



Workplace Diversity and Employee Performance in Nepalese Commercial Banks

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Abstract

This study examines the workplace diversity and employee performance in Nepalese commercial banks. Employee performance is the dependent variable. Similarly, the selected independent variables are age diversity, gender diversity, ethnic diversity, education diversity and workplace culture. The primary sources of data are used to assess the opinions of respondents regarding age diversity, gender diversity, ethnic diversity, education diversity, workplace culture, and employee performance. The study is based on the primary data of 133 respondents. To achieve the purpose of the study, structured questionnaire is prepared. The correlation and multiple regression models are estimated to test the significance and importance of workplace diversity and employee performance in Nepalese commercial banks.

The study showed a positive impact of age diversity on employee performance. It indicates that organization having employee from diverse age group leads to increase in employee performance. Similarly, the study showed a positive impact of gender diversity on employee performance. It indicates that gender diversity leads to increase in employee performance. Likewise, the study showed a positive impact of ethnic diversity on employee performance. It indicates that firm having employee of different racial and ethnic background leads to increase in employee performance. Further, the study also showed a positive impact of education diversity on employee performance. It indicates that employee from different educational background leads to increase in employee performance. In addition, the study showed a positive impact of workplace culture on employee performance. It indicates that diversified workplace culture leads to increase in employee performance.

Keywords: age diversity, gender diversity, ethnic diversity, education diversity, workplace culture, employee performance

1. Introduction

Workplace diversity refers to the presence of individuals with different backgrounds, experiences, skills, and perspectives within an organization. This diversity can include differences in race, gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, education, and more. Research suggests that fostering workplace diversity can have a positive impact on employee performance and overall organizational success. Empirical research supports the argument that gender diversity is positively associated to an organization's performance (Chew *et al.*, 2011). Employee productivity is the most significant interest nowadays, and it is affected by the working environment in many ways (Mwendwa *et al.*, 2017). Working environment is essential, as in a comfortable environment employee can focus on their job correctly, and it leads to a better employee performance, which leads to improved organizational productivity (Kamarulzaman *et al.*, 2011). The gender heterogeneous teams produce high quality decisions over a homogenous team (Roberson and Kulik, 2007). Workforce diversity in an organization is the differences in employees' demographic, cultural, and personal qualities. Age, gender, race, education, religion, and culture are just some of the differences that affect

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a task or relationship within an organization (Carrell *et al.*, 2006). Workforce diversity refers to when members of a group or organization vary in age, size, color, immigration status, and educational achievement. The workforce is more diversified than previous generations (Erasmus, 2007).

Kunze *et al.* (2013) examined the organizational performance consequences of age diversity: Inspecting the role of diversity-friendly HR policies and top managers' negative age stereotypes. The study concluded that age diversity has a negative impact on organizational performance. Similarly, Ali *et al.* (2014) analyzed the board age and gender diversity: A test of competing linear and curvilinear predictions. The study showed a positive linear relationship between gender diversity and employee's productivity. The study also showed that there is a negative linear relationship between age diversity and return on assets. Likewise, Joseph (2014) investigated the age diversity and its impact on employee's performance in Singapore. The study found that there is a negative relationship between age group of employees and their performance. Further, Gowrishankar *et al.* (2017) observed the age of the workforce diversity and employee's performance. The study revealed that age diversity has a significant contribution to predict the employee's performance. Odhiambo *et al.* (2018) analyzed the relationship between age diversity and employee's performance of public universities in western Kenya. The study revealed that age diversity has a positive impact on employee's performance. Similarly, Hsiao *et al.* (2015) perceived organizational diversity and employee's behavior. The study found that the level of diversity perceived by hotel employee's significantly influenced employee's job performance. Likewise, Nederveen Pieterse *et al.* (2013) investigated the cultural diversity and team performance: The role of team member goal orientation. The study identified goal orientation as a moderator of the performance benefits of cultural diversity and team information elaboration as the underlying process. Further, Boehm *et al.* (2014) analyzed spotlight on age-diversity climate: The impact of age-inclusive HR practices on firm-level outcomes. The study concluded how to establish and make use of a positive age-diversity climate. In addition, Kunze *et al.* (2013) examined the age, resistance to change, and job performance. The study found that contrary to common stereotypes, employee's age is negatively related to resistance to change.

