



NON- DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES AND EMPLOYEES' WORK ATTITUDES IN THE OIL AND GAS COMPANIES IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between non-discriminatory practices and employee work attitudes of oil and gas companies in Nigeria. The study adopted a cross sectional survey research design. The population of the study was eleven thousand seven hundred and sixty five (11,765) employees of 10 oil and gas companies in Nigeria. A sample size of 405 was determined using the Taro Yamen sample size formula. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 23.0. The study finding revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between non-discriminatory practices and employees' work attitudes of oil and gas companies in Nigeria. Based on the findings the study recommended that companies should adequately assimilate employees to blend them as a team and increase their positive work attitudes for improved productivity. The companies should motivate the employees from time to time in order to increase their good work attitudes to avoid discriminations, conflicts, absenteeism and lateness to work, dissatisfaction, poor performance and turnover.

Keywords: *Non-Discriminatory Practices, Employees' Work Attitudes, Job Involvement, Job Satisfaction, Job Performance.*

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INTRODUCTION

Employee work attitude is gaining global attention. Recently, a lot of management writings have been devoted to understanding the impact of employee work attitudes in the organisation and its outcomes (Firth, Mellor, Moore & Loquet, 2004; Kivimaki, Vanhala, & Pentti, 2007). Though employees do not always display negative work attitudes such as incivility, and withdrawal behaviours, they sometime show positive attitudes such as involvement, commitment and satisfaction. The growing consciousness on workers attitudes has generated considerable intellectual concerns, with diverse approaches, orientations and dispositions. However, the central theme which appears to drive any study in this sphere is that, negative inclination or positive dispositions on issues in the firm manifest into overt outcomes that have dysfunctional or functional behaviours, respectively. For instance, Ahiazu and Asawo (2014) conducted an intellectual inquiry on economic meltdown, impact on psychological contract and workers commitment in productive firms in Nigeria, and established inverse relationship. This simply translates that the adversities of the economic meltdown created negative attitude amongst the staff, which causes psychological contract breaches and diminishing commitment.

In a rapidly dynamic global marketplace, marked by the avalanche of technological advancement, organizations demand a more flexible and competent workforce in order to be adaptive and to remain competitive (Sing, 2004). Therefore, the need for well qualified employees becomes a strategic pursuit. Consequently, an organization's workforce diversity strategy is a key mechanism in ensuring the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to achieve organizational goals and create competitive advantage (Peteraf, 1993). The escalation of global competition and the relative success of economies that give an emphasis to investing in training have resulted in the recognition of the importance of

training in recent years (Holden, 1997). Indeed, at the turn of the twenty-first century HR managers reported that one of the main challenges they faced involved issues of training and development (Stavrou, Brewster & Charalambous, 2004).

Theoretically, the workplace diversity literature espouses three different theoretical frameworks for the examination of the possible effects of workplace diversity (O'Reilly, Williams & Barsade, 1998). The first is social categorization, which, according to Turner (1987) describes the categorization of people based on salient attributes like gender, ethnicity or age, resulting in stereotyping on the basis of these differences. The attraction theory, which asserts that similarity on salient and non-salient attributes like race or values increases interpersonal attraction and attachment (Berscheid & Walster, 2008). The third is information and decision making theory, which examines the impact of distribution of information and expertise on work-teams. The Social attraction theory predicts that firms with greater employee diversity will be better able to penetrate increasingly diverse product markets and have more complex inimitable social resources (Richard & Johnson, 1999). However, little attention has been given to the performance effects of being recognized for workforce diversity management strategies (Dick & Cassell, 2002). The concept of diversity management entails the application of varying methods of operations that accommodate individuals from different cultural and social backgrounds. According to Henderson (1994), the concept also entails the application of sound managerial strategies that promote optimal utilization of human resources in an organization. Cox (1993) maintains that the invisible aspects of diversity are defined by the values and norms which are socially constructed in the society. To reduce the racial and gender bias in the United States, the government has implemented measures that ensure equal employment chances for all. Diversity management involves utilization of cultural

alterations, ideas and creativity in contributing towards realization of corporate goals (Adler, 2005).

