

GENDER DIVERSITY AS A PREDICTOR TO ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY OF MULTINATIONAL CORPORATION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between gender diversity and environmental sustainability, of oil and gas multinational corporations in Nigeria. Research evidence indicates that the environmental sustainability goal is yet at its optimum using the infrastructural and social responsibility approach. The study specifically addressed the relationship between gender diversity and environmental sustainability. The study adopted the cross-sectional survey design. Structured questionnaire from 158 members of the 44 target organizations was used to generate data for the study. Three null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient was used to test the bivariate analysis. The tests were carried out at 0.05 level of significance and analysed using SPSS tool. The findings showed that there is a significant relationship between gender diversity and environmental sustainability. In conclusion, the study affirmed that gender diversity of oil and gas corporations in Nigeria impact significantly on environmental sustainability as it contributes substantially towards the unification of organizational members' ideals and values. Based on the findings, the study recommends that organizations in pursuit of environmental sustainability should emphasize on policies and culture of inclusive diverse workforce with focus on generational gaps to achieve a greater environment sustainability.

Keywords: Gender Diversity, Environmental, Sustainability, Corporation, Multinational

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria happens to be one of the most diverse nations of the world with multiple ethnic groups, languages, dialects and religions. In their view, these have contributed in shaping the culture of Nigeria. A nation with diverse ethnic groups and cultural diversity would indubitably face difficulties in formulating, articulating and implementing strategies that would be acceptable to its vast constituency, Mbakogu (2002). This is as a people's cultural orientation can create stereotypes that militate against minorities; women, certain religious groups etc. and this can degenerate into crises that hamper development initiatives if not well handled. This situation as evidenced in the Nigerian Public Service, known for its high cultural diversity, especially at the federal level, has led to an increasingly poor performance in virtually all its constituents over the years (Umemexie & Agbonifoh, 2017). World bank report (2000) attributed the economic/development setback Nigeria has suffered resulting from the dysfunctional and ineffective public institutions and weak governance to diversity issues, the much difference in the people's way of life (World Bank, 2000). Consequently, in the view of Sowell, (2004), ethnic and cultural diversity has its negative consequences in some circles as an obstacle to economic development in Nigeria (Sowell, 2004).

Debates are rife on the impact of gender diversity in the top-level management and organizational leadership on the general performance of the organization. Stanley (2016), defined gender diversity simply as balance in representation and inclusion that enhances the

spectrum of different value settings in workspace. Chin (2013) reports that a study found that firms that had high gender diversity in their top-leadership reported significant abnormal returns. Knippenberg, De Dreu and Homan (2014) found that while most top leadership and management in most firms are dominated by men, an inclusion of women in such teams make them not only become diverse but also improves the quality of the leadership and top-level management. The work environment covers all physical, technical, scientific, psychological and social intrigue that workers interact with which, influence their behaviour in the organization (Otamiri & Odu, 2018). In response to the environmental destruction and overuse of natural resources, the concept and theory of environmental economy emerged in developed countries in the 1970s to constructively, change the ways of life by combining theories of the economy and ecology (Braat & van Lierop, 1987). However, it took a further decade (1980) for this notion to spread through the developing world. Moldan, Janoušková, and Hák (2012) stated that it was not until the emergence of this notion that social and economic sustainability had been accepted as separate, autonomous pillars of sustainable development. Hence, it has been generally recognized that all three concepts of sustainability should be defined and clarified separately. They also emphasized the importance of providing a clear and specific definition of environmental sustainability that is independent from the economic and social aspects of sustainability.

Studies indicate that the consciousness and importance of environmental, economic and social issues has become vital to oil exploration in Nigeria and around the world. It has been over twenty years since the Brundtland Report drew the attention of the world to the need to re-examine the corporate firm's behaviour and ways of increasing use of resources with little or no interest for either the environment or future generations (Guterres & Spiegel 2012). Nonetheless, this notion remains elusive within the region of Nigeria and its environs since, oil and gas multinationals and indigenous corporations within the region still express deficiencies in behavioural and attitudinal change, which do not bode well for sustainable development in the long term.

