LASU International Journal of Arts and Social Science Education
Vol. 2, No. 2, Nov. 2024
http://www.lijassed.org
Print ISSN: 2992-4979
Online ISSN: 2992-4987

# INFLUENCE OF DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT AND INCLUSION ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN FRIESLANDCAMPINA PLC (NIGERIA)

**ABIODUN Oluwabunmi Blessing[1]; BAKARE Akeem Alagbe[2]; AMODE Seth Tosin[3]**
Department of Business Administration and Management, the Federal Polytechnic, Ede, Osun State.
Email: abiodunoluwabunmi23@gmail.com[1]; sethosin@yahoo.com[2]; bakareakeem2011@gmail.com[3]

## Abstract
*The need for effective diversity management to foster innovation and enhance employee satisfaction in a rapidly diversifying workforce influenced by globalization is essential for multinational companies. This study investigated the influence of diversity management and inclusion practices on organizational performance at Friesland Campina Plc, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive research design, and data were collected through structured questionnaire from 211 employees. Hypotheses were tested using regression and correlation analysis. Findings revealed that diversity management significantly impacts organizational innovation ($p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.875$), while inclusive practices are positively correlated with employee satisfaction (Pearson coefficient = 0.763). The study concluded that effective diversity and inclusion practices enhance organizational performance, innovation, and employee satisfaction, recommending continued leadership commitment, diversity training, and inclusive recruitment. These findings underscore the strategic importance of diversity and inclusion in enhancing organizational performance and employee engagement within Friesland Campina Plc Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Cultural competence, Diversity management, Inclusion, Innovation, Organizational performance,

## Introduction
In today's dynamic and interconnected global economy, the workforce is becoming increasingly diverse, reflecting significant demographic shifts and the ongoing effects of globalization. This diversity spans various characteristics, including race, gender, age, cultural background, sexual orientation, and disability status. As organizations navigate this evolving landscape, effectively managing diversity and creating inclusive work environments have become critical to organizational success. Managing workplace diversity and fostering inclusion are essential for thriving in the global marketplace.

Diversity management involves strategic, systematic efforts to recruit, retain, and develop a workforce that reflects various backgrounds and perspectives. It encompasses policies and practices that promote the fair representation and active participation of diverse groups within an organization. Inclusion, however, extends beyond mere representation; it aims to cultivate a workplace culture where every individual is valued, respected, and empowered to contribute meaningfully. True inclusion ensures diverse employees are present and actively engaged in decision-making and organizational activities, driving innovation and performance. As Omoyele and Olabisi (2020) noted, effective diversity management leads to recognizing individual differences and fostering organizational success through equal employment opportunities (Barry & Kornberg, 2019).

This study focuses on how Friesland Campina Plc, Nigeria, manages diversity and inclusion and how these practices impact organizational performance. Given Friesland Campina global operations and diverse workforce, these concepts are vital for the company. As Kowo (2021) highlighted, organizations that successfully address diversity and inclusiveness experience enhanced innovation, higher employee satisfaction, and improved financial outcomes. Friesland Campina must implement efficient diversity management strategies tailored to its local environment in a competitive and saturated market like Nigeria. This research seeks to examine the impact of diversity management on organizational innovation and to explore the relationship between inclusive workplace practices and employee satisfaction at Friesland Campina Plc Nigeria.

## Statement of the Problem

Despite the growing recognition of diversity management and inclusion as critical factors for organizational success, a significant gap exists in understanding the specific mechanisms through which these practices influence organizational performance. While existing research indicates a positive correlation between diversity and performance outcomes (Klettner et al., 2019; McKinsey & Company, 2015), many organizations still face substantial challenges in effectively implementing and leveraging diversity and inclusion strategies. Common issues include inadequate training for leaders on inclusive practices, more transparent policies, and insufficient measurement of diversity initiatives' impacts (Barry & Kornberg, 2019; Omoyele & Olabisi, 2020).

These challenges are significant because they can hinder organizations from fully capitalizing on the benefits of a diverse workforce. Employees may experience feelings of exclusion, leading to decreased morale, job satisfaction, and productivity (Afolayan, 2017; Odeleye, 2021). If these problems are not addressed, organizations risk perpetuating a homogeneous culture that stifles innovation and alienates valuable talent, ultimately affecting financial performance and competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Kowo, 2021).