Preliminary evidence shows that various organizations often make inclusive organizational policies regarding workplace diversity (Smith & Fernandez, 2010). These policies can produce better results for employees as well as the service receivers (Pitts & Wise, 2010). Organizations that embrace workplace diversity policies may uphold and make the most of on the benefits of workplace diversity particularly the performance related aspects of diversity. This involves drawing on the exceptional knowledge, skills and aptitudes of a diverse number of employees. These organizations also conscientiously recruit and work to retain a diverse workforce, take steps to lessen biased policies and practices, and undertake diversity management practices to improve the organization by reducing the level of conflicts and interpersonal tensions that often arise as a result of an increase of workplace diversity. If workplace diversity is well managed the concerned

organizations are likely to have satisfied and motivated employees who are committed to the ideals of their organization (Pitts & Wise, 2010). This hinges on the assumption that harnessing workplace diversity allows an organization to accomplish their missions with minimal resistance.

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between non- discriminatory practices and employee work attitudes oil and gas companies in Nigeria.

The following research questions were asked to serve as guide for the study;

- What is the relationship between non-discriminatory practices and job involvement of employees in oil and gas companies in Nigeria?
- What is the relationship between non-discriminatory practices and job Satisfaction of employees in oil and gas companies in Nigeria?
- What is the relationship between non-discriminatory practices and job performance of employees in oil and gas companies in Nigeria?

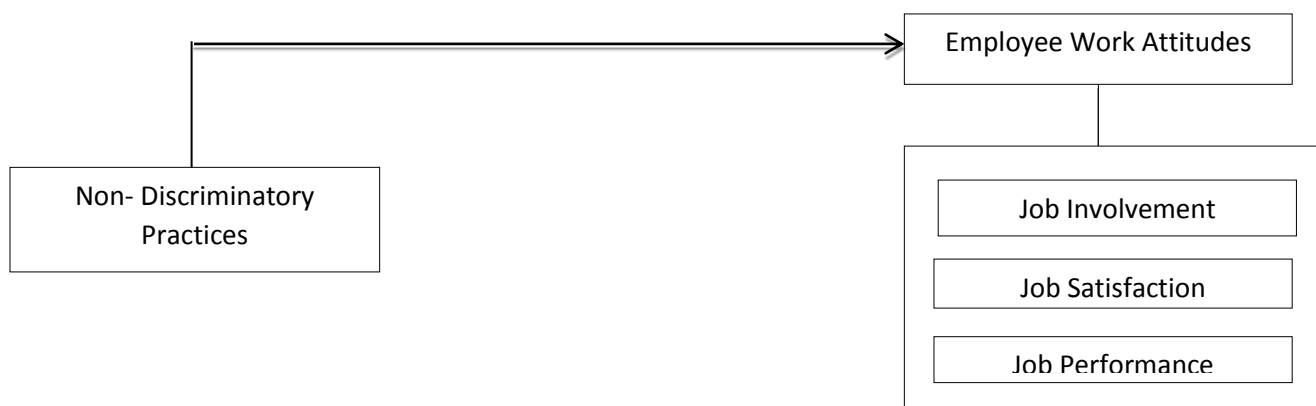


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of non- discriminatory practices and Employee Work Attitudes

Source: Desk Research, 2019: Adopted from Milliman, Czaplewski and Ferguson (2003) - Measures of Employee Work Attitudes

LITERATURE REVIEW

Non-Discriminatory Practice

Discrimination means treating a person or group unfairly because of a particular characteristic, such as

gender, disability, age, ethnic origin, skin colour, nationality, and religious belief (White, 2000). This usually results in negative consequences for the person(s) or group reducing their opportunities and

work attitudes /abilities to contribute meaningfully to the organization and live their preferred life (Greenberg, 2014). People can suffer discrimination from individuals who abuse or insult them. Discrimination is not just offensive, but it is also illegal. The Equality Act, 2010, protects people against discrimination from; Employers, businesses and organizations that provide goods and services; health and care providers, such as hospitals and care homes; housing associations and estate agents; schools, colleges and other education providers; transport services like buses, train, taxis and aircraft and public bodies, including government departments and local authorities