Shahzadi *et al.* (2014) observed the impact of employee's motivation on employee's performance. The study revealed that significant and positive relationship exists between employee's motivation and employee's performance. The study also revealed that employee's perceived training effectiveness has a negative relationship with motivation. Similarly, Hafeez and Akbar (2015) analyzed the impact of training on employee's performance (Evidence from pharmaceutical companies in Karachi, Pakistan). The study concluded that the more the employee's gets training, the more efficient their level of performance would be. Likewise, Wambugu (2014) observed the effects of organizational culture on employee's performance. The study revealed that organizational values have a more significant effect to employee's job performance. Further, Khan *et al.* (2019) investigated the effect of workforce diversity on employee's performance in higher education sector. The study found that there is positive relationship between age, gender, education background and ethnic diversity and employee's performance. In addition, Von Bonsdorff *et al.* (2018) analyzed the employee's age and company performance: An integrated model of aging and human resource management practices. The study showed that company average age is negatively related to company work ability and positively related to company performance assessed by company managers. Moreover, Pahos and Galanaki, (2019) examined the staffing practices and employee's

performance: the role of age. The study concluded that significant positive effects of staffing and age on employee's performance and a negative moderation effect of age on the above relationship. Qasim (2017) observed effect of workforce diversity on employee's job performance: the empirical assessment of education sector, Jalalabad, Afghanistan. The study revealed that workforce diversity has a significant effect in employee's job performance. In addition, Sanyang and Othman (2019) investigated the work force diversity and its impact on organizational performance. The study showed that workforce diversity factors have positive relationship with organizational performance. Further, Ehilebo *et al.*, (2022) examined the effect of workplace diversity on employee's performance in DSIBS in Nigeria. The study found a significant positive relationship between workforce diversity (age, gender and experience) and employee's performance. Likewise, Fang *et al.* (2021) analyzed the dual-mediation paths linking corporate social responsibility to employee's job performance: A multilevel approach. The study revealed that organizational-level corporate social responsibilities was positively related to employee's job performance. In addition, Awadh and Saad (2013) investigated the impact of organizational culture on employee's performance. The study concluded that value and norms of an organization were based upon employee's relationship.

In the context of Nepal, Chaudhry and Sharma (2016) examined the role of gender and ethnicity diversity on the performance of employee's. The study found that there is a significant impact of gender diversity and ethnicity diversity on the performance of employee's in the organization. Similarly, Pokhrel (2023) analyzed the workforce diversity and its impact on organizational success. The study concluded that all age, gender, ethnicity, and educational attainment have statistically significant positive connection with the organization effectiveness. Likewise, Lamichhane *et al.* (2023) observed the striving for excellence: The role of work-life balance in optimizing job performance among employee's in Nepalese microfinance institutions. The study revealed that work-life balance and employee's' engagement positively impact job performance. Further, Paudel *et al.* (2021) examined the measuring cultural diversity impact in hospitality industry leadership: managerial communication perspective from five star hotels in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal. The study concluded that managerial communication skills impact in hospitality business for its growth and maximization. In addition, Barakat (2018) investigated the age diversity management in five-star hotels: Importance-implementation analysis. The study showed that there is a significant and positive correlation between the importance and the implementation of ADMPs.

The above discussion shows that empirical evidences vary greatly across the studies on the workplace diversity and employee performance. Though there are above mentioned empirical evidences in the context of other countries and in Nepal, no such findings using more recent data exist in the context of Nepal. Therefore, in order to support one view or the other, this study has been conducted.

The major objective of the study is to examine the workplace diversity and employee performance in Nepalese commercial banks. Specifically, it examines the relationship of age diversity, gender diversity, ethnic diversity, education diversity and workplace culture with employee performance in Nepalese commercial banks.