Institutional theory

Institutional theory broadly states that their institutional environment, context or field governs the behaviour of organizations. The constituents of the field include the organization's social context, the scope of its activities, and its network of social relationships (Doshi & Khokle, 2012). In reviewing and analysing institutional theory, the theory of symbolic interactionism comes to limelight in order to explain vividly, the concept and theory of human existence, diversity and its cultural reality. According to Ritzer (2012) in Linstead, (2006), ethnomethodology is the study of the body of common sense, knowledge and range of procedures by which members of a society make sense as symbolic. Therefore, institutional context tends to bring uniformity in business practice and organizational actions through three mechanisms: coercive, mimetic and normative. Coercive mechanisms refer to pressure techniques that aim to bring business practice in line with societal expectations. Mimetic practices refer to peers' pressure on firms to conform to certain behaviours. Normative practices refer to internalization of beliefs about the suitability of certain behaviour (DiMaggio & Powell, 2000). Broadly speaking, the institutional forces drive agent's behaviour by aligning agent's beliefs with societal norms, with the alignment being caused by either internalization of norms or external pressure. Norms drive group as well as organizational behaviour especially when the groups' normative focus and member's group identification is high (Terry & Hogg, 1996; Kallgren, Reno & Cialdini, 2000). Organizations can be conceptualized as a consciously coordinated social unit that functions on a relatively continuous basis to achieve a set of goals (Robbins, Judge & Vohra, 2013). Hence, organizations being a specific type of group are likely to be affected by group norms. The concept of corporate sustainability denotes a voluntary, organizational-level behaviour that includes non-harmful, wellbeing of stakeholders' interest

(Campbell, 2007), and looking at social and environmental issues besides business issues (Jackson & Apostolakou, 2010).

Concept of Gender Diversity

The impact of gender on job satisfaction is highly significant. Though, there could be a change due to the conventional assumptions, it is still difficult for women to progress to higher or senior positions of leadership in most firms (Fatima, Iqbal, Akhward, Suleman and Ibrahim, 2015). According to Fatima, *et al.*, (2015) several studies have found a connection in gender variances with job satisfaction. Sania, Kalpina and Javed (2015) opine that diversity in the workplace transforms the nature of the relationship among the staff members, changes that can lead to increased job satisfaction and employee morale. Raza, Ishtaqi, Kanwal, Butt & Nawaz (2013) point out that workplace gender diversity can facilitate information, skills and experiences exchanges, lead to the creation of cohesion and attachments among employees of different genders, and positively influence their overall perceptions of the job. Nakagawa (2015) conducted a study among Japanese firms on the relationship between gender diversity and various aspects of organizational performance. One of his principal findings was that a more gender diverse workforce created a feeling of inclusiveness and belonging to the firm among employees especially the female employees and led to higher feelings of job satisfaction among them. However, they caution that if gender diversity is not effectively managed, it may lead to stress among the employees and result in a negative working relationship among the employees. This perspective is supported by the social identity, attraction and social categorization theories, all of which propose that diversity based on gender may result in the grouping of people into social cocoons with others with whom they share biological or social similarities (Raza, Ishtaqi, Kanwal, Butt & Nawaz 2013).

Concept of Environmental Sustainability

Morelli (2013) believed that instead of an interrelationship between these three aspects of sustainability, a hierarchical model should be provided because of the high dependence of economic and social sustainability on the environment, and that without having a sustainable environment it is difficult, if not impossible, to consider a sustainable society or economy. He also determined that environmental sustainability was a condition of balance, resilience, and interconnectedness that allows human society to satisfy its needs while neither exceeding the capacity of its supporting ecosystems to continue to regenerate the services necessary to meet those needs nor by our actions diminishing biological diversity (Morelli, 2013). The environmental dimension of sustainability is the most widely documented one. In the hospitality industry, a wide range of information exists about environmental issues such as energy saving, recycling, water savings, etc. A study in the London hotel sector showed that almost all respondents indicated to be taking action on environmental matters (Knowles, Macmillan, Palmer, Grabowski & Hashimoto, 1999). Many other researchers point out that the oil and gas industry is aware of its negative impacts on the environment. In particular resource depletion such as energy, water and non-renewable resource usage are areas of environmental action (Middleton and Hawkins, 1998; Hobson and Essex, 2001). Other initiatives towards more environmentally friendly operations management adopted by oil and gas business could be: recycling systems, use of recycled supplies, etc. (Swarbrooke, 1999; Hobson and Essex, 2001). However, researchers observe a gap between environmental 'good' intentions and action. Most business managers merely concentrate on actions that advance the company's objective. Cost-reductions through environmental actions have been criticized for being the only motivator for action (Knowles, et al., 1999; Swarbrooke, 1999; Hobson and Essex, 2001).

