International Journal of Scientific Research in Education (IJSRE)

ISSN: 1117-3259

Management Practices to Overcome Challenges of Employee Diversity Traits in Secondary Schools in Rivers State for National Integration

Samuel Nariochukwu Owhondah[i]
Department of Educational Management
Faculty of Education
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni Port Harcourt, Nigeria.
samuelowhondah@yahoo.com

Iibi John[ii]
Department of Educational Management
Faculty of Education
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni Port Harcourt, Nigeria
iibijonh@yahoo.com

…………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Abstract

There is increasing observation that diverse employee traits pose challenges and threats to effective school administration and national unity in Nigeria. The study determined the management practices to overcome challenges of employee diversity traits in secondary schools in Rivers State for national integration. To investigate this, three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. A total population of 527 principals out of which 272 principals formed the sample, which was obtained through the simple and stratified sampling techniques. A self-designed instrument "Management Practices to Overcome Employee Diversity Traits Challenges Questionnaire (MPOEDTCQ) for principals of secondary schools in Rivers State was used to elicit data for the study. The reliability index was 0.83 obtained using the Pearson product moment correlation statistic. The mean and standard deviation were applied to answer the research questions, while the z-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. The study revealed the traits that posed challenges, the nature of challenges, and the management practices to overcome the challenges in junior and senior secondary school administrations for national integration. One hypothesis was tested not significant and two were tested significant. The study concluded that employee diversity traits if not properly checked and handled could threaten school organizational cohesion and national unity. Therefore, school administrations should have a conscious understanding of the traits that impinge employee diversity, generate new knowledge of employee diversity traits challenges, and adopt management practices to forestall the challenges.

Keywords: Management, Practices, Employee, Diversity, Challenges, Traits, National, Integration.

Reference to this paper should be made as follows:

…………………………………………………………………………………………………..

INTRODUCTION

The diversity of people coming together to achieve stated goals and objectives of an organization has come of age as an acceptable and unavoidable phenomenon for the basis of promoting peace and unity or social integration or cohesion in every human endeavour. Frantically, sociologists have contributed much to understanding the anatomy of organizations through their works on diverse groups, cultural patterns, group cohesiveness and cooperation. For instance, opinions from diverse employees in organizations have always been an avenue for management's decisions making process in the area of choices from diverse opinions (Uzoma, 2015).

Studies have shown that since Taylor, much of the emphasis on scientific management has centred on the employee, and his relationship to the organization, his job and his fellow worker (Appleby, 1981). Advances in the sciences of man, and his behaviour as an individual and in groups, have revealed a number of factors that help to settle organizational problems. Industrial psychology emerged as a specific field in 1913 and was concerned with problems of fatigue and monotony, efficiency in work, working conditions and with problems of selecting and training employees towards ensuring a better organizational outcome.

The emergence of human relations movement was an answer to the integration of various disciplines and faculties of man. It was also concerned with the human problems that management encountered using the propositions of Taylor and his associates. The human relations advanced that a large part of management's task is getting things done through employees; therefore, management should try to understand employees' dispositions in the organization. This aspect of the management element of direction is concerned with understanding and inducing employees to work to the best of their ability for a better organizational outcome. In fact, human relations theory is more concerned with the informal spontaneous behaviour of work teams or groups and the sentiments, interactions and attitudes of employees from diverse backgrounds.

Like the human relations movement, employees from the educational sector are also made up of diverse orientations, backgrounds or different traits. Managing people from these diverse backgrounds in achieving goals and objectives has been perceived as a major challenge for management over the years. To this end, Nwakwo (2004) stated that diversity results in diverse opinions based on their different backgrounds. It has always led to success and failures of managerial grid based on management's ability to handle it effectively. Diversity of employees from different backgrounds, orientations, and norms has always been the composition of educational organizations. And, there is the belief that employees from diverse cultural heritages are influenced in their decision making approach on academic curriculums based on their diverse backgrounds and this usually results to positive decision making, improved problem-solving and communication approaches in most cases (Simon, 1987).