Furthermore, criticisms of diversity initiatives often suggest that organizations engage in tokenism rather than genuine inclusion (Adeniyi, 2023). This superficial approach can create a backlash among employees and stakeholders, leading to skepticism about the organization's commitment to diversity (Tongo et al., 2023). Therefore, this study aims to bridge this gap by systematically examining the impact of diversity management and inclusion on various facets of organizational performance, such as innovation and employee satisfaction, within the context of Friesland Campina Plc, Nigeria.

## Review of Related Literature

### Diversity Management and Inclusion

Diversity management and inclusion are increasingly recognized as pivotal factors driving organizational success, particularly in multinational corporations. Research by McKinsey and Company (2015) highlighted that diverse teams outperform their less diverse counterparts due to enhanced problem-solving capabilities and increased innovation. Furthermore, inclusive workplaces boost employee morale, reduce turnover rates, and foster a sense of belonging, which is essential for organizational sustainability (Omoyele & Olabisi, 2020). For multinational corporations like Friesland Campina Nigeria, effectively implementing diversity management strategies that align global objectives with local contexts presents challenges and opportunities. The growing business case for diversity emphasizes its contribution to improved organizational performance, as diverse teams bring various perspectives to problem-solving and decision-making processes, making innovation more likely. This is particularly crucial in the fast-paced marketplaces of today, where staying creative and adaptable is essential to gaining a competitive advantage.

Numerous studies have established a positive correlation between diversity and financial performance. For example, McKinsey and Company (2015) found that organizations in the top quartile for gender diversity were 15% more likely to outperform industry medians in financial returns. Similarly, businesses with more racial and cultural diversity saw performance gains of up to 35%. Moreover, diversity management significantly enhances employee satisfaction and retention, as inclusive environments foster psychological safety and engagement. Employees who feel valued and respected are more likely to be satisfied with their roles, reducing turnover and preserving institutional knowledge (Barry & Kornberg, 2019). As global corporations evolve, integrating diversity and inclusion strategies becomes critical for fostering innovation, improving employee engagement, and driving overall organizational success.

## Diversity Management Practices in Multinational Corporations

Diversity management has become a cornerstone of strategic planning for multinational corporations (MNCs), enabling them to anticipate market needs and respond to evolving consumer demographics. These strategies involve a broad spectrum of practices, including non-discriminatory recruitment, diversity-focused training, and the establishment of Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) to enhance inclusion. Companies like Google and Microsoft use diverse panels in hiring, collaborate with organizations representing underrepresented groups, and design job descriptions that attract diverse talent pools (Klettner et al., 2019). Similarly, Friesland Campina Nigeria emphasizes workforce diversification by recruiting from local universities and professional bodies, ensuring the representation of gender, ethnicity, and age groups within its talent pool (Oyedele, 2019). This approach is vital in a country as demographically diverse as Nigeria, where a diverse workforce can foster a deeper understanding of consumer needs and mitigate challenges arising from varied cultural backgrounds.

MNCs emphasize diversity development training initiatives and recruiting efforts to ensure staff members are prepared to collaborate in varied teams. Global corporations like IBM and Accenture offer diversity sensitivity training that addresses unconscious biases and multiculturalism in the workplace (Klettner et al., 2019). At Friesland Campina Nigeria, similar initiatives, such as diversity and inclusion training and leadership development programs, aim to advance the careers of underrepresented individuals (Odeleye, 2021). These strategies promote talent development and retention and contribute to the organization's long-term success by fostering a more inclusive corporate culture. Furthermore, ERGs are instrumental in advancing diversity and inclusion within organizations. At Friesland Campina Nigeria, ERGs focus on promoting gender equality, celebrating cultural diversity, and providing platforms for employees with disabilities to contribute to the organization's goals. These groups help build employees' sense of belonging and acceptance, enhancing engagement and performance (Tongo et al., 2023).

## Impact of Diversity on Organizational Performance

Diversity has emerged as a critical factor influencing various dimensions of organizational performance, including financial outcomes, innovation, and employee productivity. In industries like food and beverage, exemplified by Friesland Campina, diversity is a crucial driver of innovation, allowing companies to develop products that cater to a broad spectrum of consumer needs. Research has shown that diverse teams at Friesland Campina are more creative and better able to adapt to market changes, driving product innovation (Afolayan, 2017). This strategic use of diversity provides Friesland Campina with a competitive edge, enabling the company to maintain its leadership in a global market through innovative product offerings tailored to diverse populations. Furthermore, diversity positively impacts employee productivity by creating an inclusive environment where individuals feel valued. Studies on Friesland Campina Nigeria indicate that diversity initiatives, such as inclusive leadership and quality circles, significantly enhance staff morale and productivity (Odeleye, 2021). Friesland Campina improves operational efficiency, employee engagement, and overall organizational performance by fostering a corporate culture that prioritizes diversity.

