



Diversity and Inclusion Policy in Public Administration: Enhancing Equity, Organizational Performance and Good Governance

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Abstract

The present research analyzed diversity and inclusion policy in public administration and how it affects organizational performance, equality, and public service delivery. The study was based on the current demand for public institutions to mirror the diversity of the communities they serve and create inclusive work environments characterized by fairness, equality of opportunities, and active engagement. Specifically, the study focused on the concept of diversity and inclusion and its importance, the impact of diversity and inclusion on organizational performance, challenges in implementing diversity and inclusion policy, and ways to strengthen diversity and inclusion in public administration. A qualitative research method was used, and secondary data were collected through a review of scholarly literature, including peer-reviewed journal articles, textbooks, official publications, government policy documents, and reports from reputable national and international organizations. Analysis of Data: Data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. Research findings indicate that a strong diversity and inclusion policy plays an important role in nurturing innovation, improving organizational effectiveness and accountability, and ensuring citizen-centered services. However, there are several barriers such as discrimination, unconscious biases, and political patronage, ineffective implementation of the diversity and inclusion policy, and lack of commitment from the leaders.

Keywords: Inclusion, Diversity, Public Administration, organizational performance, representative bureaucracy, public service delivery.



1.1 INTRODUCTION

As stated by Ng and Sears (2015), modern-day public administration is practiced in highly diverse societies, which consist of ethnic, religious, cultural, age, sexual orientation, language, gender, physical ability, and economic diversity. Thus, today, there is growing pressure on governments around the world to develop policies aimed at fostering inclusiveness and equality. Indeed, diversity and inclusion policies have transformed from purely HRM policies into governance tools that are used to increase legitimacy and effectiveness (Oberfield, 2015). In today's age, when responsiveness is becoming the hallmark of public organizations, diversity and inclusiveness become an important factor in ensuring their efficiency, effectiveness, and citizen-focused governance (Boselie et. al 2021).

The rising importance of diversity and inclusivity is based on the fact that a bureaucratic organization comprising uniform members may not be capable enough to comprehend and address the diverse requirements of society. Boselie et al. (2015) state that representative organizations would be able to develop fair policies as employees with different backgrounds provide diversified inputs regarding issues, viewpoints, and solutions to problems. In addition, McGrandle (2017) suggests that an inclusive environment motivates workers through innovation, collaboration, and organizational commitment since all the workers are treated with due respect and participate in decision-making.

Around the world, diversity and inclusion have been recognized as key components of public sector reform strategies to enhance social equity and good governance. Inclusive policies have become widespread, which emphasize gender equality, disabled people inclusion minority



inclusion, affirmative action, and employment equity in the civil service. As stated by Sabharwal, Levine, and D'Agostino (2018), organizations that manage to implement inclusive policies benefit from higher levels of employee satisfaction and increased organizational commitment. Similarly, Oberfield (2015) states that workforce diversity is an important factor in enhancing the responsiveness of policies, as it enables public servants to understand the requirements of diverse communities.

Diversity and inclusion have special significance in the case of Nigeria, being a country characterized by its multi-ethnic, multi-language, and multi-cultural nature. The introduction of the Federal Character Principle through the country's constitution was aimed at ensuring equal representation of all different groups in the country in public service employment and in the sharing of national resources. However, this strategy has been met with several problems associated with meritocracy, political favoritism, tokenism, and inconsistency in implementation. Despite the above challenges, the study conducted by Rasul and Rogger (2015) shows that effective management of diversity in public organizations helps in promoting the success of projects and organizations.

Even though there has been more awareness about the need for policy change regarding diversity around the world, many public organizations still find it difficult to convert diversity into inclusiveness. There are still fewer women occupying leadership roles, disabled people are still struggling to gain access to work opportunities, and unconscious bias, discrimination, and lack of proper institutional support have hindered organizational cohesiveness. According to Ng & Sears (2015), diversity needs to be complemented with an organizational culture that encourages



participation, equity, and inclusiveness for it to be effective. Inclusion, as per McGrandle (2017), requires the organization to develop such an environment.

