Review

Workforce diversity management and global organizational growth in the 21st century

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It is generally recognized that there is diversity in the workforce of any enterprise, be it business, public, private or civil society. This paper therefore, sought to find out the impact of workforce diversity management and global organizational growth in the 21st century using secondary review. The paper revealed that, leaders and companies that encourage workforce diversity and inclusion tends to have ability to not only improve their market share in the existing domestic market but also capture a new market in the global business environment. The paper further discovered that, organizations with the inclusion work environment tend to attract and retain the best talent available who are the key ingredient for generating creative ideas that in turn impact on customer’s retention and on organization’s performance. This paper recommends that, Human Resource Professionals and company executives use good strategies to effectively manage workforce diversity by developing human resource policies and practices that encourage diverse and discrimination-free work environment where heterogeneous workforce can flourish.

Key words: Contribution, inclusion workplace, organization, productivity, workforce diversity.

INTRODUCTION

More than ever, businesses, both public and private organizations are finding it necessary to adopt a global mindset in order to remain viable and relevant in today's global marketplace and as the result a diverse workforce has become a centre of every business. This is because; the 21st century workforce has become global, highly connected, technology-savvy, creating a greater global management challenge of the highly skilled workforce. That's why a report by Deloitte (2014) discovered that in the 21st century, critical new skills are scarce and their uneven distribution around the world force companies to develop innovative new ways to find people, develop capabilities, and share expertise. It is therefore notable that, the global workforce challenge is on how to manage and capitalize on the positive impact of youthful employees who are ambitious, and filled with passion and purpose, the older workers who remain engaged and valuable contributors, people with disabilities, and women in the workforce as well as minority workers like gays, lesbian and transgender.

This has been as the result of development in science and technology that is a key ingredient of globalization. During this period, people especially the talented one are no longer live and work in an insular marketplace, rather, they are now part of a worldwide economy. For example, Colella (2006) in analyzing the most recent USA census noted that in the 21st century racial, ethnic, age and gender makeup of the US workforce through 2050 will mean that 4 out of 10 people will be the members of the ethnic groups. In this case, given the vast amount of demographic and other changes that occurs in different part of US and other part of the world, one may expect some kind of cultural drift or erosion as the norm state of affairs. Hence, the issue of managing a diverse workforce...
becomes a centre of every business since by acknowledging people’s differences and recognizing them as valuable asset, it enhance good management practices thereby preventing discrimination that eventually promote inclusiveness and as well this built organizational loyalty to employees and customers.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that, successful business in the 21st century according to Bedi (2014) are now moving far to anticipate and capitalizing on the swiftly rising proportion of minority, immigrants, female and older people. Most importantly, some organizations are attracting and capitalizing on the talent of the disabled. That’s why organizations that recognizes and utilizes the talent and ability of the disables to contribute to the organizational goal and objective have the competitive advantage over its competitors. This is because according to International Labour Organization ILO (2011), implementing the comprehensive United Nation Convention on the right of persons with disabilities and other minority workers, calls for organizations to revisit their HR practices so that they attract, retain and as well hire and utilizes them as a means of capitalizing on their talent and skills.

Therefore, maximizing and capitalizing on the workforce diversity has become an important issue of today’s Human Resource Management Professionals and their organizations since it is now considered as an important and predicted to become even more important in the future due to increasing differences in the world workforce populations. In this case, Green et al. (2012) noted that companies needs to focus on diversity and look for ways to become totally inclusive organizations because diversity has the potential of yielding greater productivity, thereby giving a company competitive advantage over the other. On the other hand, Robinson (2002) believed that diversity is an invaluable competitive asset that America and the rest of the world cannot afford to ignore. It is for this reason, that both public and private organizations need diversity so as to become creative and as well open up their doors for change that will enable a diverse workforce to flourish.

Hence, it is now the purpose of this paper that managing as well as valuing a diverse workforce is a key component of effective people’s management, that when utilized effectively lead to workplace productivity.

THE CONCEPT OF WORKFORCE DIVERSITY

Workforce Diversity is a term that refers to a situation where employers appreciate and value individual differences within the workplace, where heterogeneous workforce is established as well as allowed to perform to it potentials in an equitable work environment. Cascio (2010) refers to it as a pragmatic business strategy that focuses on maximizing the productivity, creativity, and commitment of the diverse workforce while meeting the needs of diverse consumer groups. However, the challenge of a diverse workforce to most 21st century organizations is on how to create a work setting in which each person can have an opportunity to perform to his or her full potential and therefore compete for promotion and other rewards on merit alone. Hence, the concept of workforce diversity has been the result of different forces from global business environment.

