DIVERSITY AND JOB SATISFACTION WITHIN ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE IN KOGI STATE, NIGERIA: EXPLORING THE SCENARIO OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES

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Abstract

This study focused on diversity and job satisfaction within organisational climates, exploring the scenarios of small and medium-sized enterprises. The study explored the effects of physiological elements of employee diversity on job satisfaction at the workplace and ascertained the influence of psychological diversity climate on the job satisfaction of employees in SMEs in Kogi State. This study employed a survey research design and targeted employees who could provide insights into diversity-related situations. Both descriptive and inferential methods were employed to analyse the collected data. The study used multiple regression analyses to test hypotheses. Results showed that the age of employees has a significant negative effect on job satisfaction. As employees grow older, there is a noticeable trend towards decreasing job satisfaction, and the gender of employees was found to have an insignificant negative effect on job satisfaction, among others. The study recommends, among others, that SME owners or managers should implement age-specific support programmes aimed at addressing the changing needs and preferences of older employees to help sustain and improve their job satisfaction and that managers should conduct regular training sessions to raise awareness and sensitivity among employees regarding religious and diversity-related issues to foster a positive and inclusive work environment.
Keywords: *psychological diversity climate, diversity management, job satisfaction, physiological diversity, synergetic environment*

Introduction

Diversity in organisational climate varies significantly across the globe due to a multitude of factors, including cultural, social, economic, and historical influences. Crede et al. (2019) have observed that different regions and countries have distinct cultural norms, values, and practices. These cultural differences can greatly affect the organisational climate. For example, in some cultures in Europe, Batt-Rawden and Traavik (2022) expressed that hierarchical structures

Williams OKPEBENYO, Akeem Tunde NAFIU, Simon SULE ADOMOKHAI. Diversity and job satisfaction within organizational climate in Kogi state, Nigeria: Exploring the scenario of small and medium-sized enterprises

PROBLEMS
OF MANAGEMENT
IN THE 21ˢᵗ CENTURY
Vol. 18, No. 1, 2023

35

and formal communication are highly valued, while in others, more egalitarian and informal approaches are preferred. The legal and regulatory frameworks of countries like Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom play a crucial role in shaping diversity practices within organizations. These countries have strict anti-discrimination laws and regulations that require organisations to promote diversity and inclusion. The composition of the workforce in different countries varies in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, and other demographic factors. This diversity, or lack thereof, can influence the organisational climate and the extent to which diversity and inclusion initiatives are prioritised.

In Africa, diversity in organisational climate also varies significantly. A number of African countries have taken steps to encourage diversity in organisations by implementing policies, legislation, and initiatives aimed at promoting equal opportunities for all. Vilakazi and Ponte (2022) noted that South Africa has implemented a range of affirmative action policies, including Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) initiatives, to address historical inequalities. These policies promote diversity in the workplace and aim to provide opportunities for previously disadvantaged groups. Kenya has made efforts to encourage diversity and inclusion through various policies and initiatives. The Constitution of Kenya, for example, includes provisions that promote equal treatment and non-discrimination (Nyawa et al., 2023).

In Nigeria, the management of diversity has become a strategic approach aimed at enhancing the efficiency of organizations. This approach involves the deliberate actions taken by organisations to foster greater inclusion of employees from diverse backgrounds within the organisational framework. The strategic nature of managing a diverse workforce becomes evident when considering the pursuit of long-term objectives and corporate goals. Numerous successful large corporations have effectively overseen diverse teams to achieve their corporate aims. For small and medium enterprises (SMEs), this approach often contributes to the synergy within teams, resulting in improved employee performance and job satisfaction. As noted by Ibidunni et al. (2018), "embracing workforce diversity, particularly when it encompasses gender and ethnicity, is a highly strategic means of enhancing employee job satisfaction and commitment to their organisation" (p. 1048).

Diversity management can play a pivotal role in fostering job satisfaction within the organisational climate in Kogi State. Inegbedion et al., 2020) stated that effective diversity management ensures that employees from various backgrounds, including different genders, ethnicities, ages, and cultural groups, feel included and valued within the organization. When employees feel that their differences are acknowledged and respected, it contributes to a more inclusive and welcoming workplace, which in turn enhances job satisfaction. Diversity management practices can also lead to higher levels of employee engagement. When individuals believe that their perspectives and contributions are genuinely considered and appreciated, they are more likely to be engaged in their work. Engaged employees tend to be more satisfied with their jobs, leading to increased job satisfaction across the organisation (Mwesigwa et al., 2020). Thus, diversity management may not just be a moral imperative; it is a strategic necessity for organisations in Kogi State. By embracing diversity and actively managing it, organisations can create a more inclusive, engaging, and satisfying work environment for their employees, ultimately leading to improved job satisfaction and overall organisational success.