The remainder of this study is organized as follows: section two describes the sample, data, and methodology. Section three presents the empirical results and final section

draws the conclusion.

2. Methodological aspects

The study is based on the primary data. The data were gathered from 133 respondents through questionnaire. The study employed convenience sampling method. The respondents' views were collected on age diversity, gender diversity, ethnic diversity, education diversity, workplace culture, and employee performance. This study is based on descriptive as well as causal comparative research designs.

The model

The model used in this study assumes that employee performance depends workplace diversity. The dependent variable selected for the study is employee performance. Similarly, the selected independent variables are age diversity, gender diversity, ethnic diversity, education diversity and workplace culture. Therefore, the model takes the following form:

Employee performance = f (age diversity, gender diversity, ethnic diversity, education diversity and workplace culture).

More specifically,

$$EP = \beta_0 + \beta_1AD + \beta_2GD + \beta_3ED + \beta_4EdD + \beta_5WC + e$$

Where,

EP = Employee performance

AD = Age diversity

GD = Gender diversity

ED = Ethnic diversity

EdD = Education diversity

WC = Workplace culture

Age diversity was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include "The age diversity within a team influences overall employee performance", "There is a correlation between age diversity and employee productivity in the workplace" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.764$).

Gender diversity was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include "Gender diversity within teams influences overall employee performance in the organization", "There are differences in job satisfaction levels across genders within the organization" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.714$).

Ethnic diversity was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include "There are differences in job satisfaction levels across ethnic groups within the organization", "Ethnic diversity contributes to teamwork and collaboration, impacting overall team performance" and so on. The reliability of the items

was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.771$).

Education diversity was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include "The level of education among employee correlates with overall performance in the organization", "IT tools in our organization are simple to use and have a user-friendly interface" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.763$).

Workplace culture was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include "The overall workplace culture impacts the performance of employees in the organization", "There are differences in job satisfaction levels based on employees' perceptions of the organizational culture" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.795$).

Employee performance was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include "Job satisfaction impacts employee performance in your organization", "Training and development opportunities contribute to enhance employee performance" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.757$).

The following section describes the independent variables used in this study along with the hypothesis formulation.

Age diversity

Age diversity is a shared phenomenon that is present in nearly all groupings, such as families, higher institutions, sport teams, and work or team groups with members of varying ages (Kunze *et al.*, 2013). It is observed from many studies that older employees are as productive and skilled as the young. The decline in work performance with age if any can be compensated by superior performance in other areas, such as an individual's job experience and problem-solving skills (Tempest *et al.*, 2002). There were also positive stereotypes about old workers that they were seen as being more dependable than younger workers (Posthuma and Campion, 2009). Age diversity has positively related to organizational citizenship behaviors and safety performance (Ng and Feldman, 2008). Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H₁: There is a positive relationship between age diversity and employee performance.

Gender diversity

Jayne and Dipboye (2004) argued that gender diversity does not necessarily bring positive outcome such as increases motivation, improving talents, build commitment, and decline conflict. Joshi and Jackson (2003) found a positive relationship between team gender diversity and intra-team cooperation, but only within regions that were relatively diverse in terms of gender. Because of gender discrimination the women do not get same opportunities as men get for education, promotion (Bhushan, 2016). Similarly, Mwatumba (2016) argued that gender diversity is positively linked to employee and organizational performance. Likewise, Rizwan *et al.* (2016) showed that there is positive relationship between gender diversity and employee performance. The positive and negative consequences of gender

diversity for firm performance have been inconclusive, and the majority of prior research has focused on the group level of analysis (Shore *et al.*, 2009). The identification of positive firm performance outcomes associated with a higher percentage of women in management positions is likely to influence employer willingness to adopt programs and policies that develop and retain women who aspire to management positions (Olsen and Martins, 2012). Furthermore, Selvaraj (2015) found that there is no significant relationship between gender and employee performance. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H₂: There is a positive relationship gender diversity and employee performance.