Non-discriminatory practices according to ER-WCPT (2003) is a professional practice within which individuals, teams and organization actively seek to ensure that no one is either directly or indirectly treated less favourably than the other, or would be treated in the same or similar circumstances, on the grounds of age, colour, culture, disability, gender, race, religion, marital status, political beliefs, educational backgrounds etc. Non-discriminatory practices therefore aim to overcome the negative effects of discrimination in organization and to combat discrimination in all its forms. One must not be involved in any actions that could be seen as discriminatory or potentially insulting to any individual or group, including colleagues. Organizations with diverse workforce should have policies that will provide guidance on non-discriminatory practices and also, the employees should be able to access training on anti-discriminatory practices through the employers (Elsaid, 2012),

Some of the types of discrimination in organization are highlighted below according to Ehimare (2011) as:

Religious Discrimination: It is important for organizations to ensure that no one, practices discrimination directly or indirectly against individuals

on the basis of their religion. For example, if an organization has a policy that employees should not wear beard or headdress, this may affect certain religious groups. Though rules could be justified, but the organization should be able to show sound business reason(s) for sticking to an absolute rule. Some employers choose to allow employees of a particular religion time-off on important religious holidays, while others provides for prayer facilities within the workplace.

Disability Discrimination: While certain jobs will have requirements which would make it difficult or impossible for an individual with a particular disability or defined health problem to do them, there may often be ways in which the job can be adjusted to facilitate the individual in order to avoid discrimination due to disability.

Gender Discrimination: Good practicing employers will always look to eliminate both direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of gender, whether this is in the form of recruitment decisions or payment or promotion systems, which unduly favour man. The good practice calls for a regular review of all forms of employment policy and practice to determine how they affect women and also how they may be moderated in order to remove gender bias and discrimination. Issues to consider, include equal remuneration for men and women employees for work of equal value.

Age Discrimination: Employers should not deny individuals job opportunities, merely because of either their age or unfounded perception related to their age.

Race, Nationality Ethnic Origin Discrimination: Employers should seek not to discriminate on the basis of race or ethnicity. This is of particular importance where there is a mixture of different races within a country's national population or there are defined groups of migrants or immigrant. It is important that employers should consider the

potential effects of both direct and indirect discrimination in this regard.

Concept of Employee Work Attitudes

Robbins (2003) described employee work attitudes as evaluative statements, which can be considered as being either favourable or unfavourable as it relates to objects, individuals, or activities within the organization; hence they reflect how one perceives his or her experiences with regards to particular situations, circumstances or subjects. The desirable statements tend to offer desirable outcomes as regards the object of concern, individual or circumstance whereas the undesirable statement tends to offer unwelcoming and undesirable effects. According to Purcell, Kinnie, Hutchinson and Rayton (2003), an attitude can be described as being either desirable or undesirable cognition or mental state of preparedness, acquired and arranged as a result of experience which exerts particular influence on a person's response to people, objects, events or event.

Work attitudes of employees are acquired; this is as they experience and express their behavioural tendencies and predispositions toward various mostly externalized aspects of the social world (Purcell, Kinnie, Hutchinson & Rayton, 2003). Employee work attitudes can also be considered as offering the emotional basis upon which the individual's interpersonal relations and identification with others at the workplace are structured and closed to the center of the individual's behavior and personality. While some work attitudes can be viewed as being persistent and enduring; each attitude as expressed comprises of psychological variables, hence subjecting it to change. As revealed by studies of Robbins, (2003); Purcell, Kinnie, Hutchinson and Rayton (2003), the work condition and context as it relates to job satisfaction, job performance and job involvement; an assertion which does not follow the trend of most research with reference to practitioner beliefs. This is as the most accepted job satisfaction characteristics, spanning across several organizations,

as it relates to role expectations of the employees, as it relates to their job in terms of supervision, compensation, career opportunities, peer group, management, etc. (Saari & Judge, 2004).