Problem Statement

Diversity within the workplace is increasingly recognised as a fundamental aspect of organisational effectiveness and competitiveness in today's globalised world. In the context of Kogi State, Nigeria, where a rich tapestry of cultural, ethnic, and demographic diversity is prevalent, the management of diversity within SMEs carries significant implications for both organisational performance and the well-being of employees. However, despite the growing

36

importance of diversity management, a critical issue remains relatively under-explored: the relationship between diversity and job satisfaction within the organisational climate of SMEs in Kogi State. The success of these enterprises is contingent upon several factors, including the effective management of a diverse workforce.

Studies conducted by Lu et al. (2015), as well as Vanderschuere and Birdsall (2019), have identified a range of factors contributing to low job satisfaction. This study highlights the perception that the management of employee diversity in SMEs in Kogi State is either ineffective or lacks a strategic approach. Observations suggest that SME owners and managers are primarily focused on employing various strategies to ensure the success of their businesses, paying little or no attention to the effective management of employee diversity within the specific context of Kogi State. According to Rahman et al. (2014), SMEs cannot attain success without affording special consideration to their employees, who play a pivotal role in creating a harmonious environment conducive to achieving success.

It is plausible to consider that the concept of psychological diversity climate (PDC) plays a pivotal role in the success of SMEs in Kogi State, given the diverse composition of employees within these organizations. Al Doghan et al. (2019) posited that PDC encompasses an employee's cognitive evaluation of their job environment, which substantially shapes their perception of the business enterprise. These perceptions are constructed based on the organisation's policies, rules, practices, and employment conditions. Unstable employees, often hailing from racio-ethnic minority groups and immigrant backgrounds (Gröschl, 2021; Madera et al., 2012), typically work on a temporary basis with the intention of securing better employment opportunities elsewhere. While there is evidence linking PDC to positive organisational attitudes, as demonstrated by the studies conducted by Chen et al. (2012), McKay et al. (2007), and McKay et al. (2021), there is a noticeable gap in research exploring the fundamental mechanisms through which PDC influences organisational attitudes. It is well established that employees who derive satisfaction from their jobs are more likely to develop positive organisational attitudes, thus suggesting that PDC can indeed exert an influence on employee job satisfaction. Thus, it becomes apparent that there are areas within empirical research that remain unexplored, particularly in the realm of employee diversity and job satisfaction within SMEs situated in Kogi State. The researcher bridged this gap by undertaking this study.

Aims of the Study

The main aim of this study was to examine the effect of diversity on the job satisfaction of employees in SMEs in Kogi State. The specific goals of the study were to:

1. Determine the effects of physiological elements of employee diversity on job satisfaction at the workplace.

2. Ascertain the influence of the psychological diversity climate on the job satisfaction of employees in SMEs in Kogi State.

Research Questions

The study asked the following questions:

1. What is the effect of physiological elements of employee diversity on job satisfaction at the workplace?

2. What influence does the psychological diversity climate have on the job satisfaction of employees in SMEs in Kogi State?

Hypotheses of the Study

The study drew hypotheses that:

Ho$_1$: Physiological elements of employee diversity have no significant effect on job satisfaction at the workplace.

Ho$_2$:   Psychological Diversity Climate has no significant influence on the job satisfaction of employees in SMEs.

Literature Review

Diversity

There is a wealth of literature available from which numerous deductions can be drawn. A comprehensive examination of this literature reveals that employee diversity can be systematically categorised to facilitate a more profound understanding of its essence. Williams and O'Reilly (1998) recognised this need and identified two primary research traditions in the study of work-group diversity and performance: the social perspective and the information/decision-making perspective of employee diversity. Knippenberg et al. (2014) further distinguished between social category diversity, which includes readily observable attributes such as sex, age, and ethnicity, and functional diversity, which encompasses job-related factors like educational background and tenure. Additionally, other job-related attributes include experience, intelligence, and physical ability, which can translate into qualities like initiative and increased productivity.

