



# Effect Of Workplace Diversity Management on Employee Commitment In Nigerian Regulatory Agencies: A Theoretical Framework

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## ABSTRACT

The uneven implementation of Workplace diversity Management laws across countries is a global concern. The potential for bias is increased when there is unequal treatment of all employees regardless of background, gender, ethnicity, race, social status, etc. This study focuses on the Nigerian regulatory agencies and looks at how different academics have interpreted the impact of workplace diversity management on employee engagement. The relationship between the significant variables was examined using the constructs of inclusion, fairness, equal opportunity, policies and programs, leadership style, and the moderating effect of organizational support. Additionally, a theoretical framework methodology was applied, emphasizing two theories ( Salad Bowl and Thomas and Ely's perspectives) that served as the foundation for the investigation after a thorough review of several pertinent literature sources from reputable journals. To ensure currency, however, only studies that were released in the previous five years were included in this analysis. The findings revealed that these theories were best fit for multicultural nations like Nigeria as they were adopted by private and public sector organizations in India, Indonesia, and United States who are rich in diversity. The findings revealed that Nigeria public agencies lack effective implementation of diversity management policies and are therefore encouraged to embrace diversity, absorb minorities where applicable and leverage on the variety.

**Key words:** Workplace Diversity, Employee Commitment, Inclusion, Fairness, Equal Opportunity, Salad Bowl, Thomas, and Ely's perspectives.

## 1.0 Introduction

Every Company's desire is to make profit, and the only way to make that happen is to satisfy customers and get them to pay for products and services. This means having staff that are efficient and effective and can provide great customer service. To make sure they have the best people on board, companies are focusing on finding and keeping talented employees with the right skills, knowledge, and attitudes, regardless of how much education they have or where they're from. With more people migrating from poorer to wealthier countries, companies have a lot more diversity in the workforce which gives them more options when it comes to hiring. Ali et al. (2021) found that the way each nation handles diversity management policies, and their implementation can vary. This is because they are influenced by the different historical legacies, labor market trends, and regulations in each country. For instance, the US, Canada, UK, Australia, New Zealand, and India all have the most immigrants, so their histories show how they've handled diversity. Employer requirements and successful diversity management rely on eliminating any roadblocks to fair employment, having more representation of different groups, stopping age discrimination, and preventing discrimination of any kind, such as physical disabilities and genetic information as well as style of leadership. Having a variety of people from all sorts of different backgrounds can give businesses an advantage over other companies since it considers age, gender, ethnicity, religion, nationality, and other distinguishing traits (Urbancova et al.,2020).

Organizations in private sectors don't typically prioritize diversity in their recruitment process, choosing to focus more on skills and abilities. On the other hand, public sectors usually must be diverse by law. This is done to ensure that the government isn't viewed as discriminatory, especially in multicultural countries. Regardless, diversity management policies are often not implemented well in these countries, as people in top management tend to favour people with backgrounds like theirs. In western countries, diversity plans are more prevalent, but they tend to focus more on retaining minorities which may leave members of the majority feeling alienated (Mousa, 2020).

While the western countries' motive for retaining minorities may not be unconnected with cheap labor; the motive for multicultural countries like Nigeria for inappropriate implementation of diversity policies is simply favouritism. This may be unjustly defended as merit-based policy. Countries like Nigeria have been polarized to the extent that merit-based recruitments, appointments, and promotions may be misunderstood by the public especially if it is skewed to a particular sect (ethnic group or religion). For this purpose, until the country attains a certain level of maturity and unity in diversity, considerations should always be given to different sects in all spheres such as admissions in higher institutions and political appointments.