Studies have also revealed that employee diversity and educational management are unavoidable circumstances which must be considered when achieving stated goals and objectives. The management of diverse employees' traits in educational institutions should be part and parcel of administrative orientations for school proprietors. The decision making process by educational managers is therefore impacted upon by the environment of the decision making employees (Uzoma, 2015). It is therefore implicit to believe that a principal who had had various orientations and programmes on diversity management will likely fit into the secondary school organization more than a principal who had only acquired educational certificates

The management of secondary schools in a diverse environment of employees has to do with the understanding of educational training, orientations, educational curriculums, and experience of the employees. There is always a conflict of employees' interest and organizational interest, based on the diversities of employees. The diversity of employees' interest in some cases influences organizational interest, if administration is unable to ascertain the interest of its employees and that of the organization when making decisions. Employee behaviour and attitudes to work is also influenced by their diverse traits, hence productivity and performance of employees according to Nwankwo (2004) will always have different levels of input.

Indeed, the critical expectation of stakeholders in education industry from every school management is ensuring that the school climate is conducive to provide a platform for integrating diverse employees for productive teaching tasks. The school management with the diverse employees and their traits therefore play a crucial role in institutional and students' development for a better outcome. Thus, the increasing popularity of diverse school organizational employees reflects the widely shared belief that teamwork offers the potential for schools to achieve improved outcomes that could not be achieved by individual teacher working in isolation.

Yet, as schools restructure around diverse employees and their traits, there is still the tendency that teams may not always produce the desired outcome. Even when team fulfill their potential, team members and their organizations may experience unanticipated negative impacts culminating in unproductive outcomes such as low cohesion, miscommunication, wrong decision-making and problem-solving. The management of the junior and senior secondary schools in Rivers State may not be exempted from experiencing the observed challenges associated with diverse employee traits. It is expected that school management should device effective practices for arriving at improved decisions and communication, and improved problem-solving through the integration of the views and opinions of diverse employees for a better outcome.

It is against the above background that the study is necessitated to investigate the management practices that would be employed to overcome the challenges to employee diversity traits in secondary schools in Rivers State. This is necessary in order to ensure that school management creates conducive school climate that could aggregate diverse employees and their traits for improved institutional outcome and national integration.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for this study is hinged on the theoretical proposition of the social system theory. The social system theory derives from the work of Parsons (1960). According to Parsons, the school consists of defined boundaries within which employees interrelate and interact in the performance of activities for the purpose of achieving educational goals. The school is a conglomerate of individual employees, personalities, structures, values, interests, needs, activities and programmes functioning for the achievement of common goals. As a social system the school is a plurality of employees from different backgrounds interacting with each other in a situation which has at least a physical or environmental aspect, employees who are motivated in terms of a tendency to the optimization of gratification and whose relation to their situations, including each other, is defined and mediated in terms of a system of culturally structured and shared symbols. It implies that the school is an aggregation of diverse employees and institutional organizations located in an identifiable geographical locality and functioning in various degrees of interdependence as a permanent organized unit of the social order. Notably,

the activities, interactions, and sentiments of these employees, together with the mutual relations of these elements with one another during the time the group is active, constitute the school social system. A proper understanding of the school as a conglomerate of diverse teacher employees is useful to principals who must work with groups of individual cast in diverse molds of interests, needs and aspirations. This is necessary because the interactions and relationships of these employees provide insight to social behaviour and goal achievement of the school administrative system.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Here conceptual meanings and clarifications are made in respect of employee diversity, employee diversity traits, challenges of employee diversity traits, managing employee diversity traits, and national integration.