Therefore, the forces responsible for workforce diversity (Figure 1) are: development in the global market, shifting from manufacturing to service provisions, changing labor markets, mergers and international alliances, teamwork strategies and technological advancement to mention some. Each of these forces has been discussed in details as follows:

The service economy

The increasing prevalence’s of globalization impact heavily on the manufacturing sector leading to increase in productivities in the one hand, and in the other hand decreasing the need for additional labour in the manufacturing sectors. This is because, advanced nations are now shedding manufacturing jobs and gaining service jobs and this trend has been there for decades now. It is worth noting that corporate outsourcing of tasks like marketing means workers doing the same task as before now show up as working for a firm in the service sector. This has been the result of increase in ethnic, racial as well as multicultural diverse group migrating from developed and developing countries competing for market share. As noted by Cascio (2010), the decline in new jobs in the manufacturing sector has facilitated the dramatic growth in new jobs in the service producing industry such as Banking, financial services, health services, tourism as well as retailing sector and the implications of this growth is the increase in interactions with customers. Using US data from the past 35 years, Colella (2006) in analyzing the shift from manufacturing to service jobs from 1973-2008 noted that 87% of the US employees work in service-based industries and the implications of this trend is that the evolution of the input-output structure which was mostly due to professional and business services outsourced shows the 87% increase in the service sector and as well 13% of the fall in the manufacturing sector.

Furthermore, unlike the manufacturing sector, the service producing sector have the tendency of interacting with customers and suppliers, therefore, this calls for service employees to be in a position to read their customer’s needs and understand them and as well respond accordingly so as to meet their expectations. That is to say, in the service sector game, customer literacy is an essential skill for service sector industry employees. To understand the need of your company’s customers, the language of business through possession
of the right skills is the demand of today’s business. For example, Green et al. (2012) noted that a growing number of companies now realize that their workforces should mirror their customers and that’s why most explanations of structural transformation in the shift from the US manufacturing to service sector focuses on final demand or customers, with one of the most common ideas being that when societies become richer, they prefer to consume more services. As the matter of stressing more on this, Cascio (2010) gave a scenario where when the purchasing power of Hispanics, African Americans, Asian, people with disabilities, gays/ lesbians/bisexuals/transsexuals account for over $1.5 trillion in the US population, why should any business want to ignore them? That’s why business executive should consider customer's purchasing power in the labour market regardless of which group of minority is coming from.

On the other hand, as the matter of capitalizing on the positive impact of the diverse groups, some companies noted that similarities in culture, dress and language between service workers and their customers creates more efficient interactions between them as well promote better business for the company. When companies discover that they can communicate better with their customers through employees who are familiar and similar to their customers, those companies begin to realize that they have increased their internal diversity. These calls for Human Resource department to formulate Human Resource practices that are capable to identify, attract, manage and retain their new diverse workforce who can perform better in a diverse environment. This can be witnessed from the study by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Maryland National Bank in Baltimore quoted by Cascio (2010) who discovered that recruiting Bank tellers from the locality where the business operates who are capable of swap neighborhood gossip through their local language showed higher customer-retention records than those that does not. That’s why he was quoted saying “there is no going back; diversity breeds diversity, so managing it well is an essential part of HR strategy”.

Global thinking/market

Global thinking is another strong force for the development of the philosophy of the workplace workforce diversity. As noted from the shift from manufacturing to service industry sector, that financial markets and regulatory arrangements around the world continue to become harmonized, standardized and globalized, then the industry become more connected with global decisions and regulations. A study by Deloitte (2011) noted that with an expanding middle class in Asia, particularly in China, new markets are being created for financial products. The study further revealed that Australian financial institution are geographically positioned and in terms of expertise and business
connections to capitalize on the emerging markets opportunities. This has been possible since the Australian financial sector has been able to create systems that are more outwards focused, more competitive and more innovative and as the result it has been able to attract skilled workforce from the global labor market.

It is further advisable according Boroughs et al. (2008) that for firms to improve competitiveness as well as productivity, their financial managers need to improve their knowledge and skills of the international markets, as well as implementing programs that foster a global approach that recognizes and respect different perspectives and as well broaden and deepening employees understanding of the other cultures, language, political, economy and social systems of the company concern.