This research looks at how workplace diversity is managed, compared to how committed employees are, in organizations of different countries, and the extent to which these relationships change when organizational support is introduced, with a special focus on Nigeria. Unfair recruiting strategies like basing it on race, religion, and politics are used when trying to fill jobs in Nigerian public organizations due to religious and cultural variations. This prevents qualified people from getting the job because there isn't enough fairness, inclusion, equality, or good recruiting and retention policies in place to ensure the right people are being hired. The study evaluates five constructs of Workplace diversity Management namely: Fairness, Inclusion, Equal opportunities, Policies and Programs, Leadership style and the introduction of organizational support adapted from scholars (Garcia-Rodriguez et al., 2020; Alshaabani et al., 2021; Mousa, 2020). On the other hand, the study selected affective commitment, (which shows the extent of employees' emotional attachment to their job) for the analysis over continuance and normative which are the other types of employee commitment all representing employees' psychological state (Haque et al., 2020). This choice was because continuance and normative commitment (fear of loss and sense of obligation) are involuntary in nature while affective commitment is voluntary despite better alternatives.

#### **The Research questions emanating from the problem statement are as follows:**

1. Does any significant relationship exist between Fairness and the Affective Commitment of employees in Nigerian Regulatory agencies.?
2. To what extent does Inclusion affect the Affective Commitment of employees in Nigerian Regulatory agencies?
3. How does Equal Opportunity affect the Affective Commitment of employees in Nigerian Regulatory agencies?
4. Is there any significant relationship between Policies and Programs and the Affective Commitment of employees in Nigerian Regulatory agencies.?
5. To what extent does Ethnocentric Leadership Style affect the Affective Commitment of employees in Nigerian Regulatory agencies.?
6. How does Organizational Support moderate the relationship between the dimensions of workplace diversity management and the Affective Commitment of employees in Nigerian Regulatory agencies.?

The study will benefit Policy makers, and Employers who should consider stakeholders before making and implementing policies, and employees who should know how to manage their expectations. It will also be beneficial to Human Resources Practitioners and Academics by providing insights to additional Knowledge and by motivating researchers to take a deeper dive into areas that need improvement respectively.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

A bunch of scholars have studied employee commitment and managing workplace diversity. This section gives an overview of the concept of diversity management and its constructs, employee commitment, and the ideas from different academics about them.

### **2.2 Workplace Diversity Management**

Garcia-Rodriguez et al. (2020) view workplace diversity management as making sure everyone in a company is treated the same without regard to who they are, or any differences they may have, leading to a more inclusive environment. Diversity management is a way of improving the performance of the employees by making sure everyone in the workplace is included and accepted in all activities, regardless of gender, age, color, etc. while diversity on the other hand, is simply the differing traits in individuals such as gender, race, religion, skills, knowledge, qualification, etc. that are present in employees of the same organization

(Alshaabani et al., 2021). Batmomolin et al. (2022) opined Workplace diversity management as a conscious effort by organizations to recruit capable and skilled employees from different backgrounds. Mousa (2020) believes it entails employers ensuring all employees feel a sense of belonging in the workplace irrespective of their race, ethnicity, family situation or religion. An organization may be viewed as having a lot of employees who have similarities; but there are almost always differences among workers in terms of gender, age, color, culture, beliefs, and values (Yadav & Lenka, 2020). Diversity is therefore all about different people from varying backgrounds with different experiences.

Workplace diversity management is also viewed as handling differences among employees in the workplace (Ali et al., 2021). In the Nigeria Public sector however, not following diversity policies like the quota system, catchment area, and federal character principles correctly has put the country's future in danger (Owolabi & Tijani-Adenle, 2022). Diversity Management is also a negotiating process with different parties involved who have different perspectives and interests. These parties include the state, employers, trade unions and non-governmental organizations (Ali et al., 2021)

**Inclusion:** This refers to the involvement of every employee in the organization to make a meaningful contribution regardless of race, ethnicity, professional or educational background, physical or mental abilities. According to Kuknor and Bhattacharya (2020), Inclusion is a human resource development program, with leaders of organizations pursuing it as a goal. The objective treatment of employees who identify as gender diverse and the participatory decision-making process in the pursuit of equitable employment are two elements that support an inclusive culture in organizations (Le et al., 2020).

**Fairness:** This is the impartial treatment of employees. It could also be viewed as conforming with laid down rules of an organization because rewards /consequences arising from an employee's action or inaction should be applied to any employee who acts in same manner. According to Chen et al. (2022), "fairness is people's perception of the results of distributive justice".