Notwithstanding the considerable amount of literature written on the topics of diversity and inclusion in public administration, there are several areas in which gaps persist. The majority of research conducted in this field has been primarily focused on the theoretical basis of diversity, representation, gender equality, and equal employment opportunity while paying relatively little attention to the impact that both diversity and inclusion can exert on organizational effectiveness, employees' engagement, and the quality of public services delivered in public organizations. Moreover, the empirical data used in most of the studies is obtained in developed countries that have different institutional, legal, and administrative frameworks compared to developing countries like Nigeria.

Moreover, past research has also looked at diversity and inclusion as isolated phenomena without considering the fact that they can be used together as governance mechanisms that would lead to increased efficiency and effectiveness of organizations and citizen-based services. Furthermore, there has not been much effort made to synthesize the contemporary literature regarding this issue in order to incorporate the recent advances, problems, and strategies of implementing diversity and inclusion in public administration. This paper seeks to fill this gap and reviews the literature, investigates the connection between diversity and inclusion and the performance of the public sector, as well as offers strategies for implementation.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Though there is increasing awareness regarding the significance of diversity and inclusion in the context of efficient public administration, several public organizations still experience difficulties



with implementing policies that would contribute to creating an equitable environment in terms of equality and equal opportunities. Even though governmental entities have created policies that would ensure equal representation of different groups and avoid discrimination, there are challenges such as political patronage, biased approach of employers, lack of equal access to job and promotion opportunities, underrepresentation of women and people with disabilities, and weak enforcement of the implemented policies. As a result, employee demotivation, poor innovation rates, inefficient functioning of the organization, and inequity in providing public services may occur. Given the diversity of society in Nigeria, when ethnic, cultural, religious, and regional aspects influence the processes of public administration, the failure in implementation of diversity and inclusion policies might negatively affect public trust, social cohesion, and the efficiency of public institutions. That is why there is a need to conduct research about the effectiveness of such policies, analyze the barriers to their implementation, and provide recommendations for ensuring the inclusiveness of the public sector.

The reason why Nigeria was chosen as the case study is due to its rich diversity of more than 250 ethnic groups, different religions, languages, and cultures, thus ensuring that diversity and inclusiveness become important concerns in the field of public administration. The inclusion of the Federal Character Principle into the Nigerian constitution indicates intentional efforts on the part of the state to encourage equal representation of all citizens in order to achieve national integration in the civil sector. Nevertheless, existing problems like political patronage, ethnic favoritism, disparity in access to job opportunities, poor policy implementation, and the conflict between merit and inclusiveness remain as obstacles to the successful implementation of diversity and inclusion policy. Thus, Nigeria becomes a suitable ground for exploring the impact of diversity and inclusion on organizational efficiency.



1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Why is the diversity and inclusion policy important in Public Administration?
2. How does the diversity and inclusion policy affect the performance of public service organizations?
3. What are the top three factors that affect the diversity and inclusion policy in public administration?
4. How do diversity and inclusion policies facilitate fairness, make staff involvement possible, and lead to the delivery of quality public services in public institutions?
5. What kind of approaches are available to strengthen diversity and inclusion policies so as to enhance organizational performance and the delivery of public service in a more efficient way?

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In general, the research aims to investigate the impact of diversity and inclusion policies on the effectiveness of public administration.

The particular goals are to:

1. Investigate the idea of diversity and inclusion policy and its importance in public administration.
2. Investigate the impact of diversity and inclusion policies on the performance of organizations in the public sector.



3. Analyze the main challenges associated with the implementation of diversity and inclusion policies in public organizations.
4. Investigate the contribution of diversity and inclusion to improving equity, employee engagement, and the effectiveness of public service delivery.
5. Investigate the best approaches to improving diversity and inclusion policy in public administration.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of the study lies in its contribution towards the scholarship on diversity and inclusion within the field of public administration in that it shifts away from the conventional preoccupation with demographic representation in favor of looking at diversity and inclusion as complimentary modes of governance that would help improve organizational performance, equity and delivery of services to citizens. The majority of previous research efforts that have considered issues related to diversity and inclusion in public administration have examined these concepts in isolation from each other or have focused mainly on representative bureaucracy and equal employment opportunity. This study looks at both concepts from a holistic point of view, illustrating how their interaction can affect employee. Besides, it is a first-of-its-kind study in a way that it highlights Nigeria as a multicultural public sector where elements such as the Federal Character Principle, which is a constitutional provision, are backed by meritocracy, political patronage, institutional bias, and policy implementation issues. It also gives practical and evidence-based recommendations on how to strengthen diversity and inclusion policies in the newly developing administrative systems. The results will guide policymakers, public administrators, human resource practitioners, and development partners in forming more gender-