Employee Diversity

The concept of employee diversity refers to the variety of differences between people in an organization. Diversity is a term used to identify dissimilar items of individuals and therefore has very broad applications. The core of the construct of employees' diversity is the degree to which individuals perceive similarity between themselves and co-workers. Society must agree that the identified social differences exist (Mackee, 2002). Meshack (2004) have differentiated between primary and secondary dimensions of diversity. Primary dimensions are those aspects about an individual that are basically unchangeable they are fixed. For example, age, height and race are primary dimensions. Secondary dimensions are those components of diversity that are changeable and under the purview of the individuals. Those perceptions affect their interactions. For a wide assortment of employees to function effectively as an organization, human resource professionals need to deal effectively with issues such as communication, adaptability and change. Successful organizations recognize the need for immediate actions and are ready and willing to spend resources on managing diversity at the work place.

Employee Diversity Traits

The concept of employee diversity traits encompass race, gender, ethnic group, age, personality, cognitive style, tenure, organizational function, educational level, religious beliefs, income levels, geographic location. Sessa (2002) refer to these traits as the physical characteristics of the individual, race, ethnicity, sex and sometimes disabilities and religion, as well as other non-physical attributes for example, political affiliation or ideology.

Diversity traits can make people to be easily formed into psychological groups; and individuals in those groups will look favourable at their own group and unfavourably at the other group. This allocation of individuals into groups will produce behaviours (Meshack, 2004). These behaviours most often result in a bias in favour of one's own group, even when there is no logical rationale to favour one's own group over others (Kumar, 2010). Diversity traits of teachers such, as ethnicity, geographical location, norms, beliefs, culture race etc. will have direct influence on the teaching habits styles and educational curriculums as well as the pupils' performance. Principals and educational administrators should therefore ensure that diversity traits of employees does not inflict negatively on the goals and objectives of the school (Zanold,

2000). This is important as it provides a theoretical underpinning for discriminatory behaviours, which nothing is as practical as a good theory.

Challenges of Employee Diversity Traits

The challenges to managing a diverse work population are the inherent problems. There are many challenges which face culturally diverse workplaces, and a major challenge is miscommunication within an organization. It is miscommunication because no two individuals experience events in exactly the same way as a result of cultural bias (Brownell, 2003). Cultural bias includes both prejudice and discrimination and is an additional factor which challenges culturally diverse work environments. Prejudice refers to negative attitudes toward an organization member based on his/her culture group identity, and discrimination refers to observable adverse behavior for the same reason (Owolabi, 2001).

Another challenge faced by culturally diverse organizational environments is assimilation. Ozbilgin and Tatli (2008) explains that "assimilation into the dominant organizational culture is a strategy that has had serious negative consequences for individuals in organizations and the organizations themselves. Taking full advantage of the benefits of diversity in school organization is not without its challenges. Perpetual, cultural and language barriers need to be overcome for diversity programmes to succeed. Ineffective communication of key objectives results in confusion, lack of teamwork, and low morale. Successful management of diversity in the workplace- diversity training alone is not sufficient for your organization's diversity management plan. A strategy must be created and implemented to create a culture of diversity that permeates every department and function of the organization.

Managing Employee Diversity Traits

The key to managing a diverse workforce is increasing individual awareness of and sensitivity to differences of race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, and age (Page, 2007; Plinton, 1989). There are several ways to go about creating the multicultural organization that performs extremely well.

In her article, Judi Brownell identifies three skills which help to develop communication in diverse organizational environments. These skills include self-monitoring, empathy, and strategic decision-making. Strategic decision-making implies that the communication sources and channels used to reach organization members, as well as the substance of the messages conveyed are mindfully selected (Brownell, 2003; Vaughn, 2006).

Managing diversity goes far beyond the limits of equal employment opportunity and affirmative action. Corporate Diversity Management can aim at achieving equal opportunities regarding gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation (Brooke, 2000; Rabata, 2001). Three approaches towards corporate diversity management can be distinguished: Liberal change, radical change, and transformational change (Guest & Shacklock, 2000; Gottwald & Zschunke, 2010).