Globalization is not a new concept for a thousand of years people have been selling and buying from different countries but it is regarded as a key factor for growth of workforce diversity. This is because, due to globalization, markets in every country have become fierce battlegrounds where both domestic and foreign competitors fight for the market share. It is worth noting that open borders have allowed new ideas and technology to flow freely around the globe thereby accelerating productivity growth and allowing flexible and adaptable companies to become more competitive than ever before.

Brewster et al. (2005) noted that in this era of global competition, focus on customers become the slogan of the business since customers have power to insists on what they need and also their preferences be satisfied and therefore companies need to become closer to their customers. This is when they need to establish alliances or mergers so as to be close with their customers as the way of understanding their needs better, hence the issue of managing diversity becomes crucial. It was also noted that as the country business become more global, then the nation’s most important competitive asset becomes the skilled and cumulative learning workforce. Welfare (2006) stresses that employee or workforce that is knowledgeable and skilled at handling corporate culture in a merger or alliance business in the globalized market keeps a company competitive and attracts foreign investment and thereby company withstands the global competition. For example the CEO of Switzerland-based Novo Nordisk quoted in Cascio (2010) requiring his managers that each year they must be in a position to sell at least three best practices to managers in other part of the world through their corporate intranet, first they must use technology to move information around the company; second, they must learn from colleagues around the global and share information with them and lastly, they must measure these soft skills and hard skills as returns from the business and as well hold people accountable for them but he realized that above all strategies what matters is culture.

Technological change

Technological changes have been largely responsible for continual changes in the structure of the financial services workforce and this has been the result of the fragmentation of the financial sector into narrower areas of specializations. The study by DEEWR (2013) when analyzing workforce diversity development in the Australian financial sector noted that technology has affected on how firms do business since the industry is more exposed than almost any factor than digital forces. This is because in this era of intense-global-competition, financial sector in Australia and perhaps in all parts of the world need to understand better the use of a range of technological equipments to strengthen its internal control against cyber threats.

To withstand the global competition, finance firms need a strategic understanding about technology so as to know which of the various products and platforms should be adopted and how they should be deployed within the company. In this case, firms need staff who are capable of sorting masses of data, draw conclusions and effectively communicate what the data implies to the industry. On the other hand, social media presents new marketing opportunities but also new opportunities to improve workforce efficiency by enabling working across various teams with diverse cultural background and locations to interact and share information and best practices. Through learning the best practices, firms need to consider in particular ethical and legal risks associated with the adoption of different technologies.

To overcome this challenge, Sims (2007) suggested a number of Human Resource Management programs to be implemented so as to create and maintain the global-local balance by constantly assisting the organizations to adapt to changing business. He pointed out that organization must develop workable strategies for sharing of learning across their locations as well as operational groupings. It was also suggested that Human Resource Management needs to work through the organization so as to facilitate shared knowledge and innovations. Therefore, global-local balance acts suggests that there is the need for members of the organization to feel that they belong to a global enterprises but at the same time feel accountable for their contributions in a more local sense.

Mergers and strategic international alliances

Mergers, acquisition and International Alliances involve blending people of different corporate culture and even various national cultures into one company. Leaders who have worked out the results of all mergers, acquisitions as well as strategic international alliances over the past twenty years back, know how important it is to knit together new partners financial, technological, production
and marketing resources. However, it is notable that in order to realize a successful merger and alliances, managers and leaders of the new enterprises have to strongly take into consideration the resource people by creating a partnership that spans around different corporate cultures. Moran et al. (2007) noted that key problems that make mergers and strategic international alliances fail arises from differences from their corporate cultures and it ranks on the top challenge facing mergers and acquisitions. This is because cultures from different nationalities differs in many ways such as the custom of conducting business, how people are expected to behave as well as the kind of behavior expected to be rewarded, hence when mishandled it result into what most managers refers it as culture shock. To avoid this kind of culture shock that has been regarded as a key reason for Mergers and alliance’s managers to resign or fired within 18 months of Mergers and Acquisition foreign takeoff, both employees and management need to understand how to capitalize on diversity as companies combine their efforts to offer products and services to customers in far-flung markets or across borders.

Similarly, a study by Morris (2008) noted that Mergers and Acquisition as the driving forces of today’s business environment have combined to reshape Mergers and Acquisitions landscape on the form of private capital notably known as private equity, have refashioned the way deals are transacted. It is worth noting that investor’s communities have become much more active in scrutinizing the strategy and capabilities of public companies to nurture the portfolio of their business to cope with the diversity forces.