Friesland Campina strongly emphasizes diversity globally, which is evident in its Human Resource Management strategies, which prioritize inclusive hiring and employee assistance. Adeniyi (2023) noted that technological advancements and effective diversity management practices at Nestlé, Nigeria, have improved employee productivity and organizational efficiency. These initiatives, supported by training programs designed to equip employees with the skills to manage diverse teams, have proven crucial in enhancing organizational performance. By embracing diversity as a strategic asset, Friesland Campina Plc continues to leverage its diverse workforce to drive innovation, productivity, and long-term success in a competitive global marketplace.

## Empirical Evidence from Various Industries and Regions

Extensive research from diverse industries and geographic regions highlights the critical role of diversity in enhancing organizational performance. Oyedele (2019) found a strong positive relationship between workforce diversity management (WDM) and financial performance and innovation in Lagos State, Nigeria's food and beverage industry. This evidence supports the notion that diversity fosters creativity and adaptability, which are essential for driving competitive advantage, especially in fast-evolving markets like food and beverages.

Similarly, Olanipekun et al. (2019) established a positive correlation between Nigerian firms' corporate social responsibility (CSR) and diversity management practices. This finding aligns with global research demonstrating that diversity enhances performance in technology and financial services industries. Klettner et al. (2019) further reinforce the argument that diverse teams foster innovation and improve client satisfaction and economic performance. These studies emphasize that diversity significantly enhances organizational effectiveness, positioning it as a vital tool for long-term success across multiple sectors.

The role of inclusion has become increasingly prominent, with organizations recognizing its importance in promoting employee engagement, retention, and a positive organizational culture (Adeyemi et al, 2021). As a leader in the food and beverage sector, Friesland Campina has implemented several inclusive strategies, such as leadership training, mentorship programs, and workplace policies designed to create an environment where diverse perspectives can thrive, (Bakare et al (2024). These initiatives have not only promoted innovation but also sustained high levels of performance across Friesland Campina global operations. Inclusive leadership, which promotes equality and fairness, fosters a culture of respect and transparency. Studies by Omoyele and Olabisi (2020) stated that implementing inclusive leadership practices significantly enhances organizational performance in Nigerian multinationals.

At Friesland Campina Plc, mentoring programs are integral to diversity management, offering structured guidance and development opportunities, particularly for employees from underrepresented groups. Research by Oyedele (2019) underscores the importance of mentoring in enhancing organizational performance in Nigeria's food and beverage industry, as these programs build employee engagement and career satisfaction. By pairing experienced leaders with younger employees, Friesland Campina creates a robust support system that fosters skill development and lowers turnover rates, a finding echoed by Olanipekun et al. (2019), who observed improved performance and retention among employees involved in mentoring initiatives.

Moreover, inclusive workplace policies ensure equal opportunities, eliminate discrimination, and support work-life balance. Executives at Friesland Campina Nigeria have developed policies that improve employee welfare and productivity. These policies create a conducive environment for performance, enhancing employee engagement and retention while promoting a corporate culture that values diversity, (Ulabor et al, 2020). Adeniyi (2023) further highlighted the role of technology in supporting Friesland Campina's inclusive employment practices, which improve engagement, performance, and overall employee well-being. Aligning these inclusive approaches with local cultures ensures sustainable employee performance and strengthens Friesland Campina reputation as an employer of choice in competitive markets.

## Theoretical Review

### Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory, developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in 1979, posits that individuals derive their self-concept and identity from the social groups to which they belong. This theory emphasizes the psychological significance of group membership, which can profoundly influence workplace behavior, interactions, and dynamics. In the context of Nigerian multinational corporations (MNCs), Omoyele and Olabisi (2020) underscore the importance of recognizing and valuing social identities to enhance organizational commitment and job satisfaction, particularly in a culturally diverse environment. By fostering a workplace culture that acknowledges different social identities, organizations can improve employee engagement and reduce turnover, enhancing overall performance.