The recommended diversity in the workplace solutions include: Ward off change resistance with inclusion: - Involve every employee possible in formulating and executing diversity initiatives in your workplace. Forster an attitude of openness in your organization:- encourage employees to express their ideas and opinions and attribute a sense of equal value to all. Promote diversity in leadership positions: - this practice provides visibility realizes the

benefits of diversity in the workplace. Utilize diversity training: - use it as a tool to shape your diversity policy. Launch a customizable employee satisfaction survey that provides comprehensive reporting: - use the result to build and implement successful diversity in workplace policies. As the economy becomes increasingly global, our workforce becomes increasingly diverse. Organizational success and competitiveness will depend on the ability to manage diversity in the workplace effectively. Evaluate your organization's diversity policies and plan for the future, starting today (Page, 2007).

Teachers and non-teaching staff in secondary schools have diverse backgrounds from issues such as ethnicity, race, culture, colour, race age geographical location economical and other. A school system is also a system of diverse composition of teaching and non-teaching staff. Rabata (2001) recommends five phase process for diversity management in schools including the need for diversity training of employee on major diversity concerns, diversity climate (Nwala, 2004); conducting a diversity training programme; the introduction of interventions; the development of a diversity management plan; and programme evaluation or assessment. Providing only political correctness, lip service to diversity awareness and management will have disastrous consequences on secondary schools and even non educational organizations. Oladeye (2001) emphasized that schools diversity issues should be given careful management as a failure results into pupils poor performance and management diversity failure.

National Integration

The concept of national integration can be described as the awareness of a common identity amongst the citizens of a country. National integration is a way to make people aware about the power of unity among people living in a country. It means that though we belong to different castes, religions and regions and speak different languages we recognize the fact that we are all one. This kind of integration is needed in the building of a strong and prosperous nation. When citizens feel together and one in their own country despite their differences it helps to maintain national unity, national integrity and build a strong and prosperous nation (Kumar, 2010; Singh, 2017).

The challenge to national integration include the strong feelings about our own traits and oppose those of others. We feel our own traits are more important than even our country. These feelings breed clashes between different areas and damage national unity and serve to hinder a people's progress. Appointments in jobs, admissions in educational institutions are often on the basis of traits considerations. We have to develop tolerance and understanding for other people and their traits and not let such feelings destroy our unity. Every responsible citizen must give due respect to other traits and realize that they add to the greatness of our country.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- What are the employee diversity traits that challenge the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State for national integration?
- What are the employee diversity traits' challenges in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State for national integration?

- What are the management practices to overcome employee diversity traits' challenges in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State for national integration?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested for the study:

$H0_1$: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of junior and senior secondary schools on the employee diversity traits that challenge the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State against national integration.

$H0_2$: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of junior and senior secondary schools on the nature of employee diversity traits' challenges in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State against national integration.

$H0_3$: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of junior and senior secondary schools on the management practices to overcome employee diversity traits' challenges in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State for national integration.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study was principals of the 527 junior and senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The sample was 272 principals in the area. The secondary schools in the area were enumerated and stratified along junior and senior disarticulation. The "Management Practices to Overcome Employee Diversity Traits Challenges Questionnaire (MPOEDTCQ) was used to elicit data. The MPOEDTCQ had two parts. Part 'A' focused on demographic data of respondents and Part 'B' focused on the employee diversity traits, challenges of employee diversity traits, and the management practices to overcome the challenges. The MPOEDTCQ was validated and the test-retest was conducted while the Pearson product moment correlation statistic was adopted to compute reliability coefficient (0.83). The items in Part 'B' were structured along response options of High Extent, Moderate Extent, Low Extent, and No Extent; and were weighted 4 points, 3 points, 2 points and 1 point, respectively. However, all responses under 'High Extent' and Moderate Extent were grouped as High Extent responses and regarded as High' while 'Low Extent and No Extent' were grouped as 'Low Extent' responses and regarded as 'Low'. The decision and approaches above were adopted purely for easy computation. The research questions were analyzed with the mean and standard deviation statistics. To proffer answers to research questions, the criterion mean (1.00-2.49) was considered as Low and (2.50-4.00) was considered as High. The z-test statistic was applied to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What are the employee diversity traits that challenge the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State against national integration?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the employee diversity traits that challenge the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State against national integration