According to Lindblad (n.d.), the Society for Human Resource Management defines diversity as the appreciation of unique individual characteristics, including age, ethnicity, educational level, and family background. Kokemuller (2021) supplemented this definition by describing diversity as the presence of individuals from a wide array of backgrounds and possessing diverse traits. In theory, as proposed by Knippenberg et al. (2014), diversity encompasses an extensive spectrum of dimensions, ranging from age to nationality, religious background to functional expertise, task-related skills to interpersonal skills, and political preferences to sexual orientations. In practice, however, research on diversity has primarily concentrated on gender, age, race/ethnicity, tenure, educational background, and functional expertise. Nevertheless, Yadav and Lenka (2020) characterised employee diversity as the evolution of organisations becoming more heterogeneous due to the amalgamation of individuals from different backgrounds concerning gender, age, race, and educational history. The term 'mix' in this broad definition implies the combination and interaction of individuals from diverse backgrounds. Ehimare and Ogaga-Oghene (2021) proposed that this perspective underscores that a comprehensive definition might suggest that all distinctions among individuals are equal. Thus, employee diversity denotes the amalgamation and interaction of individuals who possess distinct or similar psychological, sociological, economic, and personality attributes in a workplace. Diversity management, as elucidated by Georgiadou, Gonzalez-Perez, and Olivas-Luján (2019), pertains to the capacity to make informed decisions amid the diversity and commonalities mentioned earlier. To elaborate, diversity management can be defined as the creation of a collaborative environment founded on mutual respect among employees, wherein the contributions of each employee to the organisation are acknowledged and evaluated (Ordu, 2016).

38

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction (JS) is the good impression that an employee has about his or her job. It is a feeling that the employee is happy with the result when he evaluates his work (Vroom, 1964) or experiences a feeling of pleasure (Jin et al., 2018). Job satisfaction occurs when organisational and individual desires do not conflict. There is balance and respect for what the organisation and individual employees intend to achieve. The employees do not pursue their objectives to the detriment of the organisation, and the organisation helps and supports the employees to achieve their meaningful and realistic objectives. Dissatisfaction occurs when standards do not overlap (Lu et al., 2015). In other words, job satisfaction is supposed to be high when an employee's job expectations are met, they experience fair actions by the managers during the implementation process, and the enterprise achieves its goals (Allan et al., 2018).

Work is completed with high productivity, and a high-quality product is generated as a natural consequence of job satisfaction. As a result, it could be in the organisation's best interests if employees' job satisfaction is closely monitored (Allan et al., 2018). The willingness to make choices about a job is the most important factor affecting employees' job satisfaction (Albert et al., 2018; Ordu, 2016). When an employee remains the implementer of decisions on which he or she disagrees, he or she does not take responsibility for his or her actions. He or she can struggle to find significance in his or her job if he or she is not involved in the decision-making process (Ordu, 2016; Dicke et al., 2018). The employee who takes part in decision-making processes feels valuable, his psycho-social needs are met, working has meaning, and he experiences job satisfaction (Wang et al., 2014). As a consequence, the employee needs to attach meaning to his job in terms of job satisfaction (Ateş & Ünal, 2021).

Physiological Elements of Diversity and Job Satisfaction at Workplace

The effects of physiological elements of employee diversity on job satisfaction in the workplace are multifaceted and can affect the overall work environment and employee well-being. Physiological diversity, which includes differences in age, gender, physical abilities, and other visible attributes, brings a wide range of perspectives and experiences to the workplace. This diversity can lead to more creative problem-solving and innovation, as employees with varied backgrounds may approach challenges differently. When employees feel their unique viewpoints are valued, it can boost their job satisfaction.

Studies into the effects of psychological diversity climates are now being conducted. Employee job satisfaction, lower turnover intentions, and increased organisational commitment, for example, are all attitudinal outcomes of positive diversity climates (Chen et al., 2012; McKay et al., 2021). Effective diversity management contributes to job satisfaction in a variety of ways. Individual contributions include employee comfort and trust, morale, job satisfaction, effective communication, teamwork, high performance, and loyalty. Organisations that value differences and offer opportunities for their members to fully utilise their potential provide individual contributions such as morale, job satisfaction, effective communication, teamwork, high performance, and loyalty (Barutcugil, 2021).

Psychological Diversity Climate and Job Satisfaction of Employees in SMEs

The influence of psychological diversity climate (PDC) on job satisfaction among employees in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is a complex and important aspect of organisational dynamics. Madera et al. (2016) posit that PDC refers to how employees perceive and experience the work environment in terms of diversity and inclusion, particularly in relation to their psychological well-being and job-related experiences. A positive PDC fosters an inclusive

Williams OKPEBENYO, Akeem Tunde NAFIU, Simon SULE ADOMOKHAI. Diversity and job satisfaction within organizational climate in Kogi state, Nigeria: Exploring the scenario of small and medium-sized enterprises

PROBLEMS
OF MANAGEMENT
IN THE 21st CENTURY
Vol. 18, No. 1, 2023

39

work environment where employees from diverse backgrounds feel valued and respected. When employees believe that their unique perspectives and contributions are recognised and appreciated, they are more likely to experience job satisfaction. They feel a sense of belonging and psychological safety, which enhances their overall well-being. Managers' psychological diversity climate is linked to job satisfaction because having a pro-diversity climate decreases the stress of intergroup interactions (Madera et al., 2013).