These forces have become more serious due to the tremendous growth in the cross-border activities fuelled by the process of globalization. It is therefore advisable that companies and their management will not be able to survive and prosper in this new world of Mergers and Acquisition, unless they fight back by building a world-class M&A teams that will be managed through effective communication.

The changing labour market

The demographic of the US labour market and perhaps all over the world have shifted significantly due to the pressure from development from science and technology as well as the impact from globalization. The 2000 US census report served as a call to corporations to heighten their attention to diversity issues within their workforce and throughout the workplace. As noted by Cascio (2010) that due to the report of the US census, it is predicted that over the 25 years to come (2035), the US workforce will comprise of more women, more immigrants, more people of different color, and more older workers and as the result workplace will be characterized by more diverse workforce in every respect. It is now notable that in order to minimize the negative impact of the diverse workforce and as well being able to capitalize the advantage from the same, it is advisable to teach all employees to understand and value different races, ethnic groups, cultures, languages, religions, sexual orientations, levels of physical ability and family structures brought by these composition of the workforce. It is of crucial importance that employees and managers need to understand that differences from diverse work groups does not mean deficiency and that’s why there is a need for organizations to try all means on how to capitalize on the positive advantage from the diverse workforce.

Furthermore, McCuiston et al. (2004) discovered that the increasingly US demography, coupled with a growing global economy, are buying to force organizations to rethink models of business success and how they will align business strategies with current and future demographics and market realities. It is only through effective design of the inclusive business strategies that consider employees at every level of the organization, when the company will be able to build the trust among the members of high-performance work teams. It is therefore advisable that such teams incorporates practices that clearly provide to their members with the information, skills, incentives as well as responsibility to make decisions that are essential to innovate, to improve quality and to respond rapidly to global change.

NEW BUSINESS STRATEGIES

For organizations to survive in this globalized business environment, they need to pursue business strategies that define broadly their product than ever before such as world class quality, reliability and high proficiency in customer service. Carrying this strategy, organizations need to reformulate new business strategy that will ensure that all members of the firms sing the same song of “quality product as a team”. That’s why Page (2007) suggested that if a firm’s business strategy emphasize speed in every function for example in developing new products, producing them, distributing them as well as responding to feedback from customers, then it is advisable that the firm needs to rely on teams of workers to meet this demand from customers who are the blood fluid for the survival of their business. In this case, team means a diverse workforce regardless of drawing from the most talented or experienced staff or a deliberate restructuring effort to stimulate creativity within the organizations.

Aghazadeh (2004) noted that, it is only through work teams that organizations can execute successful newly adopted strategies that focus on better quality products, innovated, cost control or speed in response to its customers. The teams can be domestic or global and they may never meet but they can be successfully...
managed through their interaction by the combination of electronic communication systems. This has call for a need for a rich training agenda as members from a diverse background need to learn to work productively and efficiently together to the achievement of the overall organizational goals and objectives and at the same time achieving their personal growth.

WORKFORCE DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT AND GLOBAL ORGANIZATION’S GROWTH IN THE 21ST CENTURY

In the 21st century, workforce diversity has become a major competitive factor for many organizations that are to become global competitors than the others. Hence, carefully creating an environment that is inclusive of a diverse workforce, companies will be in a position to outperform their rival one. The contributions that a diverse workforce has to overall global organization’s growth in the 21st century are as discussed in details as follows:

Employee and customer’s retention

An inclusive work environment has proven to attract top talent people and as the result they have been able to retain both employees and the company’s customers. Guthridge et al. (2008) noted that buying power, particularly in today’s global economy specifically in the 21st century, is represented by people from all walks of life such as ethnicities, races, ages, abilities, genders as well as sexual orientations to mention some. In order to ensure that their products and services are designed to appeal to this diverse customer base, smart companies, are hiring people, from those walks of life for their specialized insights and knowledge concerning such particular customer’s base. More importantly, companies that interact directly with the public are finding increasingly important to have the makeup of their workforces reflect the makeup of their customer base. For example Brewster and Sparrow (2007) noted that qualified and interested people are often attracted to employers who are able to show that they are committed to develop and promote a wide array of people. He consider IBM, since 1995 where the number of female executives worldwide has increased by 490%, while the number of self identified gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) employees has grown even faster, and also the number of executive with disabilities has been more than tripled. The logic here as a strategy for retention is that IBM buys $2.1 billion worth of goods and services from suppliers owned by women, minorities, or GLBT people and as well it sells more than $500 million of goods and services by marketing to those groups. By doing so, employee’s customer retention has been realized.