**Equal Opportunity:** This is the act of ensuring that everyone gets the same chance to be employed in an organization. This can be achieved by advertising vacancies which are openly competed for. For existing employees, it offers the same chance to everyone for promotions and career advancement without showing any favouritism to certain groups. Equal Opportunities improves each person's prospects in life and is frequently linked to the phrase "level playing field" (Gargelwar, 2020).

**Policies and Programs:** These are plans or agenda an organization puts in place for the benefit of its employees, while achieving its goals. These plans are devoid of discrimination but involve inclusion, fairness, justice, and equity. While programs are thought of as internal activities that reflect inclusion, such as recruitment, non-exclusion, and leadership development, policies revolve around ideas and understanding of diverse tasks within an organization (Majczyk, 2022).

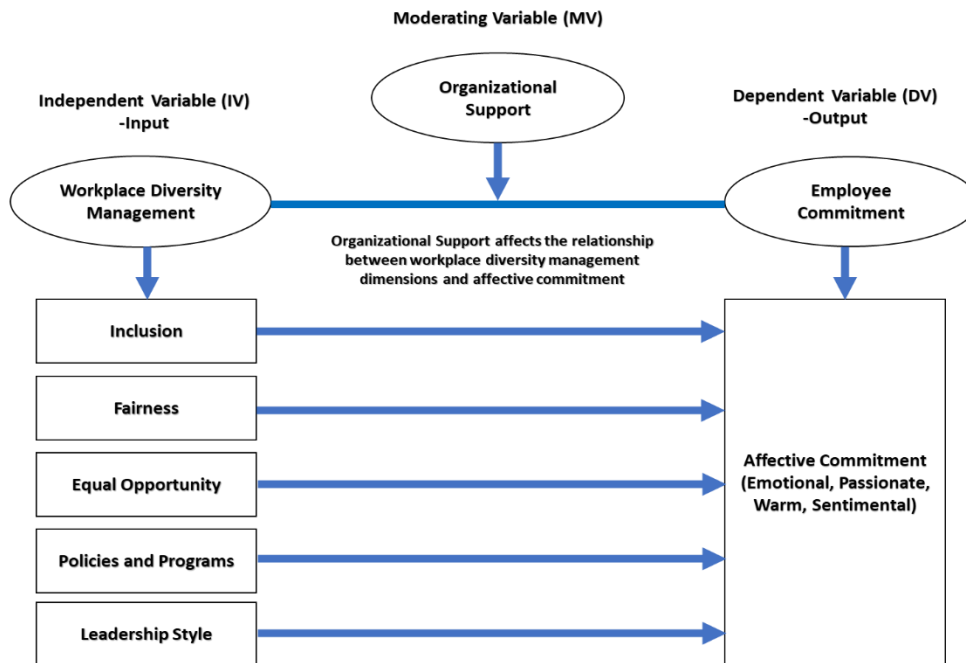
**Leadership Style:** Leadership style is the approach in which a manager or supervisor performs his/her functions towards the employees such as decision making and its implementation, which is usually influenced by the Manager's traits (attitude, beliefs, values, personality, experiences). These traits reflect the type of leadership style the Manager adopts which could be Democratic, Autocratic, Laissez-Faire, Transformational, Transactional, Ethnocentric leadership styles. Gonzales (2022) defined leadership as the process of persuading a group of people to achieve a common objective while Gameda and Lee (2020) opined that the fundamentals of leadership are its ability to persuade people, which is an organization's source of competitive advantage, and the consequences that follow. Studies show that ethnocentric style (feeling that one's ethnic group is superior to others) is common in Nigerian agencies.

**Moderating Role of Organizational Support:** This is the employees' understanding of the encouragement and aid provided by their company/employer. These aids can range from job empowerment, vacation days and work from home policies which help employees' physical and mental well-being; inclusion, fairness, and equal opportunities to all in the workplace. Asghar et al. (2021) viewed 'Perceived Organizational Support' as the level at which employees require support and motivation to manage multiple tasks. Furthermore, the Organization support theory posits that people often personify their organizations, seeing them as having a personality that either has good or bad intentions towards them (Cote et al., 2021).