Top management actions towards a diverse workforce and the management of employees with diverse backgrounds are associative constructs of PDC. The effect of top management actions towards a diverse workforce on job satisfaction can be significant and multifaceted. Top management's approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) can play a pivotal role in shaping the work environment and employees' overall job satisfaction. The management of employees with diverse backgrounds has a significant impact on job satisfaction within an organization. Effective diversity management includes measures to reduce discrimination and bias within the workplace (Van Knippenberg, Nishii, & Dwertmann, 2020). When employees observe that the organisation is committed to eliminating discrimination, it can lead to increased job satisfaction.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design, gathering data through surveys. It specifically targeted employees capable of providing insights into diversity-related scenarios within SMEs in certain cities in Kogi State. The total employee population meeting this criterion was 10,270. To determine an appropriate sample size, the researchers applied Paler-Calmorin and Calmorin's (2006) formulas, considering a desired sampling error of 1% and a confidence level of 99%. Using these parameters and assuming a 1% sampling error (0.01) with 99% reliability, the study chose a stratified random sample of 254 employees. It is important to highlight that, in these circumstances, the critical value at a 1% probability level is 2.58. The sample size is then determined as follows:

$$n = \frac{NZ + (S_e)^2 \, x(1 - \hat{P})}{N \, S_e + Z^2 \, xP(1 - P)}$$

Where n = sample size
N = total number of population
Z= the standard value (2.58) of 1% level of probability with 0.99 reliability
Se= Sampling error (0.01)
p = the population proportion

$$n = \frac{10270(2.58) + (0.01)^2 \, x \, (1 - 0.5)}{10270(0.01) + (2.58)^2 \, x \, 0.5(1 - 0.5)}$$

N= 253.886154817605 (254 approximately)

Cronbach Coefficient alpha (α) was employed to test the instrument's reliability. The results in the table below show that all the constructs in Table 1 are reliable. This is because the coefficients are above 0.70, or 70%.

40

Table 1
Reliability for Constructs

S/N	Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
1	Age	.786	6
2	Gender	.775	5
3	Academic qualification	.823	5
4	Religiosity	.765	5
5	Physical ability	.871	3
6	Job Satisfaction	.755	6
7	Employees perceive and experience	.710	4
8	Psychological safety	.702	4
9	Management actions on diversity issue	.791	4
10	Management's approach to diversity	.814	4
11	Sense of belonging	.811	4

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 2
Participant Profile (Sample= 254)

Profile	Frequency	N	%
Gender	Male	153	60.2
	Female	101	39.8
Age Distribution	Below 20 Years	12	4.7
	21-25 Years	35	13.8
	26- 30 Years	57	22.4
	31-35 Years	75	29.5
	36- 40 Years	35	13.8
	41- 45 Years	19	7.5
	Above 46 Years	21	8.3
Marital Status	Single	81	31.9
	Married	105	41.3
	Widow	40	15.7
	Separated	18	7.1
	Divorced	10	3.9
Educational Level	Primary School Leaving Cert.	29	11.4
	Secondary School Certificate	43	16.9
	OND & Equivalence	78	30.7
	B.Sc/HND & above	104	40.9
Work experience	Below 1 Year	23	9.1
	1-2 Years	24	9.4
	2-4 Years	39	15.4
	4-6 Years	77	30.3
	6-10 Years	57	22.4
	10-15 Years	17	6.7
	Above 15 Years	17	6.7

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Williams OKPEBENYO, Akeem Tunde NAFIU, Simon SULE ADOMOKHAI. Diversity and job satisfaction within organizational climate in Kogi state, Nigeria: Exploring the scenario of small and medium-sized enterprises

PROBLEMS
OF MANAGEMENT
IN THE 21ˢᵗ CENTURY
Vol. 18, No. 1, 2023

41

Table 2 shows that 153 participants (60.2%) were male, and 101 participants (39.8%) were female. We also explored the age demographics of the respondents, shedding light on the composition of our survey sample. The table shows that 12 participants making up 4.7% are below the age of 20 years; 35 participants accounting for 13.8% were between 21 and 25 years; 57 participants comprising 22.4% were between 26 and 30 years; 75 participants representing 29.5% fall into the 31 to 35 years category; 35 participants aged between 36 and 40 years make up 13.8%; 19 participants constituting 7.5% were in the 41 to 45 years age bracket; and 21 participants aged above 46 years represent 8.3%. The table shows that 81 participants (31.9%) were single; 105 participants (41.3%) were married; 40 participants (15.7%) were widows; 18 participants (7.1%) were separated; and 10 participants (3.9%) were divorced.