Employee Diversity Traits	Junior Schools (Principals) = 136		Senior Schools (Principals) = 136		Mean set $(\overline{xx})$	Remarks
	$\overline{x_1}$	Sd$_1$	$\overline{x_2}$	Sd$_2$		
Age	1.6	0.24	1.8	0.22	1.7	Low
Disability	0.7	0.42	0.5	0.58	0.6	Low
Educational Attainment	2.9	1.30	2.6	1.02	2.8	High
Gender	2.7	0.24	3.7	0.06	3.2	High
Socio-Economic Status	3.3	0.02	3.1	0.06	3.2	High
Ethnic Group of Origin	3.2	0.06	3.3	0.01	3.3	High
Religion	3.9	0.10	3.7	0.06	3.8	High
Geographic Region	3.9	0.24	3.1	0.06	3.5	High
Tenure	1.1	0.10	1.3	0.01	1.2	Low
Personality	3.2	0.06	3.8	0.25	3.5	High
Grand Mean	**2.7**	**0.28**	**2.7**	**0.23**	**2.7**	**High**

Data on table 1 shows that educational attainment, gender, socio-economic status, ethnic group of origin, religion, geographic region, and personality all had mean scores that lie within (2.50-4.00) high response while age, disability and tenure had mean scores that lie within (1.00-2.49) low response. The table further showed overall Grand mean (2.7) for junior and the Grand mean (2.7) for senior secondary schools with Grand mean set (2.7) indicating high traits. It implies that employee diversity traits such as educational attainment, gender, and socio-economic status, ethnic group of origin, religion, geographic region, and personality challenged the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State against national integration.

Research Question 2: What is the nature of challenges of employee diversity traits on the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State against national integration?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on the nature of challenges of employee diversity traits on the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State against national integration

Challenges Employee Diversity Traits	Junior Schools (Principals) = 136		Senior Schools (Principals) = 136		Mean set $(\overline{xx})$	Remarks
	$\overline{x_1}$	Sd$_1$	$\overline{x_2}$	Sd$_2$		
Acknowledged differences among staff on cultural basis	2.4	0.04	2.8	0.22	2.6	High
Miscommunication within the school based on cultural bias.	2.6	0.30	3.4	0.38	3.0	High
Negative attitude among staff towards the school based on cultural bias	2.9	0.22	2.6	0.11	2.8	High
Observable diverse behaviour towards the school based on cultural bias	2.6	0.07	2.7	0.17	2.7	High
Denied ability of staff to express genuine self in school	1.8	0.07	1.6	0.11	1.7	Low
Staff resistance to change in school.	2.3	0.00	2.2	0.00	2.3	Low
No cohesion among staff in the school based on cultural bias	2.4	0.04	2.8	0.22	2.6	High
Grand mean	**2.4**	**0.11**	**2.6**	**0.16**	**2.5**	**High**

Data on table 2 shows that acknowledged differences among staff on cultural basis, miscommunication within the school based on cultural bias, negative attitude among staff towards the school based on cultural bias, observable diverse behaviour towards the school based on cultural bias, and no cohesion among staff in the school based on cultural bias all had mean scores that lie within (2.50-4.00) high response while denied ability of staff to express genuine self in school and staff resistance to change in school had mean scores that lie within (1.00-2.49) low response. The table further showed overall Grand mean (2.4) for junior and the Grand mean (2.6) for senior secondary schools with Grand mean set (2.5) indicating high challenge. It therefore implies that acknowledged differences among staff on cultural basis, miscommunication within the school based on cultural bias, negative attitude among staff towards the school based on cultural bias, observable diverse behaviour towards the school based on cultural bias, and no cohesion among staff in the school based on cultural bias were the challenges of employee diversity traits against national integration.