friendly and representative public institutions. Also, the study fills the gaps in the existing knowledge base that is identified in the current literature and lays the groundwork for future empirical studies on diversity, inclusion, representative bureaucracy, and public sector governance in Nigeria and other multicultural society's engagement and effective governance.

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2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

There exist two differing views regarding diversity and inclusion policy in public administration. The first view is that diversity and inclusion increase organizational effectiveness, improve the service delivery process, increase innovation, and ensure democratic governance. On the other hand, the second view is that diversity in the workforce might result in communication problems, conflicts, a decrease in cohesiveness, and poor implementation if not well-managed. Hence, this literature review will consider both views.



Proponents of diversity and inclusion policies argue that having a diverse workforce in the public sector increases the legitimacy and responsiveness of the government. Riccucci and Van Ryzin (2016) posit that representative bureaucracy allows public agencies to understand citizen needs and to increase social equity and democratic governance. They state that employees of different backgrounds provide new perspectives that improve decisions making process for the public and build citizens' trust in government institutions.

In the same way, the research carried out by Fangda and Riccucci (2023) through a meta-analysis revealed that inclusion of diversity positively impacts the performance of public organizations, provided there is leadership that fosters inclusivity, efficient communication, and collaboration within the organization.

Also, according to research conducted by Maja Husar Holmes et al. (2023), inclusion is the key determinant of how diversity creates positive results within organizations. They assert that organizations that create a culture of inclusiveness among their employees are able to foster employee engagement, organizational commitment, cooperation, and public service performance, as the employees will feel respected, valued, and empowered to contribute towards organizational objectives.

One other supporting perspective can be found in the findings of Grissom et al. (2023). They have established that representative bureaucracy helps immigrants and minorities have better access to public services. This means that people are more likely to trust and cooperate with public organizations when the staff reflects the demographic composition of the population.

One more supporting argument is offered by Baekgaard and George (2018). These authors claim that diversity among senior administrative officials will make it easier to recruit people from



different backgrounds and provide a larger number of viewpoints during the policy-making and implementation process.

On the contrary, those who do not believe that the introduction of diversity into an organization is helpful claim that diversity may negatively affect organizational performance because the diversification of staff may result in interpersonal conflicts, poor communication, a lack of trust between employees, and slow down the decision-making process if there are no effective mechanisms of inclusiveness used. Ding & Riccucci (2023) prove empirically that the impacts of diversity are ambiguous because the outcomes of organizations' work depend on various contextual factors, namely leadership, organizational culture, and management.

Similarly, Eiko (2023) notes that representative bureaucracy theory has been concerned with demographic representation but has overlooked structural inequities that exist in the context of public management. Therefore, the study reveals that the increase in demographic representation can be ineffective in terms of inclusion and equity in public outcomes if there are barriers to inclusion at the organizational level.

Moreover, according to a systematic review conducted by Jungwon and So (2023), even though diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility have become primary concerns in public administration research, many organizations fail to translate their commitments to policies into effective outcomes related to workplace diversity due to ineffective leadership commitment, accountability, and implementation of diversity policies.

Yet another important perspective is that the diversity initiative is likely to become a compliance-driven rather than performance-driven process in organizations that are focused on demographic targets but do not have an inclusive organizational culture. In other words, the lack of an inclusive



culture in organizations makes diversity policies look like political tools rather than efforts aimed at improving organizational performance and achieving organizational goals (Abiodun, 2024).

Generally, from the literature review presented above, it is clear that there is substantial potential for using diversity and inclusion policies as an instrument to enhance the efficiency of public administration through innovation, organizational legitimacy, employee engagement, and equity in the provision of services. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that the evidence also suggests that simply having diversity does not lead to improvements in organizational performance. It largely depends on whether the public organization has created an inclusive organizational culture, provided proper leadership, ensured equitable employment practices, and empowered all its employees to take part in the process of making organizational decisions.