It is worth noting that 29 participants, which translates to 11.4% of the respondents, have successfully obtained a 'Primary School Leaving Certificate.' This indicates the presence of participants who have completed their primary education. A larger group of 43 participants, constituting 16.9%, possess a 'Secondary School Certificate,' signifying secondary education attainment. In the category labelled 'OND & Equivalence,' we observed a substantial number of 78 participants, making up 30.7%. 'OND' typically stands for 'Ordinary National Diploma,' and this category includes those with equivalent post-secondary qualifications. The most prevalent educational level among the participants is 'B.Sc./HND and above.' A total of 104 participants, comprising 40.9%, possess qualifications at the bachelor's degree level (B.Sc.), higher national diploma (HND), or above, indicating a significant portion of the participants have pursued higher education.

Among the participants, 23 individuals, constituting 9.1%, have 'below 1 year' of work experience, indicating a group of individuals who are relatively new to the workforce. A similar proportion, comprising 24 participants, or 9.4% of the total, possess 1 to 2 years of work experience, reflecting a slightly more experienced group. It was found that 39 participants, making up 15.4%, had 2 to 4 years of professional experience. A substantial segment of our participants, 77 individuals to be exact, falls within the 4-to-6-year category, representing 30.3%. This group signifies a significant level of mid-level work experience. We have 57 participants, making up 22.4%, who possess 6 to 10 years of work experience, demonstrating a higher level of professional expertise. The category labelled '10 to 15 years' contains 17 participants, accounting for 6.7%, signifying a group with considerable experience in their respective fields. Finally, an equivalent number of 17 respondents, or 6.7%, boast above 15 years of work experience, indicating a highly experienced segment of the surveyed population.

The collected data was analysed using both descriptive and inferential methods. In particular, the study employed multiple regression (SMR) analysis. Job satisfaction was assessed using a multi-item index, following the measurement approach consistent with earlier research conducted by Choi and Rainey (2014). The use of a multi-item index to measure job satisfaction is a commonly accepted practice in the field, as demonstrated by previous studies such as Choi (2009) and Kim & Min Park (2014). Additionally, the suitability of a multi-item index as a measure of job satisfaction has been supported by research carried out by Vanderschuere and Birdsall (2019). The evaluation of the psychological diversity climate involved the use of a four-item scale developed by Pugh et al. (2008). This scale employed a 5-point rating system, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), to assess respondents' perceptions of the psychological diversity climate.

The broad model is specified as:

$$JS= f(ED)\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots \qquad 1$$

The specific model is:

$$JB= \partial + \beta_1 AOE + \beta_2 GOE + \beta_3 RRI + \beta_4 PAE + \beta_5 AQE + \varepsilon\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots \qquad 2$$

$$JB= \partial + \beta_1 EPE + \beta_2 SOB + \beta_1 PSS + \beta_1 MDI + \beta_1 MAD + \varepsilon\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots \qquad 3$$

Where,

ə = Constant
β_1 to β_5= Coefficients of the Regression
Ɛ= Stochastic Error
ED- Diversity
JB- Job Satisfaction
AOE- Age of Employees
GOE- Gender of Employees
RRI- Religion-related issues
PAE- Physical abilities of Employees
AQE- Academic qualification of Employees
EPE- employees perceive and experience
SOB- sense of belonging
PSS- psychological safety
MDI- management actions on diversity issue
MAD management's approach to diversity

Research Results

Descriptive statistics of physiological elements of employee diversity are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of Physiological Elements of Employee Diversity

	Age of Employees	Gender of Employees	Religion-related issues	Physical abilities of Employees	Academic qualification of Employees
Mean	3.65	3.06	3.10	3.28	2.84
Median	4.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	3.00
Maximum	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Minimum	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Std. Dev.	1.17	1.31	1.29	1.30	1.30
Skewness	-0.70	-0.15	-0.21	-0.31	0.19
Kurtosis	2.56	1.89	1.91	1.92	1.87
Jarque-Bera	22.69	13.96	14.57	16.33	15.15
Probability	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Sum	926.00	778.00	788.00	832.00	721.00
Sum Sq. Dev.	348.11	436.99	421.34	430.71	428.38
Observations	254	254	254	254	254

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Table 3 shows descriptive statistics of the physiological elements of employee diversity. On average, the age of employees is approximately 3.65. This shows that the sampled employees tend to have a moderate level of age diversity. The mean gender diversity score is approximately

Williams OKPEBENYO, Akeem Tunde NAFIU, Simon SULE ADOMOKHAI. Diversity and job satisfaction within organizational climate in Kogi state, Nigeria: Exploring the scenario of small and medium-sized enterprises