As employees report to work, their attitudes affect their work performance and can have impact on the employees' morale around them. Generally, employees with good attitudes have stronger performance and employees with poor attitudes exhibit laziness, lateness to work, absenteeism, discriminations, etc. which lead to poor performance. When employees are happy and engaged, attitudes and productivity are more likely to be positive (Audra, 2007). By effectively managing the workplace and employees, the organization can positively shape attitudes of employees and even improve performances, because employees' attitudes are dampened and lifted by all kind of factors outside their own control. The negative attitudes of the employees can be prevented through the followings (Audra, 2007);

Employee Engagement: Engagement is a term covering employee satisfaction, commitment and motivation. The ways to positively engage employees in the organizations include; providing strong leadership; providing line managers who can motivate and empower employees; listening to the employees' voice throughout the organization and having organizational integrity i.e. organization living up to its stated values.

Maintenance of Psychological Contract: Psychological contract is an agreement that shows the relationship between the employer and employees, spelling out what are expected of each other in the organization. When the psychological contract is not maintained, the employees will feel that their employer has acted unfairly and breaks the promises. This can negatively impact engagement and job satisfaction, leading to negative workplace attitudes of the employees. Also, negative employee attitudes can arise for external

reasons (Personal issues and problems outside the workplace). For example, personal or family problems can cause an employee to bring negativity into work. Though, management cannot solve some of those family problems but can still support the employee and manage the attitudes. According to Audra (2007) prevention is the best cure, as they say. Rather than wait for negativity to arise, management can use the following methods to positively shape employees' attitudes in the workplace; Make sure employees have a voice: When management listens to employees' concerns and acts upon them, negativity is less likely to surface. Given employees opportunities to voice out their concerns, both formally and informally and taking them seriously will positively shape employees' attitudes.

Make the Workplace a Peaceful Place: Some employees are naturally prone to complaining, management should not allow their complaining attitudes to bring others down. Management can overcome the negativity by praising employees for their successes and focusing on solutions instead of problems, by getting employees to think of the solutions to their complaints. However, no matter how great an organization may be, it is going to face negative employees' attitudes at some point in time. Since, negative emotions are contagious, management should endeavor to deal with them quickly and effectively (Audra, 2007) by identifying the negative employees, their actions and the impact they are having on the workplace; talking to the employees. Showing them the impact of their attitudes to the organization and make it clear to them that negativity will not be tolerated. Support the employees to change their attitudes for good. Give them opportunity to explain their problems, encourage them to find a solution and provide help if needed.

Job Involvement

Job involvement can be described as the internalization of values about the workplace roles

and expectations or the necessity of work according to the employee or worker (Singh, Gupta & Venugopal, 2008). Job involvement can be seen as a process which illustrates how employee sees competency, value system, and social knowledge as well as behavioural dispensation which can be considered imperative for role expectations and for taking part in the organization as an employee (Shamaila & Aylia, 2012). This is as studies of Pierce, Kostova and Dirks, (2001) assert that the belief about one's current role within the organization is how task could lead to satisfaction of employees' desires to improve performance.

According to Hwang (2003) job involvement can be described as a function of the relationship between individual difference and the work situation; hence, the relationship between demographic and work experience factors which are expected to relate to job involvement. Positive and desirable relationships are expected with demographic factors such as age, tenure with the organization, education, having children, and gender. However, there is an empirical evidence for a significant relationship between job involvement and employee effectiveness and productivity (Beardwell, Holden & Clayton, 2004).

Employees with high levels of both job involvement and job satisfaction would be the most motivated, to go to work timely while employees with poor levels of job involvement and job satisfaction should be the least motivated. These non-motivated employees may be absent or show up bad behaviours or give excuses with various reasons such as issues related to health, holidays based on religious activities, death of family member, extended leave occasions, and transportation issues. However, workers who are highly driven cannot be reckoned as being unmotivated and thus given way to absenteeism, work laxity and the likes of such for flippant reasons. Employees who are more involved are satisfied with their roles and have a higher tendency to meet up

with their expectations with less excuse for absence (Combs, Liu, Hall & Ketchen, 2006).