Research Question 3: What are the management practices to overcome the challenges of employee diversity traits on the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State for national integration?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation on Management Practices to Overcome the Challenges of Employee Diversity Traits on Administration of Secondary Schools in Rivers State for National Integration

Management Practices	Junior Schools (Principals) = 136		Senior Schools (Principals) = 136		Mean set	Remarks
	$\overline{x_1}$	Sd$_1$	$\overline{x_2}$	Sd$_2$	$(\overline{xx})$	
Equal employment service opportunity is open to every staff.	2.6	0.03	2.5	0.03	2.6	High
Affirmative action is displayed to every staff in the school.	3.7	0.06	3.5	0.03	3.6	High
Avail diversity training for every staff.	3.9	0.18	3.6	0.38	3.8	High
Involvement of every staff in formulating and executing diversity initiative in the school.	3.6	0.46	3.4	0.62	3.5	High
Encouragement of every staff to express his/her opinions and ideas during meetings without sentiment.	2.8	0.57	2.6	1.30	2.7	High
Exhibition of a sense of equal value to all staff.	2.4	0.46	2.6	0.93	2.5	High
Promotion of diversity in leadership positions/appointments in the school.	2.9	0.18	2.7	0.12	2.8	High
Assessment and evaluation of diversity among staff in the school.	2.9	0.18	3.1	0.03	3.0	High
Setting up diversity plan for every staff in the school.	3.1	0.06	3.3	0.00	3.2	High
Implementation of diversity policies in the school.	3.2	0.02	3.8	0.19	3.5	High
Grand mean	**3.1**	**0.22**	**3.1**	**0.36**	**3.1**	High

Data on table 3 shows that all the items investigated had high mean scores for both junior and senior secondary school principals indicating that all lie within (2.50-4.00) high management practices. The overall Grand mean (2.6) for junior and the Grand mean (2.6) for senior secondary schools with Grand mean set (2.6) indicating high management practices. It implies that the management practices to overcome the challenges of employee diversity traits on the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State for national integration were equal employment service opportunity was open to every staff, affirmative action was displayed to every staff in the school, diversity training was for every staff, involvement of every staff in formulating and executing diversity initiative in the school, encouragement of every staff to express his/her opinions and ideas during meetings without sentiment, exhibition of a sense of equal value to all staff, promotion of diversity in leadership positions/appointments in the school, assessment and evaluation of diversity among staff in the school, setting up diversity plan for every staff in the school, and implementation of diversity policies in the school.

HYPOTHESES

H0$_1$: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of junior and senior secondary schools on the employee diversity traits that challenge the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State against national integration.

Table 4: z-test significant difference between the mean scores of junior and senior secondary schools on the employee diversity traits that challenge the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State against national integration

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df.	z-cal	z-critical	Decision
Junior School (Principals)	136	2.7	0.28	270	0.00	1.96	Not Significant
Senior School (Principals)	136	2.7	0.23				

The result on table 4 shows that the z-calculated 0.00 was less than the z critical 1.96 at degree of freedom 270 and $p<=.05$. The null hypothesis was upheld and the alternative hypothesis rejected. We, therefore, state that there was no significant difference between the mean scores of junior and senior secondary schools on the employee diversity traits that challenge the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State against national integration.

H0$_2$: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of junior and senior secondary schools on the nature of challenges of employee diversity traits on the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State against national integration.