PROBLEMS
OF MANAGEMENT
IN THE 21st CENTURY
Vol. 18, No. 1, 2023

43

3.06, revealing a moderate level of gender diversity within the workforce. The mean score related to religion-related diversity issues is approximately 3.10, indicating a moderate level of sensitivity or attention to religious diversity in the workplace. The mean score related to the physical abilities of employees is approximately 3.28, suggesting a moderate level of awareness or consideration of physical diversity among employees. The mean score related to academic qualifications is approximately 2.84, implying that there might be a somewhat lower level of diversity in academic backgrounds among employees. For all the physiological elements, the median values are consistent, with each element having a median value of 4.00, 3.00, 3.00, 4.00, and 3.00, respectively. This implies that in each category, the middle value falls within this range, showing the central tendency. This table offers a detailed statistical perspective on employee diversity across various physiological elements.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics of Psychological Diversity Climate

	Employees Perceive and Experience	Sense of Belonging	Psychological Safety	Management Actions on Diversity Issue	Management's Approach to Diversity
Mean	2.88	3.44	3.94	3.09	3.26
Median	3.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	3.00
Maximum	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Minimum	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Std. Dev.	1.32	1.19	1.13	1.30	1.29
Skewness	0.12	-0.23	-1.00	-0.18	-0.30
Kurtosis	1.84	1.99	3.21	1.90	1.97
Jarque-Bera	14.85	12.88	43.18	14.20	14.93
Probability	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Sum	731.00	875.00	1002.00	784.00	829.00
Sum Sq. Dev.	439.22	360.73	321.23	430.09	419.33
Observations	254	254	254	254	254

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Table 4 shows a comprehensive set of statistical results that shed light on how employees perceive and experience various aspects of psychological diversity within SMEs. The mean score for the sense of belonging among employees is approximately 2.88. This indicates that, on average, employees report a moderate sense of belonging within SMEs. The median value is 3.00, indicating that the middle point of employee perceptions aligns with this moderate score. The standard deviation, which measures the spread of scores around the mean, is 1.32, implying some variability in employees' sense of belonging. The skewness is positive but close to zero, indicating a nearly symmetrical distribution of responses. The kurtosis suggests a moderately peaked distribution, not too different from a normal distribution.

Employees report a relatively higher mean score for psychological safety, with a mean of approximately 3.44. This implies that, on average, employees perceive a moderate to high level of psychological safety within SMEs. The median score is 4.00, indicating that many employees report even higher levels of psychological safety. The standard deviation is 1.19, indicating

44

some variability in perceptions. The skewness is negative but close to zero, indicating a nearly symmetrical distribution of responses. The kurtosis suggests a moderately peaked distribution.

Employees, on average, rate management's actions on diversity issues with a mean score of approximately 3.09, suggesting a moderate level of satisfaction with management's efforts. The median score is 3.00, aligning with this moderate assessment. The standard deviation of 1.30 indicates that there is variation in the responses. While the kurtosis suggests a distribution with a modestly peaked apex and a skewness that is almost zero, the distribution appears to be generally symmetrical. Management's approach to diversity receives an average score of approximately 3.26, indicating a moderate level of satisfaction or agreement among employees. The median score is 3.00, suggesting that this moderate assessment is widespread. The standard deviation is 1.29, showing some degree of variability. The skewness is slightly negative but close to zero, indicating a near-symmetrical distribution, while the kurtosis suggests a moderately peaked distribution. The table provides valuable insights into how employees perceive and experience psychological diversity within their organization. While the central tendency suggests moderate levels of sense of belonging, psychological safety, satisfaction with management actions, and management's approach to diversity, there is diversity in individual responses.

Table 5

Regression Analysis on Physiological Elements of Employee Diversity and Job Satisfaction

Variable	β	SE	t-Statistic	p
C	.447331	.199685	2.240183	.0260
AOE	-.108665	.032460	-3.347631	.0009
GOE	-.018353	.028833	-.636531	.5250
RRI	.930583	.029347	31.70967	.0000
PAE	.016313	.029132	.559986	.5760
AQE	.003341	.029124	.114704	.9088

R-squared	.803679	Mean dependent var	2.944882
Adjusted R-squared	.799721	S.D. dependent var	1.338438
S.E. of regression	.598985	Akaike info criterion	1.836180
Sum squared resid	88.97833	Schwarz criterion	1.919739
Log likelihood	-227.1948	Hannan-Quinn criter.	1.869794
F-statistic	203.0472	Durbin-Watson stat	2.266374
Prob(F-statistic)	.01		

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Table 5 shows the results of the multiple linear regression on the effects of physiological elements of employee diversity on job satisfaction. The R-squared value is .803679, which means that approximately 80.37% of the variability in employee job satisfaction is explained by the age of employees, gender of employees, religion-related issues, physical abilities of employees, and academic qualification of employees in the model. The adjusted R-squared value accounts for the independent variables (age of employees, gender of employees, religion-related issues, physical abilities of employees, and academic qualification of employees) in

the model and is .799721. The standard error of the regression is .598985. The F-statistic is 203.0472, showing that the overall model is statistically significant. The p-value connected with the F-statistic is less than .001, indicating that the model as a whole is highly statistically significant.