Job Satisfaction

It can be seen as the combination of various psychological, physiological and environmentally related situations that make an employee feel happy with their role expectations. It deals with the way employees feel with contentment and interest on their job and various expressions of such within the workplace. Also, it looks at the way workers in the organization like or dislike their jobs in an organizational setting (Beardwell, Holden & Clayton, 2004).

According to Alharbi and Wan, (2013), job satisfaction showcases the feelings that are positive or negative, expressed by the employee in various situations which are concerned with their role expectations within the organization. In the course of carrying out their duties or jobs, he or she brings along various needs, expectations, desires and experiences which determine to a considerable extent his or her contentment with the experience of the job and also indicate the degree to which expectations are met and match the real awards; outcomes which invariably determine behavior at the workplace.

Job satisfaction is an indication of the employee's sense of achievement and success with regards to his or her role expectations. It is generally perceived to be directly associated with employee performance and welfare of employees. It suggests a high level of enthusiasm and happiness with one's work and can be considered as crucial achievement of self-goals (Beardwell, Holden & Clayton, 2004; Pierce, Kostova & Dirks, 2001). Job satisfaction comprises the feeling and beliefs that employees have with regards to their jobs and expectations at the workplace. It ranges from high extreme satisfaction to high extreme dissatisfaction. If an employee is satisfied with his job, his work attitudes will positively increase for performance (Ejiogu, 2000). This is as satisfaction

relates to employees having expressing overall job behaviours and information concerning the nature and timing of the job, their colleagues, supervisors or subordinates as well as their compensation and benefit.

Job Performance

Job performance assesses whether an employee performs an assigned duty well. Campbell, (2000) describes job performance as the work related activity expected of an employee and how well the activity is executed. If jobs are properly aligned with organizational strategies and workplace diversity well managed, counter-productive behaviours or attitudes by employees, such as poor attendance, tardiness, unauthorized breaks, socializing, performing personal work, etc. may not be captured in an organization and the employees' performance / productivity will be increased. According to Ruch and Hershauer (1978) job performance is a detailed examination of observable activity or behaviour associated with the execution or completion of a required function or unit of work. At individual level, productivity measurement tracks how well the employee applies talents and skills, using materials and equipment to produce goods and services within a specified time period. Although, it is fundamental to success as management meets the expectations of the employees, but if the job design, measurement system, evaluation and reward systems are not aligned with the corporate strategy and reinforced at all levels of management, performance / productivity is hollowed as the employee work attitudes will be demoralized (Ruch & Hershauer, 1978).

Non- Discriminatory Practices and Employee Work Attitudes

Magoshi & Chang (2009) suggest that diversity can be either detrimental or beneficial for employees' job performance. Good workplace diversity management practices in the area of Human Resource are believed to enhance both employee and organization performance. Adler (2005) argued that with the

diverse workforce, it has become necessary for organizations to develop equal opportunities and diversity management policies to maintain the skills of employees with diverse backgrounds in order to protect their competitive position in the business environment.

Workplace diversity generates conflicts between employees. These conflicts occur due to differences of perception, ideas, behaviours, interest, attitudes, religious / political differences and unjustified distribution of resources. If the workplace diversity is been handled or managed properly, it can become a very rich source of development, but if it is ignored, the clashes between co-workers will be converted into personal and emotional conflicts, which could damage the organizational culture, workers' morale and organizational performance. It can also lead to a reduction in creativity, innovation, quality and performance of employee, which will negatively affect team performance and the overall performance of the organization (Alserhan, Forstenlenchner and Al- Nakeeb, 2010). In line with the foregoing discussions, the following null hypotheses were postulated;

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between non-discriminatory practices and job involvement of employees in oil and gas companies in Nigeria.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between non-discriminatory practices and job satisfaction of employees in oil and gas companies in Nigeria.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between non-discriminatory practices and job performance of employees in oil and gas companies in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a cross sectional survey research design. The population of the study was eleven thousand seven hundred and sixty five (11,765) employees of 10 oil and gas companies in Nigeria. A sample size of 405 was determined using the Taro Yamen sample size formula. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 23.0.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between non-discriminatory practice and job involvement of employees in oil and gas companies in Nigeria.