Table 5: z-test significant difference between the mean scores of junior and senior secondary schools on the nature of challenges of employee diversity traits on the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State against national integration

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	z-cal.	z-critical	Decision
Junior School (Principals)	136	2.4	0.11	270	8.638	1.96	Significant
Senior School (Principals)	136	2.6	0.16				

The result on table 5 shows that the z-calculated 8.638 was greater than the z critical 1.96 at p< =.05. The null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis upheld. We, therefore, state that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of junior and senior secondary schools on the nature of challenges of employee diversity traits on the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State against national integration.

H0$_3$: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of junior and senior secondary schools on the management practices to overcome the challenges of employee diversity traits on the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State for national integration.

Table 6: z-test significant difference between the mean scores of junior and senior secondary schools on the management practices to overcome the challenges of employee diversity traits on the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State for national integration

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	z-cal.	z-critical	Decision
Junior School (Principals)	136	3.1	0.22	270	0.00	1.96	Not Significant
Senior School (Principals)	136	3.1	0.36				

The result on table 6 shows that the z-calculated 0.00 was less than the z critical 1.96 at degree of freedom 270 and p<=.05. The null hypothesis was upheld and the alternative hypothesis rejected. We, therefore, state that there was no significant difference between the mean scores of junior and senior secondary schools on the management practices to overcome the challenges of employee diversity traits on the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State for national integration.

DISCUSSION

The employee diversity traits that challenge the administration of secondary schools against national integration

The employee diversity traits that challenged the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State against national integration educational attainment, gender, and socio-economic status, ethnic group of origin, religion, geographic region and personality. Taking ethnic group of origin for instance, to some extent this finding is true to the fact that ethnic diversity was unrelated to administrative performance (Tsui et al., 2013). The finding corroborates Williams and Sessa (2002) whereby age diversity had been consistently found to lead to lower levels of social integration, bad communication and turnover. The result of test of the corresponding hypothesis indicated that there was no significant difference between the mean scores of junior and senior secondary schools on the employee diversity traits that challenge the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State against national integration. It implies that administrators should have a conscious understanding of the traits of employee diversity in schools.

The nature of challenges of employee diversity traits on the administration of secondary schools against national integration

The findings of the study further showed that acknowledged differences among staff on cultural basis, miscommunication within the school based on cultural bias, negative attitude among staff

towards the school based on cultural bias, observable diverse behaviour towards the school based on cultural bias, and no cohesion among staff in the school because of cultural bias were the nature of challenges of employee diversity traits on the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State against national integration. There was a significant difference between the mean scores of junior and senior secondary schools on the nature of challenges of employee diversity traits on the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State against national integration. There is therefore a negative relationship between employee diversity and school administrative outcome. It implies that administrators should generate new knowledge and adopt management skills to discern the challenges of employee diversity traits in schools.

Management practices to overcome the challenges of employee diversity traits on the administration of secondary schools for national integration

The management practices to overcome the challenges of employee diversity traits on the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State for national integration were equal employment service opportunity was open to every staff, affirmative action was displayed to every staff in the school, diversity training was for every staff, involvement of every staff in formulating and executing diversity initiative in the school, encouragement of every staff to express his/her opinions and ideas during meetings without sentiment, exhibition of a sense of equal value to all staff, promotion of diversity in leadership positions/appointments in the school, assessment and evaluation of diversity among staff in the school, setting up diversity plan for every staff in the school, and implementation of diversity policies in the school. There was no significant difference between the mean scores of junior and senior secondary schools on the management practices to overcome the challenges of employee diversity traits on the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State for national integration. Since challenges to employee diversity traits result against national integration, school organization must understand how policies and practices ought to be put in place to manage the diversity challenge. It implies that administrators should develop management practices and policies that forestall the challenges of employees' diversity traits for national integration in schools.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that secondary school administrations were generally challenged by diverse employee traits. It is hoped that national integration should begin in schools as a primary agent of socialization. Therefore, employee diversity traits if not properly checked and handled threatens school organizational cohesion and national unity. School administrations should have a conscious understanding of the issues that impinge employee diversity traits, generate new knowledge and adopt management practices to forestall its occurrence for national integration.