Furthermore, it is notable according to Lieber (2010) that when companies discover that they can communicate better with their customers through employees who are similar to their customers, hence those companies realize that they have increased their internal diversity and as the result they are able to retain both employees and their consumers.

In connection to that, the study by the society for Human Resource Management by Aghazadeh (2004) found that:

(a) 91% of employees reported that diversity initiatives helped their organizations compete in the marketplace.
(b) 79% believed that their diversity programs improved corporate culture.
(c) 77% said that diversity programs improved recruitment efforts.
(d) 52% indicated that diversity programs facilitated more effective client contact.

From the study above, it is worth noting that diversity programs has the crucial role to play in the issue of employees and customer’s retention through what Cascio (2010) refers it as customer-literacy-skills.

Enhance on organizational performance

The current literature reveals the fact that the relationship between diversity and organizational or group performance can be either positively correlated or negatively correlated. Diversity according to Gandossy et al. (2006) can be classified in two perspectives such as demographic and cognitive, and demographic diversity includes things like gender, age, race and ethnicity and on the other hand cognitive diversity includes knowledge, education, values, perception, affection and personality inclusiveness.
characteristics of an individual from a diverse work group. Hence, the attributes, knowledge, education, perception as well as personality that an individual or group brings to the workplace if well managed, is considered to have positive contribution to the overall organization’s effectiveness and performance. That’s why Bergen (2005) noted that there have been many contemporary studies on demographic diversity and its effect on organization’s performance. It is notable according to Roberson and Parks (2006) that a diverse workforce results in higher perceived levels of overall company’s performance, profitability and return on equity. This is because diversity results in greater knowledge, creativity and innovation and thus, organizations tend to become more competitive than its competitor.

Moreover, organizations with the inclusion work environment tend to attract and retain the best talent available who are the key ingredient for generating creative ideas that in turn impact on organization’s performance. The fund so accrued due to lower turnover and fewer lawsuits as the result of retention through diversity inclusion programs enhances organization ability to increase more investments that in turn affect positively organization performance. This is because according to Deloitte (2011), an environment where employees feel valued and given freedom to pursue at their best tends to yield greater commitment as well as motivation to succeed and this means that fewer resources spend on grievances, turnover and the replacement costs that in turn re-invested to more projects.

It is further worth noting that organizations that embrace inclusive work practices and directly address the racial and cultural diversity of their employees have been found to benefit from experiencing both substantial increases in profit as well as employee productivity. For example, a study by McCuiston et al. (2004) discovered that there is a strong correlation between employees’ diversity and greater business performance in areas such as worker’s productivity, net operating profit, gross revenues as well as higher shareholders values.

**Expand company to global market**

In the 21st century, workforce diversity is no longer regarded as simply a human resources issue that is limited only to fair hiring practices or enhancing an organization’s image. Most scholars argue that in this dynamic global business environment, there has been an increasing recognition that it can also contribute to corporate strategy and effectiveness, and that diverse organizations may have opportunities and advantages than more homogeneous companies may not. It is notable according to Adecco (2013) that while successful management of diversity may lead to business benefits or competitive advantages, but failure to adequately address these issues could present a risk to a company’s ability to innovate, attract clients and partners, or keep pace within its industry through new market penetrations.

In addition, there are some powerful examples of leading global companies which successfully utilized diversity to help generate innovative products and services that delivered tangible benefits to their bottom lines and thereby increasing their domestic and global market. These can be witnessed from the study by Morris (2008) who summarizes the PepsiCo diversity initiatives as follows:

>“PepsiCo attributed one percentage point of its 7.4% revenue growth in 2003 or about US$250 million to new products inspired by diversity and inclusion efforts. Seeking to expand into ethnically diverse markets, PepsiCo used its diverse workforce to obtain unique insights into the needs of customers in those markets. PepsiCo products such as guacamole-flavored Doritos chips, Gatorade Xtremo, and Mountain Dew Code Red were inspired by and targeted to minorities. “I believe that companies that figure out the diversity challenge first will clearly have a competitive advantage,” Steve Reinemund, PepsiCo’s then-chairman and CEO, told The Wall Street Journal (Morris, 2008:159).

From the above quotation, one can declare that diversity and inclusion programs has enabled the PepsiCo expand its domestic markets into the international market through targeting to the minority demands.