### Resource-Based View (RBV)

The Resource-Based View (RBV), proposed by Jay Barney in 1991, suggests that an organization's sustained competitive advantage is derived from its strategic resources, including its human capital. Within the framework of RBV, diversity is viewed as a critical resource that enriches decision-making processes by providing a variety of perspectives and innovative solutions. Kowo (2021) highlights how a diverse workforce at Nestlé Nigeria enhances creativity and problem-solving capabilities, leading to better organizational outcomes. Oyedele (2019) further emphasizes that effective diversity management practices in the food and beverage sector improve operational performance and contribute to developing a more adaptable and innovative organizational culture.

**The Business Case for Diversity**

http://www.lijassed.org
Print ISSN: 2992-4979
Online ISSN: 2992-4987

The Business Case for Diversity posits that diverse teams lead to enhanced organizational performance through improved financial outcomes, customer satisfaction, and employee morale. Research by Omoyele and Olabisi (2020) supports the notion that effective diversity management practices correlate with enhanced performance in Nigerian multinational firms, including Friesland Campina PLC. By embracing diversity, organizations position themselves better in the market, foster innovation, and achieve greater operational efficiency. This perspective highlights the necessity for MNCs to integrate diversity into their strategic objectives, ensuring that diversity is not merely an ethical obligation but a fundamental driver of business success.

### Integration of Theories at Friesland Campina Plc.

These theories underscore the importance of diversity and inclusion as strategic assets for organizations. Social Identity Theory highlights the need for cultural sensitivity and acknowledgment of diverse identities, while RBV emphasizes the economic benefits of leveraging diverse human capital. The Business Case for Diversity further reinforces the argument that diversity is essential for achieving superior organizational performance. Together, these frameworks provide a comprehensive understanding of how effective diversity management can enhance innovation, employee satisfaction, and overall organizational success in dynamic and competitive environments.

Friesland Campina PLC in Nigeria can integrate these theories by developing comprehensive diversity management and inclusion strategies. By applying Social Identity Theory, the company can enhance employee engagement and foster a sense of belonging through inclusive policies that respect cultural diversity. RBV supports Friesland Campina Plc's strategy to leverage diverse human capital through training and development initiatives that harness employee creativity and innovation.

### Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design to investigate the impact of diversity management and inclusion on organizational performance at Friesland Campina Plc. The target population consisted of 2,300 employees of Friesland Campina Plc, as reported by the company in 2023. Data was primarily collected through a structured questionnaire, designed using a five-point Likert scale. This approach was chosen due to the well-defined nature of the target population, making it suitable for quantitative analysis. A sample size of 230, representing 10% of the total population, was selected, ensuring that the sample was representative of the overall workforce. Simple random sampling was employed to ensure an unbiased selection process. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section gathered demographic information, such as gender and educational qualifications, while the second section focused on the study's objectives, research questions, and hypotheses. To ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument, the questionnaire was pretested, and its reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.83. According to Serkaran and Bougie (2010), this indicates a high level of internal consistency, confirming the reliability of the instrument for this study. A total of 211 questionnaires were retrieved, representing a response rate of 91.7%.

Data analysis involved the use of descriptive statistics to summarize the demographic characteristics and responses of the participants. Hypotheses were tested using simple linear regression and correlation analysis, with a significance level set at 0.05. Pearson's **r** ranges from +1 to -1, where +1 represents a perfect positive correlation, -1 represents a perfect negative correlation, and 0 means there is no linear relationship. The decision rule is to accept the null hypothesis ($H_0$) if the significance value is greater than the p-value (0.05); otherwise, reject $H_0$.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0 was used to conduct all statistical analyses and derive conclusions from the data. The results were utilized to assess the relationships between diversity management, inclusion practices, and organizational performance at Friesland Campina Plc.

## Analysis of Hypothesis

$H_01$: Diversity management has no significant impact on organizational innovation and creativity of Friesland Campina Plc, Nigeria.

**Table 1: The Impact of Diversity Management on Organizational Innovation and Creativity**

| Variables | Beta (β) | T | Sig. | $R^2$ | Adj. $R^2$ | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (Constant) | -.604 | -.853 | .395 | | | | |
| Diversity Management | .867 | 26.110 | .000 | .875 | .765 | 681.753 | .000$^b$ |
| Dep. Variable: Organizational innovation and creativity | | | | | | | |
| Ind. Variable: Diversity Management | | | | | | | |
| DF (F-Statistics) = 210 | | | | | | | |

Source: Field Survey, 2024

$y = a + bx$

Organizational innovation and creativity = a + b (Diversity Management) $y = -0.604 + 0.867x$.