The connection between diversity and organizational performance has been receiving quite a lot of attention from scholars in recent times. One such approach is based on the representative bureaucracy theory, which states that public organizations perform better when their personnel is demographically representative of the community they serve. Specifically, Ding et al, (2021) conducted a meta-analysis of 80 quantitative articles including 648 effect sizes and revealed that representative bureaucracy has a significant positive effect on public organizational performance.

Similarly, Bishu and Kennedy (2019) conducted a meta-analysis of almost a hundred empirical studies on representative bureaucracy and found that workforce diversity had transformed from being treated as only a question of social justice to a means of increasing administrative effectiveness. As shown in their meta-analysis, diversity helps to improve policy implementation, builds up the trust of the public, and enhances organizational flexibility. Yet, at the same time,



they stated that empirical evidence was not evenly distributed across the countries and policy areas, suggesting that further research was needed in young democracies.

Further development of the theory of diversity was undertaken by Groeneveld and Meier (2022), who introduced a new notion of status distance, which explains why diversity sometimes brings about good results and, in other cases, causes problems in the workplace. It is suggested that the success of diversity policies is contingent upon the impact of differences in social status, organizational hierarchy, and organizational culture on interactions between employees and between public servants and citizens.

Moreover, the problem of demographic representation has been looked into in terms of the public's perceptions about the issue. According to Baker, Rubin, Weinberg, and Stout (2024), citizens believe that government programmes become more legitimate and fair if they are conducted by organizations that have a diverse workforce. It means that diversity makes public confidence in government institutions higher since it implies fairness, impartiality, and equal representation.

Another study conducted by Grissom et al (2023) looks at the concept of representative bureaucracy and its importance for immigrant communities. It shows that public organizations that hire representatives of service users' cultures/nationalities are able to ensure better cooperation with citizens, good communication, and better implementation of policies.

Despite all the above benefits, some studies warn against the idea that diversity leads to positive organizational outcomes automatically. For instance, according to Strader et al. (2023), most of the diversity policies pay attention only to the numerical representation of certain groups in the organization but forget about the organizational structure and the existing structural issues.



Equally, Yeo and Jeon (2023) performed a systematic review of research in diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in public administration and found that even as more governments acknowledge the significance of DEIA policies, there are problems in implementation. These include a lack of commitment among leaders, poor accountability structures, ineffective monitoring measures, and lack of employee engagement.

The evidence from the Nigerian public service is also significant in understanding the diversity issue. Ikpebe (2025) analyzed the Federal Character Principle as a measure aimed at promoting representative bureaucracy and social equity in Nigeria. In the analysis, it was shown that even though the policy has enhanced the regionally representative nature of the Nigerian public service, a lot of public servants are still concerned about political influence and lack of institutional enforcement, thus undermining its efficacy.

Together, the literature shows that diversity and inclusion policies have the capacity to positively contribute to organizational performance, innovation, accountability, and citizen satisfaction in public administration. At the same time, the literature shows that this contribution can only be realized through inclusive leadership, equitable organizational culture and practices, and adequate mechanisms for implementing diversity policies. Public organizations, which concentrate exclusively on demographic representation without inclusion, will not realize the full administrative and governance advantages of having a diverse workforce.

2.1.1 CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

Diversity

Diversity is the occurrence of variation among the people who belong to an organization or society. The differences can include gender, age, ethnicity, race, religion, culture, disabilities, language,



education level, and social economic position. Public administration diversity makes sure that the staff is diversified like the population in which it serves to enhance effectiveness and representation.

Inclusion

Inclusion is the creation of an organizational environment that treats every member of the staff respectfully and offers the same chance for participation in the decision-making process, career growth, and organizational activities regardless of his or her background or other personal attributes.

Diversity policy

A diversity policy is a set of principles that provides equal opportunity of employment, eliminates discrimination in the workplace, and fosters the hiring, retaining, and promotion of diverse individuals.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Representative bureaucracy theory

Representative Bureaucracy Theory was advanced by J. Donald Kingsley in 1944, and further enhanced by Samuel Krislov (1974) and Kenneth J. Meier. According to the theory, the government structure must be composed of people who mirror the sociological composition of the society. It posits that the greater the diversity in the public workforce, the greater the equity, equality, accountability, and responsiveness to the needs of citizens due to differences in the perspectives of employees.



Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory was developed by Henri Tajfel (1978) and John Turner (1979). The theory postulates that people are attached to social groups based on their ethnicity, gender, religion, and culture, and their attitudes and relationships within organizations. It posits that mismanaged diversity can result in discrimination and conflicts in organizations, while inclusive policies create cooperation.

Applicability of Representative Bureaucracy Theory and Social Identity Theory

The results of the study confirm the premises of Representative Bureaucracy Theory, which states that governmental organizations function more efficiently if the staff is diverse and represents the diversity of the population of the organization. It was established that diversity and inclusion lead to fairness, engagement of employees, increased effectiveness of organizations, and equitable public service delivery. At the same time, it should be noted that such an effect is possible only when there is also meritocracy and transparency in the organizations.

The results of the study also confirm the premises of the Social Identity Theory, which asserts that people tend to feel closer to their ethnic, religious, or regional groups, thus affecting their behavior at work and decisions made. According to the research, ethnocentricity leads to discrimination, decreased cooperation, and organizational inefficiency. At the same time, inclusive policies at work help create a team spirit and make the members of the organization commit to the common goals.



2.2.1 Issues of discussion

i. Diversity and inclusion policy in Public Administration

The concept of diversity and inclusion policy has gained prominence in today's public administration since such policies ensure equality, equity, and representative leadership. Public organizations are supposed to employ and maintain individuals who come from various social, cultural, ethnic, and religious, gender, and educational backgrounds so as to reflect the composition of society. The implementation of effective diversity and inclusion policies ensures that discrimination is eradicated and that there is equal participation and contribution towards the achievement of organizational goals (Imran and Roger 2015). This will enhance the credibility of public institutions and service delivery.

ii. Diversity and inclusion policy and organizational performance: Inclusion and diversity of a workforce ensure organizational performance through integration of individuals from various knowledge bases, experiences, and perspectives. This will enhance creativity, innovation, and the decision-making process within public organizations, which is in line with citizens' demands. In addition, inclusiveness of the workplace will also enhance job satisfaction and employee commitment, leading to increased performance of organizations.

iii. Issues that have an impact on the implementation of diversity and inclusion policies: The implementation of diversity and inclusion policies is faced by various issues. Some of them include political patronage, discrimination, unconscious biases, lack of organizational commitment, poor institutional structures, resistance to organizational change, and lack of monitoring mechanisms. Several public organizations still have unequal access to employment and promotion chances for



women, people with disabilities, and minority groups. These issues lower the levels of motivation among employees, organizational cohesion, and effective delivery of public service.

iv. Diversity and inclusion as tools for achieving equity and effective delivery of public services: Equity is the main goal of implementing diversity and inclusion policies in public administration. Such policies make sure that all employees are treated equally, and everyone receives access to employment, promotions, leadership opportunities, and other resources within an organization regardless of individual differences. The inclusion of diversity allows public institutions to know the needs of citizens and provide effective policies and service delivery to them.

v. Strategies for enhancing the policies of diversity and inclusion in Public Administration: Improving the policies of diversity and inclusion involves implementing necessary institutional changes and commitment from leaders. The first strategy is that public organizations should implement open recruiting and promotion practices based on merit with proper representation of minority groups. Another strategy includes having diversity training, anti-discrimination policy, leadership development for inclusiveness, mentoring programs for employees, and having a good monitoring and evaluation system. Governments must also implement accountability measures to ensure that organizations adhere to the policies of diversity and create an environment of respect and cooperation.

2.3 Contribution to knowledge

The findings from this research contribute to knowledge by providing a synthesized documentary analysis of issues relating to diversity and inclusion in the Nigerian public service, from a perspective that moves beyond fragmented analysis toward an integrated analysis of the effects of



inclusiveness in the practice of public administration. The findings establish that the concepts of diversity and inclusion are more than just Human Resource Management (HRM) issues; rather, they are tools for governance that add value to the legitimacy of the institution, the engagement of its employees, and the performance of its administrative processes. This research expands the scope of applicability of Representative Bureaucracy Theory and Social Identity Theory to the Nigerian public sector by establishing the need for meritocracy, in addition to representativeness, as requirements for efficient public administration.