It is further worth noting that virtually all companies regardless of sector (whether public or private), competitive strength and market growth depend on how innovative and creative a company is. This is because gaining market share and expanding into new markets hinges on winning over new consumers or clients by identifying unmet needs and developing new products, services, and systems to fill that particular market. This is what Hewlett et al. (2013) call serial innovation that relies much on a diverse workforce as the result of the speak-out culture as diagrammatically shown in Figure 2.

From Figure 2, it is notable that leaders and companies that encourage workforce diversity and inclusion tend to have ability to not only improve their market share in the domestic market but also capture a new market in the global business environment. This is because an inclusive leader’s behaviors and a diverse work environment effectively unlock the innovative potential of an inherently diverse workforce, thereby enabling companies to increase their share of existing markets and open brand new ones. It is suggested according to Canadian Institute of Chartered Accounts (2010) that leaders who encourage and foster a speak-out culture environment enable companies to realize greater efficiencies through creation of brilliant ideas that tends to cultivate creativity and innovation which result in the improvement of the existing market and as well open new markets through development of a new products as illustrated diagrammatically in Figure 2.

Most dramatically, Visconti (2007) asserts that there is a robust correlation between highly innovative, diverse companies and market growth. The survey study by
Harrison and Klein (2007) reported that heterogeneous workforce enable companies to have 46% of firm’s ability to captured a new market in the past 12 months, and 45% more likely that their firm have been able to improve market share in that same time frame. This has been possible due to innovation capacity that resides in an inherently diverse workforce where leaders prize difference, value every voice, and manage rather than suppress disruption.

CHALLENGES FOR WORKFORCE DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

Implementing diversity initiatives posits a challenge to both top management and line managers in any Organization. Below are some of the challenges facing the implementation of diversity initiative programs in different organizations.

Divergent paths taken to reach the same goal

Though Organizations worldwide tend to agree on the goal of greater Diversity promotion and management, but their overall commitment and their methods of achieving it cover a broad spectrum and differ from one country to another. That’s why, study shows that beyond a nearly universal interest in attracting and promoting female employees, companies vary in their choice of target groups and to some extent their preferences follow regional patterns. For example, Koonce (2001) noted that US companies tend to seek racial and ethnic balance, while European and Canadian companies pay closer attention to immigration and people from different nationalities. It is further notable that companies also vary in how firmly they enforce specific diversity goals, for example the study discovered that US companies tend more toward the prescriptive approach and European and Asian companies leaning more toward a decentralized, laissez-faire approach.

Regional differences according to Flagg (2002) present tricky problems for multinational corporations as most of the time try to strive for consistency in their HR policies across geographical locations as an internal strategy, but on the other hand, they strive for policies that respect local cultures and traditions in which the business operate. That is to say, the differences in culture within the environment where business is operated tend to hinder the implementation of diversity policies and thereby hindering the achievement of the regional target. For example, the above study found that issues of race can be a significant aspect of diversity programs in US companies, whereas in Germany, companies are not allowed to collect racial data on employees and racial discussions tend to be avoided. In France, the series of race riots and clashes in October-November 2005, which were staged by Muslim youths, led to a debate over the need to collect racial data since it was forbidden in the country. Therefore, such differences in culture and history of the country concerned have a decisive impact on the shape of diversity initiatives.

Corporate culture hinder diversity efforts

Beyond the complex task of defining objectives and methods to achieve diversity managements companies face a variety of internal barriers to implementing such programs. By its nature, hiring, promoting and integrating a critical mass of employees from diverse backgrounds changes the nature of the interactions within a company. If that diversity effort is to succeed that is, if the newcomers are to be successfully integrated, the company’s culture must itself undergo fundamental changes.
The survey study by Roosevelt (2001), confirms that the main barrier to diversity and inclusion is cultural resistance from within the company itself. From that survey study, it was discovered that nearly half (46%) of respondents said that the task of changing HR practices and policies to encourage diversity is either somewhat difficult or very difficult with only 18% that rated the task as either very easy or somewhat easy. Hence, culture differences, perception and beliefs tend to hinder to a large extent the promotion of workforce diversity initiative programs implemented in different countries.

Data difficulties

One of the barriers to implementing Diversity programs is legal complexity surrounding the collection of data on recruitment and promotion in a particular country since National laws differ on what data may be collected. For example, a study by Canadian Institute for Chartered and Accounts (2010) discovered that in some European countries, assembling racial and ethnic data on employees is expressly forbidden, as it raises painful memories of wartime persecution while the US law and regulations however sees nothing wrong with collecting such information.