Ethnic diversity

Ethnic status is therefore defined as shared perceptions regarding the degree of prestige and respect afforded to members of different ethnic groups within a society (Phillips *et al.*, 2009). According to Dastane and Eshegbe (2015), highly ethnically diverse organizations are in a better position to be creative and innovative. Likewise, Pitts (2009) revealed that ethnic diversity groups in the organizations influenced job performance outcomes. Furthermore, Schwab *et al.* (2016) highlighted that the extent to which employee performance is influenced by gender and ethnic diversity. Similarly, Zgourides *et al.* (2002) found that ethnic diversity facilitates problem-solving with ethnically diverse problem-solving perspectives that contributed to improved team success after the teams learned how to use these differences to their advantage. Based on it, this develops the following hypothesis:

H₃: There is a positive relationship between ethnic diversity and employee performance.

Education diversity

Maingi and Makori (2015) revealed that the educational background reflects the cognitive strength and personality of employee. Similarly, Fleischmann *et al.* (2009) revealed that different levels of education and varieties of educational certifications may assume different flexible wage rates. For instance, the occupations accessible to those with working knowledge however do not have certified degree might vary from the individuals who have such education level. Furthermore, Mwatumba (2016) showed that there is positive relationship between education background diversity and employee performance. Likewise, Dainel (2009) stated that productivity of an employee depends on the level of the education, the employee will be productive if he/she has high level of education. Similarly, Emiko and Eunmi (2009) argued that the level of their education, a person would be more efficient. Likewise, Choi and Rainey (2010) stated that a higher output level is driven by a more prominent portion of trained staff. Based on it, this develops the following hypothesis:

H₄: There is a positive relationship between education diversity and employee performance.

Workplace culture

Organizational culture is defined as philosophies, a set of ideas, attitude, feelings, assumptions, hope, thoughts, norms and values (Pettigrew, 1979). The culture of organization has been affected by attitudes, norms and beliefs that lead to strong communication between employees (Schein, 1990). There is a positive relationship between employee performance and organizational culture (Nazir and Zamir, 2015). There is a significant relationship between employee performance and organizational culture, if employees have common perceptions then they will more cooperative with each other to achieve their goals (Eric, 2010). Based on it, this develop following hypothesis:

H₃: There is a positive relationship between workplace culture and employee performance.

3. Results and discussion

Correlation analysis

On analysis of data, correlation analysis has been undertaken first and for this purpose, Kendall’s Tau correlation coefficients along with mean and standard deviation has been computed and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Kendall’s Tau correlation coefficients matrix

This table presents the Kendall’s Tau correlation coefficients between dependent and independent variables. The correlation coefficients are based on 133 observations. The dependent variable is EP (Employee performance). The independent variables are AD (Age diversity), GD (Gender diversity), ED (Ethnic diversity), EdD (Education diversity) and WC (Workplace culture).

Variables	Mean	S.D.	EP	AD	GD	ED	EdD	WC
EP	3.448	0.887	1					
AD	3.278	0.845	0.509**	1				
GD	3.304	0.705	0.407**	0.553**	1			
ED	3.257	0.782	0.517**	0.505**	0.512**	1		
EdD	3.311	0.751	0.484**	0.483**	0.490**	0.507**	1	
WC	3.326	0.808	0.539**	0.519**	0.408**	0.608**	0.584**	1

Note: The asterisk signs (**) and (*) indicate that the results are significant at one percent and five percent levels respectively.

Table 1 shows that age diversity is positively correlated to employee performance. It indicates that organization having employee from diverse age group leads to increase the employee performance. Similarly, gender diversity is positively correlated to employee performance. It indicates that gender diversity leads to increase in employee performance. Likewise, ethnic diversity is positively correlated to employee performance. It indicates that firm having employee of different racial and ethnic background leads to increase in employee performance. Further, education diversity is also positively correlated to employee performance. It indicates that employee from different educational background leads to increase in employee performance. In addition, workplace culture is positively correlated to employee performance. It indicates that diversified workplace culture leads to increase in employee performance.

