aspects of diversity and inclusion.

4.0 Result and Discussion

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Religion		1.00	5.00	3.5650	1.01912

Employee productivity	1.00	5.00	3.3049	1.10312
Employee motivation	1.00	5.00	3.8496	1.08691
Ethnicity	1.00	5.00	2.9146	1.14144
Valid N (listwise)	225			

Source: SPSS V24, 2024

This table presents the descriptive statistics for four variables: Religion, Employee productivity, employee motivation, and ethnicity. Descriptive statistics provide an overview of the data, indicating the minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation for each variable under investigation. Religion exhibited a mean of 3.5650 with a standard deviation of 1.01912, indicating a moderately high level of diversity in the workforce, as perceived by the respondents. Employee Productivity demonstrated a mean of 3.3049, with a standard deviation of 1.10312, suggesting that employees' productivity levels were moderate. Employee Motivation had a higher mean of 3.8496, with a standard deviation of 1.08691, indicating that motivation levels among employees were relatively high. Ethnicity displayed a mean of 2.9146 and standard deviation of 1.14144, reflecting that ethnicity was perceived to be moderate among the respondents.

Overall, these statistics provide an overview of how respondents perceive religious and ethnic diversity in the workforce, as well as their own levels of motivation and productivity. The minimum and maximum values (ranging from 1.00 to 5.00 for all variables) show that the scale used for these measures allowed participants to rate their experiences across a full spectrum from very low to very high.

Test of Hypotheses and Discussion of Findings

H0$_1$: Religion does not have any relationship with employee productivity in MTN Nigeria Taraba State

Table 3: Correlations

		Religion	Employee productivity
Religion	Pearson Correlation	1	.731**

			.000
	N	225	225
	Pearson Correlation	.731**	1
Employee productivity	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	225	225

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlation analysis in Table 3 reveals a Pearson's correlation coefficient of 0.731 between Religion and Employee Productivity with a significance level (p-value) of 0.000. This indicates a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between religion and employee productivity at the 0.05 level.

The data suggest that, as religious diversity or consideration within the workforce increases, employee productivity also tends to increase. A significance level of 0.000 (less than 0.05) confirms that this relationship is statistically significant, indicating that it is unlikely to have occurred by chance. Consequently, religious diversity appears to play a substantial role in influencing employee productivity.

This finding aligns with Guchait, P., & Namasasu, M. (2022), who found that inclusive workplaces that acknowledge and respect employees' religious practices tend to experience higher levels of employee engagement and productivity. The authors emphasized that when employees perceive their religious beliefs are respected, it fosters a supportive work environment, leading to improved performance outcomes. Similarly, this study demonstrates that religious inclusivity in the workplace in MTN, Nigeria, is associated with enhanced employee productivity.

H0$_2$: Religion does not have any relationship with employee motivation in MTN Nigeria Taraba State.

Table 4: Correlations

		Religion	Employee motivation
Religion	Pearson Correlation	1	.536
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	225	225
Employee motivation	Pearson Correlation	.536	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	225	225

The correlation analysis in Table 4 reveals a moderately positive relationship between religion and employee motivation, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.536 and a significance level (p-value) of 0.000. This indicates that as religious diversity or inclusivity within the workforce increases, employee motivation tends to increase significantly. A p-value of less than 0.05 confirms that this relationship is statistically significant, suggesting that it is unlikely to have occurred by chance.

These findings are consistent with the research of Guchait, P., & Namasasu, M. (2022), who demonstrated that workplaces that acknowledge and respect employees' religious practices tend to foster higher levels of employee motivation and satisfaction. Employees who perceive that their religious beliefs are valued contribute to a more supportive and motivating work environment.

Similarly, Luu et al. (2019) emphasized that an inclusive organizational culture positively influences employee engagement and motivation, particularly when employees perceive that their diverse backgrounds, including religion, are recognized and respected. This aligns with the present study, indicating that religious inclusivity in Nigeria positively impacts employee motivation, which is essential for maintaining high levels of organizational performance.

H0₃: Ethnicity does not have any relationship with employee productivity in MTN Nigeria Taraba State.

Table 5: Correlations

		Ethnicity	Employee productivity
Ethnicity	Pearson Correlation	1	.909[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	225	225
Employee productivity	Pearson Correlation	.909[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	225	225

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 indicates a Pearson Correlation coefficient of 0.909 with a significance level of 0.000. Given that the p-value is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis (H03). This shows that ethnicity has a strong and significant positive relationship with employee productivity in MTN Nigeria, Taraba State. This finding is consistent with the research by Ede, A. J., & Eweoya, I. O. (2019), who found that ethnicity significantly, enhances team performance in diverse groups by

promoting a shared identity and goals. The authors emphasized that leaders who are inclusive can align diverse teams toward common objectives, leading to higher productivity. The results of this study support this perspective, indicating that inclusive ethnic background in MTN Nigeria is crucial in driving employee productivity, especially in a diverse workforce.

H0₄: Ethnicity does not have any relationship with employee motivation in fostering a collaborative work environment in MTN Nigeria.

Table 6: Correlations

		Ethnicity	Employee motivation
Ethnicity	Pearson Correlation	1	.490[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	225	225
Employee motivation	Pearson Correlation	.490[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	225	225

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlation analysis in Table 6 shows a Pearson Correlation coefficient of 0.490 with a significance level of **0.000**. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis (H04). This indicates that ethnicity has a significant positive relationship with employee motivation in MTN Nigeria, Taraba State. This finding is closely related to the work of Ede, A. J., & Eweoya, I. O. (2019) who discussed how fostering a strong, shared organizational identity in diverse workplaces enhances cooperation and loyalty among employees. The findings from MTN Nigeria reinforce this, demonstrating that inclusive ethnic background does not only enhances productivity but also plays a critical role in motivating employees, which is essential for achieving long-term organizational goals.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that diversity and inclusion significantly influence organizational performance, particularly through religion and ethnicity. The positive correlations between these factors and employee productivity and motivation underscore the importance of fostering a diverse and inclusive work environment. Organizations like MTN Nigeria that emphasize diversity and inclusivity are better positioned to achieve higher employee engagement, productivity, and overall

performance, thereby gaining a competitive advantage. Based on this finding the study recommends the following:

    i.   Organizations in Nigeria should accommodate diverse religious practices by providing flexible work hours for religious observances and creating multi-faith spaces, fostering an inclusive environment that enhances productivity.

    ii.   Firms should implement religious diversity programs and interfaith dialogues to educate employees and promote tolerance, increasing their motivation by ensuring that their beliefs are valued.

    iii.   Government and firms should build an ethnically inclusive work culture through diversity training and cross-cultural teamwork, foster innovation, and improve employee productivity.

    iv.   Firms should encourage collaboration by celebrating diverse cultural events and promoting mentorship across ethnic groups, creating a motivated and cohesive workforce.

Limitations of the Study

- **Self-Reported Data**: Survey responses may be influenced by social desirability bias, where participants provide answers they believe are favorable rather than reflective of their true experiences.

- **Generalizability**: Although the sample covers various industries, the findings may not be fully generalizable to smaller organizations or those outside the geographic region being studied.

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