Concerning the core concept of environmental sustainability, Sutton (2004), the Commissioner of Environmental Sustainability of the Australian State of Victoria, emphasized the maintenance of natural support systems. Similarly, Moldan, Janouskova & Hak, (2012) stated that the

maintenance of natural resources and nature's services at a 'suitable level' may be defined as environmental sustainability. This definition is similar to the general definition provided by Goodland (1995) of the "maintenance of natural capital". He explained further that this notion and definition is based on the input-output rules. In the following year, Goodland and Daly (1996), suggested a fundamental definition for this notion based on input-output rules.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In view of the philosophical stance of the researcher, the study adopts a deductive approach as being suited for its purpose. Hence, the research design adopted in this study is a census cross-sectional survey(explanatory) design, which as a form of quasi-experimental research, supports the systematic integration of the stages of the research (from theoretical statements and prescriptions, to actual empirical activities), and provides the required blueprint for the accomplishment of the research goal.

Population size of the study

The population for this study comprised of 44 active oil-producing firms as licenced by the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR). These oil and gas corporations were the notable oil and gas corporations operational in Nigeria. Thus, Human resources managers, administrative managers, operations managers, and finance managers of the 44 corporations were targeted as respondents within the organization. These classes of workers are noted to have the capacity to contribute meaningfully based on their knowledge of the operations, and functioning of the organization. One manager each from these organizations, making it a total of 176 questionnaire were distributed through our research assistance's visits and inquiry from the administrative personnel and human resource officers at the main offices of the target oil-producing corporations in Nigeria. The study adopted a census survey technique, given the specification of respondents which follows a purposive sampling and draw members from the exclusive category of management staff as stated.

Data Analysis Technique

The Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient was utilized in the assessment of the relationship between the variables of the study at a 95% confidence (implying a 0.05 level of significance). The choice of the Spearman is premised on its flexible features and applicability for hypothesis test for data scaled both as interval and as ordinal.

Results

Hypothesis

HO₁: There is no significant relationship between gender diversity and environmental sustainability of oil and gas corporations in Nigeria

Hypothesis testing for gender diversity and Environmental sustainability

		Gender	Environ
gender	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.710**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	158	158
Spearman's rho	Correlation Coefficient	.710**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	158	158

Correlation	.413**	.369**
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** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Research data, 2019

i. Hypothesis (H₀₄): There is no significant relationship between gender diversity and environmental sustainability of oil and gas corporations in Nigeria:

The findings show significant association between gender diversity and environmental sustainability in organizations where $\rho = 0.710$; and $p\text{-value} = 0.00$ where significance is at a 99% confidence interval; therefore, we reject the null hypothesis based on the adopted criteria of $p < 0.05$.

CONCLUSIONS

This is as the study finds that gender diversity has strong implications for the shared values and in this vein contributes towards the extent to which the organization is able to harness the benefits and advantages offered the diversity within its workplace. In this vein, the study identifies diversity as a substantial antecedent of environmental sustainability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. The oil and gas corporations in Nigeria should, as a matter of Policies framework, institutionalize gender diversity and emphasize on fairness, equity, exchange of ideology that involves both male and female sex in the supervisory and managerial level of leadership.
- ii. The oil company should focus to achieve corporate sustainability goals and objectives of the organization through members' collaboration and teamwork, rather than particular gender categories of groupings. Such specifications should guide what is expected of the workers and the extent to which their performance as individuals matches with the requirement of the organization.
- iii. Finally, the culture of the oil and gas corporations in Nigeria should be adequately structured to offer the required format and platform through divergent views and opinions to be harmonized within the organization. This is for the strengthening of ties and experiences across the organization in a way that is healthy and considerate of the goals of corporate sustainability.

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