Regression analysis

Having indicated the Kendall’s Tau correlation coefficients, the regression analysis has been carried out and the results are presented in Table 2. More specifically, it shows the regression results of age diversity, gender diversity, ethnic diversity, education diversity and workplace culture on employee performance.

Table 2

Estimated regression results of age diversity, gender diversity, ethnic diversity, education diversity and workplace culture on employee performance

The results are based on 133 observations by using linear regression model. The model is $EP = \beta_0 + \beta_1AD + \beta_2GD + \beta_3ED + \beta_4EdD + \beta_5WC + e$ where the dependent variable is EP (Employee performance). The independent

variables are AD (Age diversity), GD (Gender diversity), ED (Ethnic diversity), EdD (Education diversity) and WC (Workplace culture).

Model	Intercept	Regression coefficients of					Adj. R _{bar} ²	SEE	F-value
		AD	GD	ED	EdD	WC			
1	1.117 (4.898)**	0.711 10.553**					0.455	0.654	111.374
2	1.185 (3.808)**		0.685 7.438**				0.292	0.463	55.326
3	1.08 (4.240)**			0.727 (9.564)**			0.407	0.683	91.744
4	1.08 (4.240)**				0.761 (9.652)**		0.411	0.68	93.158
5	1.08 (4.240)**					0.731 (10.228)**	0.44	0.664	1.362
6	1.08 (4.240)**	0.636 (6.359)**	0.122 (1.014)				0.456	0.654	56.212
7	0.731 (2.734)**	0.504 (5.004)**	0.078 (0.627)	0.407 (3.947)**			0.51	0.62	46.869
8	0.475 (1.781)	0.468 (4.813)**	0.146 (1.206)	0.223 (1.981)*	0.361 (3.451)**		0.549	0.596	41.104
9	0.398 (1.499)	0.43 (4.417)**	0.104 (0.859)	0.129 (1.086)	0.216 (1.763)	0.256 (2.221)*	0.562	0.587	34.879

Notes:

- i. Figures in parenthesis are t-values.
- ii. The asterisk signs (**) and (*) indicate that these results are significant at one percent and five percent level respectively.
- iii. Employee performance is dependent variable.

Table 2 shows that the beta coefficients for age diversity are positive with employee performance. It indicates that age diversity has a positive impact on employee performance. This finding is consistent with the findings of (Kunze *et al.*, 2013). Similarly, the beta coefficients for gender diversity are positive with employee performance. It indicates that gender diversity has a positive impact on employee performance. This finding is consistent with the findings of Mwatumba (2016). Likewise, the beta coefficients for ethnic diversity are positive with employee performance. It indicates that ethnic diversity has a positive impact on employee performance. This finding is consistent with the findings of Dastane and Eshegbe (2015). Further, the beta coefficients for education diversity are positive with employee performance. It indicates that education diversity has a positive impact on the employee performance. This finding is consistent with the findings of Emiko and Eunmi (2009). In addition, the beta coefficients for workplace culture are positive with employee performance. It indicates that workplace culture has a positive impact on employee performance. This finding is consistent with the findings of (Nazir and Zamir, 2015).

4. Summary and conclusion

Workplace diversity refers to the presence of individuals from different backgrounds, cultures, genders, races, ethnicities, ages, abilities, and other characteristics within an organization. It is crucial to acknowledge the potential challenges associated with managing diversity, such as communication barriers and different work styles. Embracing diversity and creating an inclusive environment can lead to enhanced creativity, better decision-making, and improved understanding of customer needs.

This study attempts to examine workplace diversity and employee performance in Nepalese Commercial Banks. The study is based on primary data of 133 respondents.

The major conclusion of the study is that age diversity, gender diversity, ethnic

diversity, education diversity and workplace culture have positive impact on employee performance. The study also concludes that education diversity followed by workplace culture is the most significant factors that explain the impact of workplace diversity on employee performance.

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