### 2.3 Employee Commitment

This is referred to as the relationship or bond workers have with their organization. It can also be viewed as a voluntary psychological connection that reflects one's responsibility and devotion to a goal (Gifford et al., 2022). Three types of commitment were identified by Meyer & Allen (1991) in their three-factor model namely: affective, continuance and normative. Apart from the affective commitment, which has a key essential element of willingness (voluntary), dedication and accountability; individuals with continuance and normative commitment (commitment because of lack of choice either because of fear as in the former, or out of obligation as in the latter) are still seen as being committed.

**Affective Commitment:** Affective commitment is viewed by several scholars as a worker’s sentimental attachment to his organization because of his love or passion for his job. Haque et al. (2020) defined affective commitment as the degree to which employees experience psychological bonds with their organizations through feelings such as warmth, belongingness, liking, contentment, loyalty, and affection. Figure 1 below shows the theoretical constructs and relationship between the variables of significance.



**Figure1 Schematic representation of variables.**

**2.4 Theoretical Background**

Organizations with diverse workers embrace various ways to implore commitment from employees. These theories include but not limited to Affective events theory, Organizational attribution theory, Conservation of Resource theory, Contingency theory, Effort Recovery theory, Equity theory, Fairness theory, Human Capital theory, Institutional theory, Intersectionality theory, Job Demand resources theory, Resource-Based theory, Similarity attraction theory, Social exchange theory, Socio cultural theory, social categorization theory, organizational support theory, Person-Organization fit (PO-Fit theory), Racialized organizational theory. Upper echelon theory, leadership theory, leader-member exchange theory, Melting pot theory, Salad bowl theory, Thomas and Ely’s perspectives of discrimination and fairness.

This study is however hinged on two theories which relate with the Nigerian public sector situation namely: Salad bowl theory developed by Degler (1959), and Thomas and Ely’s three perspectives of discrimination and fairness developed by Thomas and Ely (1996). The salad bowl theory posits that individuals can still be regarded as members of the dominant society even if they choose to retain their cultural heritage. In contrast to a melting pot, which stresses the blending of the parts into a single whole, salad bowl is the way an intercultural society can integrate various cultures while preserving their unique identities.

The study is consistent with the salad bowl theory because it focuses on the multicultural environment of Nigerian public agencies. Several authors (Jaiswal et al., 2022; Gale et al., 2021; Berray, 2019) opine that the salad bowl theory accepts the coexistence of distinct identities, adheres to the multiculturalism ideology, and recognizes rather than minimizes racial, ethnic, and cultural differences. However, this theory's drawback is its disloyalty to the nation's or organization's shared core values. Employees’ focus on group interests and successes over organizational success causes the organization to weaken in the absence of a shared destiny and set of goals.

To relate this theory to the workplace diversity constructs, it is expected that its assumption of unity while retaining employees’ cultural identities aligns with the recognition of everyone regardless of background (Inclusion). The inclusion construct is therefore the foundation for the impartial treatment of employees (fairness), providing a level playing field to compete (equal opportunity), and developing guidelines (policies and programs) by the employers/Managers (Leadership style) who will ensure enforcement and provide the enabling environment (organizational support) for employees to thrive thereby eliciting their commitment.

Furthermore, the study also aligns with Thomas and Ely’s three paradigms of diversity because these three paradigms reflect the expectations of employees in Nigerian public sector. The model developed by Thomas and Ely (1996), emphasizes on the impact that workplace diversity has on organizational outcomes. Three perspectives were put forth by Thomas and Ely for managing diversity at the organizational level:

discrimination and fairness, access and legitimacy, and integration and learning. Following the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlawed discrimination based on race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, physical ability, and other factors, the discrimination and fairness paradigm came into being. Its enactment required businesses with more than 15 employees to treat their workers equally and without discrimination in all facets of their business operations. The hallmarks of this paradigm are law and obedience.