The constant shows the intercept of the regression equation with a coefficient of .447331. The coefficient for the age of employees is -.108665, suggesting that as the age of employees increases, job satisfaction tends to decrease. That is, 10.9% of the negative change in job satisfaction is brought about by a unit change in the age of employees. This relationship is statistically significant, with a t-statistic of -3.347631 and a very low p-value of 0.01. The coefficient for the gender of employees is -.018353, indicating a slight negative relationship between gender and job satisfaction. However, this relationship is not statistically significant, with a p-value of .5250.

The coefficient for religion-related issues is .930583, indicating a strong positive relationship between religion-related issues and job satisfaction. That is, a unit change in religion-related issues brings about a 93.1% change in job satisfaction. This relationship is highly statistically significant, with a high t-statistic of 31.70967 and a very low p-value of .01. The coefficient for the physical abilities of employees is .016313, indicating a weak positive relationship, but this relationship is not statistically significant (p-value > .05). That is, a mean change in the physical abilities of employees will lead to an insignificant change in job satisfaction. The coefficient for the academic qualification of employees is .01, suggesting a very weak positive relationship. This relationship is not statistically significant (given that the p-value is greater than .05). The Durbin-Watson-Watsontic test for autocorrelation in the residuals is 2.266374, and this suggests that there is no autocorrelation issue in the residuals.

Table 6

Regression Analysis on Psychological Diversity Climate on Job Satisfaction

Variable	β	SE	t-Statistic	p
C	1.196862	.312106	3.834796	.0002
EPE	.149661	.062020	2.413094	.0165
SOB	.174162	.063694	2.734372	.0067
PSS	.113270	.063238	1.791178	.0745
MDI	.158691	.063363	2.504463	.0129
MAD	-.007998	.061188	-.130714	.8961
R-squared	.134488	Mean dependent var		2.944882
Adjusted R-squared	.117038	S.D. dependent var		1.338438
S.E. of regression	1.257678	Akaike info criterion		3.319749
Sum squared resid	392.2748	Schwarz criterion		3.403309
Log likelihood	-415.6082	Hannan-Quinn criter.		3.353364
F-statistic	7.707088	Durbin-Watson stat		1.925526
Prob(*F*-statistic)	.000001			

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Table 6 shows the results of the regression analysis of the influence of psychological diversity climate on the job satisfaction of employees in SMEs in Kogi State. The R-squared value is .134488, implying that approximately 13.45% of the variation in job satisfaction is explained by employees' perceptions and experiences, sense of belonging, psychological safety, management actions on diversity issues, and management's approach to diversity in the model. The adjusted R-squared value accounts for the independent variables (employees perceive and experience, sense of belonging, psychological safety, management actions on diversity issues, and management's approach to diversity) in the model and is .117038. The standard error of the regression is 1.257678. The F-statistic is 7.707088, indicating that the overall model is statistically significant. The p-value connected with the F-statistic is very low (0.01), indicating that the model as a whole is highly statistically significant.

The intercept of the regression equation is 1.196862. In more practical terms, when all other factors are held constant, the intercept provides the estimated baseline for the dependent variable. The coefficient for employees' perception and experience is .149661, indicating that an increase in employees' perception and experience regarding diversity positively influences job satisfaction. That is, a 15% change in employees' perceptions and experiences will result in a proportional change in job satisfaction. The result shows that employees' perception and experience significantly and positively relate to job satisfaction (p-value <.05).

The coefficient for a sense of belonging is .174162, suggesting that a stronger sense of belonging among employees positively affects job satisfaction. That is, a 17.4% change in the sense of belonging will lead to proportional job satisfaction. This implies that a sense of belonging significantly and positively relates to job satisfaction (p-value < .05). The coefficient for psychological safety is .113270, indicating that higher levels of psychological safety in the workplace have a positive impact on job satisfaction, although this relationship is not statistically significant at the conventional significance level (p-value > .05).

The coefficient for management actions on diversity issues is .158691, suggesting that positive management actions related to diversity issues contribute to higher job satisfaction. The result shows that management actions on diversity issues significantly and positively relate to job satisfaction (p-value < .05). The coefficient for management's approach to diversity is -.007998, indicating a negative but very weak relationship between management's approach to diversity and job satisfaction. This relationship is not statistically significant (p-value > .05). The Durbin-Watson statistic is 1.925526, which suggests that there is no autocorrelation in the residuals.