It is worth noting that, in India and in most African Countries, it is a taboo to mention for example the issues of Gays and Lesbian while in US and UK, one can set a day to discuss issues affecting this particular group of minority. Therefore, due to difficulty in collecting data that can be used to measure the degree or the extent to which the diversity target is being or has been reached hinder the diversity initiatives programs.

Diversity and top management support

It is noted that, Diversity, especially in its early stages, can complicate the completion of tasks, and the biggest barrier is found in middle management where departmental or team projects are carried out. Thirty-six percent (36%) of survey respondents according to Canadian Institute of Chartered Accounts (2010) say one of the main impediments to increasing diversity is a general attitude of indifference, and 33% say the obstacle is a sense that the workforce is sufficiently diverse. Similarly, the survey further revealed that at senior levels of the organization, the greatest barriers to diversity has been lack of top-level commitment (22%).

From the above findings, one can declare that negative attitudes and behaviors as well as lack of commitment from top and line management normally becomes a barrier to organizational diversity initiatives because they can harm working relationships and damage morale and work productivity.

STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE

Most workplaces are made up of diverse cultures, so organizations need to learn how to adapt to be successful and as well in order to be successful in this dynamic business environment it has to learn how to manage a diverse workforce in the workplace. Therefore, organizations must rapidly try to adjust to the growing needs and values of today’s diverse workforce and this will include recruitments and maintenance of a pool of highly qualified workers in their business.

In order to be successful, Peter et al. (2010) contends that diversity work needs to be adjusted to the local context in which one need to find diversity dimensions that are important and relevant in each specific country. That’s why, a study by Global consultancy Accenture’s vision of Diversity according to Peter et al. advised that companies need to act locally and as well coordinate globally, so the company’s leadership teams in each country is left to choose what aspect of Diversity to emphasize.

Achieving cultural competence in an organization involves an ongoing process of quality improvement and strong commitment from top management. This framework has to be structured to foster and promote a process of continuous quality improvement through regular planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. Therefore, organizations need to develop, implement, and maintain ongoing training because a one-day session of training will not change people’s behaviors to cope with the diversity initiative programs (Koonce, 2001).

Another vital requirement when dealing with diversity is promoting a safe place for associates to communicate. Social gatherings and business meetings, where every member must listen and have the chance to speak, are good ways to create dialogues that can promote diversity initiative programs to flourish. Therefore, Managers need to implement policies such as mentoring programs to provide associates access to information and opportunities and also, associates should never be denied necessary, constructive, critical feedback for learning about mistakes and successes (Flagg, 2002).

Make diversity a core business value

Diverse work teams bring high value to organizations and respecting individual differences will benefit the workplace by creating a competitive edge and increasing work productivity. Therefore, it is advisable that board commitment is vital to articulate Diversity and Inclusion as core corporate business values. For example Lieber (2010) noted that, when quoting Anise Wiley-Little, who was the Chief Diversity Officer of insurer Allstate, says her company took the route of making diversity a core
business value since from the beginning with good results: She was quoted saying:

“We were very deliberate in spelling out Diversity as one of the company’s core values and that is what makes employee to sing one song of diversity, we call it inclusive diversity” (Lieber, 2010).

From the above quotation, it is worth noting that, classifying diversity as a corporate business as part of who we are and how we work, it surely assist in driving the right behaviors, then behaviors drive performance, and performance drives results since it become the slogan of the company. That’s the way we need to look at it, when we define ‘inclusive Diversity’ as a core value, it has to touch every part of our business and all company’s employees.

**Build an infrastructure to support Diversity**

Companies that build successful Diversity initiatives create management infrastructure to support them and this consists of both the existing hierarchy and permanent or dedicated groups such as employee networks with top-level backing through communication network. Many companies appoint Diversity councils to collect and respond to the views of specific Diversity groups such as women or minorities. It is notable here that while the challenges for transforming an organization into an inclusive one, such challenges can be met by a demonstrated and trustworthy commitment to diversity, innovative programs and training around issues of racial and cultural as well as establishment of organizational support for employee from diverse background.

For example, Sayers (2013) quoted the CEO Kenneth Lewis of Bank of America, a company that voted # 1 in commitment to diversity, as inc. magazine summarizes as follows:

“Our commitment to diversity is a commitment to individual and to the teams. It is about creating an environment in which all associates can fulfill their potential without barriers and in which the team is made stronger by the diverse background, experiences and perspectives of an individual. It is about giving all of us-individual and together the best possible chance to succeed but with material support” (Sayers, 2013).