3.1 METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research design, based on a systematic literature review, was utilized in this study to analyze the issues related to diversity and inclusion policy in public administration. A qualitative research design was deemed to be more appropriate since it allowed for comprehensive synthesis and interpretation of the scholarly literature, policy, and other relevant empirical evidence concerning this issue without the production of any new data.

Strategy for literature search

A comprehensive strategy was applied for searching the literature. The current research emphasizes scholarly sources that consider the issues of diversity, inclusion, representative bureaucracy, organizational effectiveness, and public administration. Special attention was paid to peer-reviewed journal articles published from 2015 to 2025 to present the latest theoretical findings. Moreover, seminal literature sources related to the theoretical background were incorporated into the review if needed.



Criteria for inclusion and exclusion

The inclusion criteria included peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, governmental publications, policy documents, and reports in English related to diversity and inclusion in public administration and public sector organizations. The studies dealing with organizational performance, equity, representative bureaucracy, employee engagement, and public services provision were considered in the review as well. On the other hand, the exclusion criteria were represented by conference abstracts, opinion papers, unpublished manuscripts, duplicate studies, non-English literature, and studies not related to public administration/public sector management.

Database searches

Sources of literature pertinent to the topic were sought via searching internationally acknowledged academic databases, such as Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, JSTOR, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis Online, SAGE Journals, Wiley Online Library, and Emerald Insight. Other materials have been sourced from publications by credible institutions, namely, the United Nations (UN), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and governmental sources. Key search words used in searches include diversity policy, inclusion policy, diversity and inclusion, representative bureaucracy, public administration, organizational performance, public sector diversity, employee engagement, and public service delivery.

Assessment of the quality of documents

The quality of the selected sources was determined based on well-established criteria such as their relevance to the research goals, publication in respected peer-reviewed journals, sound methodology, credible authorship, up-to-date publications, and consistency of results with the



existing literature. Priority was given to empirical research published in quality peer-reviewed journals listed in internationally recognized indexes. International government documents and research from internationally recognized organizations were selected when they contained reliable policy evidence.

Thematic analysis

The process of data analysis was conducted using a thematic analysis approach. The selected literature was closely studied and categorized depending on the objectives of the study. The recurring themes, concepts, and patterns were identified and categorized into broad themes, which included the importance of diversity and inclusion, organizational performance, implementation difficulties, equity and employee engagement, as well as ways to strengthen diversity and inclusion in public administration.

Validity and reliability

To improve the validity of the study, the information was collected from different scholarly sources, government documents, and reports from various credible international agencies. No bias was involved as only authentic publications were used in order to improve validity. The reliability of the study was improved by applying clear inclusion and exclusion criteria, a systematic approach for searching information, and an easily reproducible analysis process.

Ethical issues

Since the research did not involve any human subjects but only used secondary data, no ethical approval was needed. Nonetheless, ethical standards of academic writing were maintained in the research through proper representation of the ideas of the authors, citing all the sources used,



avoiding plagiarism, and presenting an objective review of the literature under discussion. All the sources cited in the research were properly cited according to APA 7th edition guidelines.

4.1 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Empirical review and key findings

Author(s)	Focus of Study	Methodology	Key Findings
Ng and Sears (2015)	Diversity and inclusion in public service organizations	Literature review	Diversity enhances organizational effectiveness when supported by inclusive workplace practices and equal opportunities.
Rasul and Rogger (2015)	Ethnic diversity and organizational performance in the Nigerian public service	Quantitative analysis	Effective management of workforce diversity improves project implementation and organizational performance.
Riccucci and Van Ryzin (2016)	Representative bureaucracy and social equity	Survey research	Representative public institutions improve citizens' trust, legitimacy, and perceptions of fairness in governance.
McGrandle (2017)	Workplace inclusion and employee engagement	Qualitative review	Inclusive workplaces increase employee commitment, collaboration, and job satisfaction.
Sabharwal, Levine, and D'Agostino (2018)	Diversity research in public administration	Content analysis	Diversity and inclusion contribute to employee satisfaction, innovation, and organizational effectiveness.
Bishu and Kennedy (2019)	Representative bureaucracy in public administration	Meta-review	Workforce diversity enhances policy responsiveness and public confidence in government institutions.
Ding, Lu, and Riccucci (2021)	Representative bureaucracy and organizational performance	Meta-analysis	Diversity positively influences organizational performance and service delivery outcomes.