Recommendations

It is hereby recommended that:

- School administrators should have a conscious understanding of employee diversity traits in educational institutions.

- School administrators should generate new knowledge and adopt management skills for discerning the challenges of employee diversity traits in educational institutions.
- School administrators should adopt effective management practices in administration of educational institutions to forestall the challenges against national unity

REFERENCES

Appleby, R. C. (1981). *Modern business administration*. Marshfield: pitman Publishers.

Brooke, L. (2000). Human resource costs and benefits of maintaining a mature- age workforce. *International Journal of Manpower,* 24 (3): 260-283.

Brownell, J. (2003). Developing Receiver-Centered Communication in diverse organizations. *Listening Professional,* 2(1), 5-25 http://www.mentornet.net.

Gottwald, M. & Zschunke, M. (2010). Alters managements. Springer, em&ex—1 193889600&en=4b0cd84261ffe5b4&ei=5087%0A.

Guest, R. & Shacklock, K. (2000). The impending shift to an older mix of workers: perspectives from the management and economics literature, *International Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, 10 (3): 713-728.

Kumar, V. (2010). *National Integration Council reconstituted*. The Hindu. Retrieved 2012-03-05.

Mackie, L.D. (2002). *Diversity issues and concepts*. Enugu: ACE Publishers.

Meshack, M. (2004). *The diversity concept and organizational development*. London: Edition Publishers.

Nwala, C. (2004). Reviving diversity needs in an organization. London: millet Publishers.

Nwankwo, R. (2004). *A way forward in diversity management and control*. London: Olius Publishers.

Oladeye, C. (2001). *What is diversity control?* London: Links Publishers.

Owolabi, O. (2001). *Diversity types and characteristics of a modern economy*. Abuja: Macmillian Publishers.

Ozbilgin M. F., & Tatli, A. (2008). Global diversity management: An evidence based approach. *Paigrave Macmillian EU Treaty of Amsterdam: Article 13,* 1997

Page, S. (2007). *The difference: How the power of diversity creates better groups, firms, schools, and societies*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton.

Parsons, T. (1960). Structure and process in modern society. New York: The Free Press.

Plinton, C. (2001). *Mastering diversity needs.* Lagos: Imo Publishers.

Rabata, O. (2001). *A comparative diversity management and control*. London: Ovins Publishers.

Sessa J. K. (2002). *Revisiting diversity links*. Toronto: Andrews Publishers.

Simon, H. A. (1987). Administrative behaviour. New York: MacMillan Press.

Singh, A. (2017). *Studies at Greater Noida Institute of Technology* (2019). Answered Jan 5, 2017. Author has 69 answers and 51.5k answer views.

Tsui, A. S., Xin, K. R., & Egan, T. D. (2013). Relational demography: The missing link in vertical dyad linkage. In S.E. Jackson & M. Ruderman (eds.), *Diversity in work teams: Paradigms for a changing workplace,* (pp. 97-130). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association. University Press.

Uzoma, I. G. (2015). *Employee diversity and secondary school administration in Mbaitoli Local Government Area of Imo State: Issues, benefits, challenges and management*. M.Ed Thesis National Open University of Nigeria, Noun, Lagos.

Vaughn, B. (2006). *High impact diversity consulting.* San Francisco, CA. Diversity Training University International Publications Division.

Zanold, O. (2000). *Establishing cultural values and control in an organization*. Ibadan: Ozas Publishers.

© JSRE

----

[i] **Dr. Samuel Nariochukwu Owhondah** is a Senior lecturer in the Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni Port Harcourt, Nigeria. He can be reached via email at samuelowhondah@yahoo.com

[ii] **Iibi John** is a post graduate student in the Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni Port Harcourt, Nigeria. She can be reached via email at iibijonh@yahoo.com.