From the above quotation that top-level commitment to diversities initiatives program is critical to success but it is advisable that if one objective is to create an inclusive workplace that support people of diverse background to prove themselves, then you must provide tools that can help managers and employees to be effective in that particular inclusive environment.

**Focus on Diversity in the entire talent pipeline**

Large companies that want to ensure a supply of qualified diverse candidates for senior-level jobs must start at the bottom of the pyramid by grooming promising employees and this can stand as a motivator to them. Procter (2006) advised that if within the organization there is no those promising staff to be groomed, then the exercise need to extends to recruiting for internship and trainee programs, and in some cases goes back even further, to outreach programs in schools for example, Siemens in Europe has instituted a program called “Promoting Diversity” (Prodi) with the target to get more women into leadership careers. The program had the intention of getting girls and women in schools and universities interested in careers in science and/or engineering and another initiative for promoting a diverse workforce adopted by Siemens was supporting female students in a network of technology, a program called Young Ladies Network of Technology (Yolante). The two programs had the intention of encouraging young ladies to study engineering and technology programs at University and get employed by Siemens Company after graduation.

**Metrics and rewards-set clear Diversity targets**

It is advisable for companies to set a clear target to be achieved at every end of each financial year and this will be in numerical numbers. While a target is a softer goal than a quota, it amounts to setting a numerical goal and tends to achieve a similar result and always target setting is needed to focus attention of what is to be achieved at the end of the year.

In order to be sure whether your company is or not achieving the set target of initiative diversity programs, then we can compare the make-up of the workforce with that of the surrounding population or the specific target set by the company. Such comparisons are helpful in indicating emerging trends or early shifts to correct the deviation and if data suggest that a change is needed in our for example recruiting and hiring approach, we need to respond accordingly.

On the other hand, it is further advisable that the achieved target or behaviors have to be rewarded accordingly and this will encourage the persistence of the same behavior.

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The ongoing discussion revealed the significant relationship between workforce diversity management and global organization’s growth in the 21st century multinational corporations. This is because, development in science and technology and globalization of business has created a sophisticated, complex as well as competitive environment in which for organizations to be successful, they will need to comply with the end demand
requirements through quality and reliable products and services. To ensure that innovative products that can capture the attention of customers are in place, a diverse workforce and inclusion strategy must also be in place. This is because, a diverse and inclusive workforce is a crucial ingredient to drive innovation, foster creativity and as well guide business strategy on why and how to achieve a diverse workforce. It is worth noting that, multiple set of diverse experiences and perspectives lead to new ideas, encourage global thinking and as well develop a new products as well as new service style through what is called “customer-literacy skills”. It is further notable that, today’s organizations are no longer view diversity and inclusion efforts as separate from their business and Human Resource Management strategy, but rather they recognize and view that a diverse and inclusive workforce can differentiate them from their competitors through customer’s retention strategy from talented and highly skilled workforce.

Furthermore, the study noted that while diversity and inclusion efforts in organization is given that no firms can afford to ignore, but companies still face both external and internal challenges in implementing the idea as a policy and procedure. Internally, organizations are still struggling with their negative perceptions and attitudes towards equal employment opportunity among women, minority workers and people with disabilities as required by UN Convention on Human Rights and different laws and regulations from different Countries. For example, studies shows that, US seeks to achieve a racial and ethnic balance while in European Countries and Canada their target is for immigrants and people from different nationalities, and in German and France is that collection and discussion on racial data is prohibited, while in most African Countries and India, it is a taboo and against the law to collect and discuss data on issues of the marginalized groups like gays and lesbian while in the UK, it is possible to call a meeting and discuss issues affecting gays and lesbian groups, hence legal complexity among Countries hinder the actual implementation of the strategy. Externally, due to resource dependent theory, economic forces and capabilities impede business firms from hiring talented and skilled workforce from a diverse workgroup.

Looking forward, as a strategy for copying due to declining pipeline of qualified talent in the 21st century, organizations must try to grapple with an aging workforce, grooming the promising one from within their firms and this can only be possible by making training and diversity issue a core business strategy as way of overcoming challenges of multigenerational and multicultural workforce.

Lastly but not the least, as long as organizations can keep their eye on the prize from the top, that is to diversity and inclusion efforts at the top level of management priority list, hence one can certainly predict that, it will position the company out of these challenges and enable them come out ahead of the competition.

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