Discussion

Results showed that the age of employees has a significant negative effect on job satisfaction. As employees grow older, there is a noticeable trend towards decreasing job satisfaction. This implies that job satisfaction tends to decline as employees advance in age within the workforce. This disagrees with the finding of Mottaz (1987) that age has a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction. The relationship between age and job satisfaction appears to be inversely proportional, with older employees generally reporting lower levels of job satisfaction.

The gender of employees was found to have an insignificant negative effect on job satisfaction. This implies that gender does not play a significant role in determining job satisfaction among employees. This refutes the finding of Mohd-Suki and Mohd-Suki (2011) that both men and women employees in Labuan hold an equal perception of job satisfaction. Religion-related issues have a highly statistically significant positive effect on job satisfaction. This means that the religious beliefs of employees were accommodated in the workplace, and they tended to have higher job satisfaction levels. This also supports the finding of Yafiz et

al. (2022) that a significant and favourable correlation exists between Islamic religiosity and satisfaction with their jobs.

The physical abilities of employees have no significant effect on job satisfaction. This indicates that an employee's physical capabilities do not strongly influence their overall job satisfaction. In other words, an employee's level of physical capability is not a key factor that determines how happy or content they feel in their workplace. Job satisfaction appears to be influenced by other factors more prominently than an individual's physical capabilities. The academic qualifications of employees have no significant effect on job satisfaction. The level of education or academic qualifications of employees did not show a meaningful correlation with job satisfaction. This aligns with the finding of Namaziandost et al. (2021) that the qualifications of employees are not significantly related to their job satisfaction. Having higher or lower academic qualifications doesn't appear to significantly affect how satisfied an individual feels about their job. Job satisfaction seems to be influenced by factors other than an employee's educational achievements, and these factors play a more prominent role in determining overall job satisfaction.

Results showed that employees' perceptions and experiences regarding diversity significantly and positively influence job satisfaction. Employees who perceive their workplace as diverse and inclusive and who have positive experiences related to diversity tend to report higher levels of job satisfaction. A sense of belonging significantly and positively relates to job satisfaction. Employees who feel a sense of belonging within their organisation are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs. Management actions on the diversity issue significantly and positively relate to job satisfaction. When employees perceive that their organisation takes proactive and effective steps to address diversity and inclusion, they are more likely to experience higher job satisfaction.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Age was identified as a significant factor, with older employees reporting lower job satisfaction. In contrast, gender, physical abilities, and academic qualifications were found to have little to no impact on job satisfaction. Notably, the accommodation of religion-related issues in the workplace was strongly associated with higher job satisfaction levels. These can assist organisations in understanding and addressing the specific needs and concerns of their employees, ultimately contributing to a more satisfying and productive work environment.

The study underscores the importance of diversity perception, sense of belonging, and management actions in influencing employees' job satisfaction. A diverse and inclusive workplace, where employees feel a sense of belonging and where management actively addresses diversity issues, tends to lead to higher levels of job satisfaction among the workforce. Organisations need to consider these findings when developing strategies to enhance employee job satisfaction. Fostering a diverse and inclusive environment and demonstrating commitment to diversity-related initiatives can contribute positively to employee satisfaction levels.

Based on these research outcomes, the following recommendations can be made:

1.   SME owners or managers should implement age-specific support programmes aimed at addressing the changing needs and preferences of older employees to help sustain and improve their job satisfaction.

2.   Managers should conduct regular training sessions to raise awareness and sensitivity among employees regarding religious and diversity-related issues and foster a positive and inclusive work environment.

3.   SME owners or managers should foster a sense of inclusivity and belonging among employees by encouraging open communication, collaboration, and teamwork. They should promote an environment where employees feel valued and respected, irrespective of their demographic characteristics.

4.		Managers should provide management training programmes focusing on effective management strategies that promote diversity and inclusivity, thereby fostering a positive impact on employee job satisfaction.

5.		SME owners or managers should develop and implement initiatives that encourage employee engagement, active participation, and involvement in decision-making processes. They should encourage employees to contribute their ideas and feedback, creating a sense of ownership and value within the organisation.

6.		Policymakers should reevaluate the current performance evaluation policies to ensure they are free from biases related to age, gender, physical abilities, or academic qualifications. They should implement a fair and transparent evaluation system that acknowledges and rewards employees based on their contributions and performance.

7.		SME owners or managers should introduce flexible work arrangements and adaptability measures that accommodate the diverse needs and requirements of employees across different demographics, contributing to a more satisfied and motivated workforce.

By implementing these recommendations, SME owners and managers can foster a more inclusive, supportive, and satisfying work environment, which is crucial for enhancing job satisfaction and overall organisational performance.

Declaration of Interest

The authors declare no competing interest.

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