The results indicate that diversity management has a significant positive effect on organizational innovation and creativity, with a p-value of $< 0.001$, an $R^2$ value of 0.875, and an F-statistic of 681.753. The negative intercept suggests that in the absence of diversity management, organizational innovation and creativity would decrease. Moreover, the results reveal that diversity management explains approximately 87.5% of the variance in organizational innovation and creativity. The F-statistic further validates the robustness and appropriateness of the regression model. Given that the significance value ($p = 0.000$) is well below the threshold of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that diversity management has a significant and positive impact on organizational innovation and creativity at Friesland Campina Plc, Nigeria.

$H_02$: There is no significant relationship between inclusive workplace practices and employee satisfaction in Friesland Campina Plc, Nigeria.

http://www.lijassed.org
Print ISSN: 2992-4979
Online ISSN: 2992-4987

**Table 2: Relationship between Inclusive Workplace Practices and Employee Satisfaction**

| | | Inclusive Workplace Practices | Employee Satisfaction |
|---|---|---|---|
| Inclusive Workplace Practices | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .763** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 211 | 211 |
| Employee Satisfaction | Pearson Correlation | .763** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 211 | 211 |

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.763, with a significance level of 0.000, indicates a strong positive relationship between inclusive workplace practices and employee satisfaction at Friesland Campina PLC.

Since the significance value (0.000) is less than the p-value (0.05), we reject the null hypothesis ($H_0$) and conclude that there is a significant relationship between inclusive workplace practices and employee satisfaction at Friesland Campina Plc, Nigeria.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that diversity management positively impacts organizational innovation and creativity, explaining 87.5% of the variance in innovation ($p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.875$). Additionally, a strong positive correlation exists between inclusive workplace practices and employee satisfaction, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.763 ($p < 0.001$). These results confirm the hypothesis that both diversity management and inclusion significantly enhance organizational performance at Friesland Campina Nigeria.

## Discussion of Findings

The tested hypothesis indicates that diversity management significantly influences organizational innovation and creativity at Friesland Campina Plc, Nigeria. This finding aligns with Klettner et al. (2019), who emphasized that diversity fosters innovation, enhances client satisfaction, and improves overall organizational performance. Their research concluded that diversity not only enhances organizational effectiveness but also drives success in various dimensions.

Additionally, the study found a significant relationship between inclusive workplace practices and employee satisfaction at Friesland Campina Plc, Nigeria. This supports the findings of Omoyele and Olabisi (2020), who explored effective diversity management practices and their impact on organizational performance. They found that implementing inclusive leadership practices notably enhances performance in Nigerian multinational firms. Odeleye (2021) further corroborated these findings, noting that inclusive workplace policies create equal opportunities and prevent discrimination in areas such as working conditions, opportunities, and work-life balance.

The study confirms that effective diversity management fosters innovation by integrating diverse perspectives, consistent with the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, which regards diverse human capital as a strategic asset. Moreover, inclusive practices enhance employee satisfaction by cultivating a sense of belonging, in line with Social Identity Theory.

For Friesland Campina Plc Nigeria, these findings underscore the importance of investing in diversity and inclusion initiatives, as such efforts are likely to improve organizational performance while also enhancing employee retention and engagement.

## Conclusion

The study concludes that diversity management and inclusion significantly enhance organizational performance at Friesland Campina Nigeria, particularly in the areas of innovation and employee satisfaction. The research highlights the need for organizations to prioritize diversity and inclusion as fundamental components of their strategic objectives, particularly in a competitive and multicultural market.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the study on diversity management and inclusion at Friesland Campina PLC, Nigeria, the following recommendations are made:

i. Implement comprehensive diversity training programs that educate employees about the benefits of diversity and inclusion, addressing unconscious biases and fostering a more inclusive workplace culture.
ii. Encourage and develop inclusive leadership practices that empower all employees to participate in decision-making processes, ensuring that diverse voices are heard.
iii. Regularly assess the effectiveness of diversity and inclusion initiatives through employee feedback and performance metrics to ensure continuous improvement.
iv. To sustain these benefits, Friesland Campina Plc should prioritize leadership commitment to diversity, expand diversity training programs, and implement inclusive recruitment practices.

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