Groeneveld and Meier (2022)	Representative bureaucracy and status distance	Theoretical analysis	The benefits of diversity depend on organizational culture, leadership, and inclusion mechanisms.
Holmes, Elias, and D'Agostino (2023)	Inclusion in public-sector workplaces	Qualitative review	Inclusion is essential for translating workforce diversity into improved organizational outcomes.
Yeo and Jeon (2023)	Diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in public administration	Systematic literature review	Weak implementation and inadequate accountability remain major barriers to effective diversity policies.
Grissom, Darling-Aduana, and Hall (2023)	Representative bureaucracy and immigrant communities	Empirical study	Workforce representation improves citizen trust, communication, and equitable service delivery.
Ikpebe, Akinrinmade, and Asempah (2025)	Federal Character Principle and representative bureaucracy in Nigeria	Survey research	Equitable representation promotes social equity, but political interference and weak implementation reduce effectiveness.

5.1 CONCLUSION

In today's world, diversity and inclusion have emerged as key pillars of public administration. It is evident from this study that the use of sound and effective diversity and inclusion policies can play a significant role in contributing towards organizational success, employee engagement, innovation, equality, and better public services. Through the adoption of inclusive policies and ensuring representation of society's diverse elements in public institutions, governments can enhance their legitimacy, accountability, and citizens' trust.

Moreover, this study shows that diversity policies cannot yield desired outcomes without the implementation of corresponding inclusion policies. Issues such as discrimination, patronage,



unconscious bias, ineffective policy enforcement, and lack of commitment from the government can affect the effectiveness of diversity initiatives negatively. To achieve the desired level of success and respond effectively to the requirements of the current world, it is important to move from symbolism towards real actions through developing and enforcing inclusion policies.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Encourage merit-based recruitment and apply the Federal Character Principle fairly:

The research has revealed that ethnocentrism remains a critical factor affecting recruitment, promotions, and appointments in the Nigerian public sector, sometimes at the cost of efficiency and effectiveness. As a result, the Federal Government, Federal Civil Service Commission, and various state civil service commissions should encourage transparent and merit-based recruitment procedures, while the application of the Federal Character Principle should be done in a way that does not undermine efficiency. For instance, all job openings should be advertised, examinations standardized, and the appointment process monitored.

2. Institutionalize training in diversity, ethics, and national integration for public servants:

As observed from the findings, the existence of ethnocentrism negatively influences teamwork and organizational productivity. Hence, Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) should institutionalize diversity management, ethics training, conflict resolution, and national integration within their staff training programs. For example, the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON) and the Public Service Institute of Nigeria (PSIN) could include mandatory diversity training courses as part of civil servants' induction and leadership training programs.

3. Strengthening oversight and accountability of discriminatory practices: Based on the findings from the analysis, there was need to strengthen the enforcement mechanisms to prevent



ethnocentric practices because of their existence in most public institutions. Therefore, oversight institutions such as the Federal Character Commission as well as other agencies dealing with corruption and public services oversight need to increase the number of periodic audits, deal with complaints regarding discriminatory practices and impose penalties to those institutions which violate the public service rules.

4. Foster inclusive leadership and career development opportunities: It has been found from the study that restriction of career development opportunities for specific categories of people has negative impacts on employees' motivation and organizational effectiveness. Therefore, public organizations must develop clear promotion criteria that consider individuals' performance, competence, and integrity, and at the same time offer everyone an equal chance at leadership training and mentoring, without discrimination based on religion, region, ethnicity, or gender.

5. Review public service policies to deal with any new issues of diversity and inclusion: The results make it clear that the current policy frameworks have not been fully successful in eradicating ethnocentrism among public servants. Thus, the government needs to conduct periodic reviews of the rules of the public service, diversity policy, and the institutions involved in the process by consulting all stakeholders, including civil servants, trade unions, professional organizations, NGOs, and policy experts.

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