The access and legitimacy paradigm were founded on the forecast that the proportion of women and minorities in the American workforce would increase by the year 2000. The paradigm concentrated on how to better integrate women and racial and ethnic minorities into the corporate culture of the United States. Minorities received special training because of this, and some bilingual minorities were assigned to important roles in the company, like customer service, where they could interact with a variety of demographics. Employers who view diversity as an important but unimportant side issue typically adopt this strategy, formalizing diversity initiatives without fully integrating them into their core business operations.

Lastly, the paradigm of learning and effectiveness has gained prominence as diversity has been recognized as one of the primary sources of competitive advantage for businesses. As the proportion of women and minorities in the workforce increased, businesses started considering how to develop these workers to the best of their abilities rather than integrating them into the current corporate culture and reducing their ability to influence business results. As a result, diversity was expanded to include secondary dimensions, which businesses included, accepted, and celebrated such as: education, geography, personalities, and communication styles.

To relate the above theory of three paradigms to the constructs of diversity in Nigerian public sector, it is apparent that the inclusion, equal opportunity, policies and programs and fairness constructs align with the discrimination and fairness paradigm because its emphasis, backed by law, is on avoiding preferential treatment and providing equity for all workers just like the quota system policies in Nigeria. Similarly, inclusion and leadership style also align with the access and legitimacy paradigm because of its postulation of integrating women and minorities into corporate culture.

This paradigm reflects the responsibility of the Federal Character Commission in Nigeria in ensuring Chief Executive Officers of Government agencies adhere to the laws of recruitments in representing all geopolitical zones in their employee distribution. Conclusively, organizational support aligns with the paradigm of integration and learning which postulates that businesses developed these minorities to the best of their abilities and retained them in their organizations for optimal productivity. This paradigm shows that commitment of employees is provoked when organizations train staff and provide them with the necessary tools and favourable environment to discharge their responsibilities. The above three paradigms which guarantee the hiring and retention of minority group employees and equal opportunity, represent the expectations of the Nigerian public sector employees. Based on the first two perspectives, it is assumed that integration and learning (the third perspective) will take place as the inventors imagined.

### 3.0 Methodology

The Objective of this review is to justify the relevant theories that explain the existence of the research problem that is being studied and present the relevant constructs used by various scholars in countries with similar characteristics like Nigeria. Using keywords from the independent and dependent variables, as well as their corresponding proxies, several pertinent bodies of literature from respectable journals were consulted and included to find theories that were used. However, only works of relevant literature that had been published in the previous five years were cited in this study to guarantee currency. Table 1 shows a summary of the theories that underpin this study, the relevant constructs, and their Authors as well as the sector in countries that were studied.

**Table 1**

S/N	CONSTRUCTS	AUTHOR	THEORY	SECTOR
1	Fairness	Batmolin et al.,2022	Thomas and Ely's perspective	Private (Indonesia)
2.	Inclusion (Multiculturalism)	Batmolin et al.,2022; Gale et al.,2021; Jaiswal et al., 2022	Thomas and Ely's perspective, Salad Bowl	Public (USA), Private (India)
3.	Equal Opportunity	Batmolin et a.,2022, Berray, 2019; Calderon Berumen, 2019	Salad Bowl	Public (USA)

### 4.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

This review has shown that there are commonalities among the opinions and perceptions of diversity and diversity management held by various scholars. They all agree that diversity management is the effort made by the management of individual organizations to ensure unity in diversity, whereas diversity is concerned with the heterogeneity of the workforce. To accomplish this and meet the objectives of the organization, policies and programs that promote justice, fairness, inclusion, and equal opportunity are put into place. Therefore, the goal is to motivate employees to perform at their highest level. But there is still a gap in the inadequate application of some or all these diversity management policies,

particularly by multicultural countries like Nigeria's public sector, where the government frequently meddles in agency hiring practices and creates uneven appointments.

The two theories (Thomas and Ely's three perspectives and Salad bowl) that underpin the study are proposed for a diverse workforce because they also support the constructs of the independent variable (inclusion, fairness, equal opportunity). By encouraging unity in diversity and recognizing individual differences, employees' commitment will increase which will result to loyalty. Organizations are therefore advised to embrace diversity, absorb minorities where necessary, and leverage on the variety.

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