Table 1: The Relationship between Non-Discriminatory and job involvement

		Non-Discriminatory	Job Involvement
Non-Discriminatory	Pearson Correlation	1	.650**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	386	386
Job Involvement	Pearson Correlation	.650**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	386	386

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output

From the result of the above table, the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.650$, which was the strength of the relationship) between non-discriminatory practice and job involvement of employees in oil and gas companies is positive, since .650 is above 0.4. The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.42$) indicated that 42% change in job involvement of employees in oil and gas companies can be explained by non-discriminatory practice. The significant value of 0.000 ($P 0.000 < 0.05$) revealed a positive and significant

relationship. Based on that, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between non-discriminatory practice and job involvement of employees in oil and gas companies in Nigeria.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between non-discriminatory practice and job satisfaction of employees in oil and gas companies in Nigeria.

Table 2: The Relationship between Non-Discriminatory and Job Satisfaction

		Non-Discriminatory	Job Satisfaction
Non-Discriminatory	Pearson Correlation	1	.616**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	386	386
Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.616**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	386	386

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output

From the result of the above table, the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.616$, which was the strength of the relationship) between non-discriminatory practice and job satisfaction of employees in oil and gas companies is positive, as .616 was greater than .4.

The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.40$) indicated that 40% change in job satisfaction of employees in oil and gas companies can be explained by non-discriminatory practice. The significant value of 0.000

($P < 0.05$) revealed a positive and significant relationship. Based on that, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between non-discriminatory practice and job satisfaction of employees in oil and gas companies in Nigeria.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between non-discriminatory practice and job performance of employees in oil and gas companies in Nigeria.

Table 3: The Relationship between Non-Discriminatory and Job Performance

		Non-Discriminatory	Job Performance
Non-Discriminatory	Pearson Correlation	1	.682 **
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	386	386
Job Performance	Pearson Correlation	.682 **	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	386	386

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output

From the result of the above table, the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.682$, which was the strength of the relationship) between non-discriminatory practice and job performance of employees in oil and gas companies is positive, since .682 is above .4. The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.47$) indicated that 47% change in job performance of employees in oil and gas companies can be explained by non-discriminatory practice. The significant value of 0.000 ($P 0.000 < 0.05$) revealed a positive and significant relationship. Based on that, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between non-discriminatory practice and job performance of employees in oil and gas companies in Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings revealed a significant relationship between workplace diversity management and job performance. This was validated by the fact that learning of more skills and knowing the norms / policies of the company through courses (training), improved employees' performances; good

employee's performance is important for the future of the company; ideas and knowledge are absorbed in common to enhance teamwork; employees were motivated to complete the tasks / jobs assigned to them in the companies, which enhanced job performance.

Adler (2005) argued that with the diverse workforce, it has become necessary for organizations to develop equal opportunities and diversity management policies to maintain the skills of employees with diverse backgrounds in order to protect their competitive position in the business environment. This concurs with findings in the present study. Also, Rab, Lodhi, Ashrsf, Riaz, Dustgeer, Sami, Mahmood and Ahmad (2013) conducted a study on effect of workplace diversity on the performance of students, findings revealed that there is positive and significant relationship between the workplace diversity and the performance of the students. This further validated the present study. The implication is that adequate diversity management practices trigger positive effects on employees' organizational commitment,

which brings about better performance. Rosenwald (2000) argues that poor employee work attitudes hinder cooperation and impact negatively on the overall employees' performance. Petrecca (2000) summarily observed that adequate management of workplace diversity increases employees' job involvement, job satisfaction, job retention and job performance, reduces employees' absenteeism, theft, lateness to work etc. and facilitates employees' identification and commitment to the company.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In a rapidly dynamic global marketplace, marked by the avalanche of technological advancement, organizations demand a more flexible and competent workforce in order to be adaptive and to remain competitive (Sing, 2004). Therefore, the need for well qualified employees becomes a strategic pursuit.

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Consequently, an organization's workforce diversity strategy is a key mechanism in ensuring the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to achieve organizational goals and create competitive advantage (Peteraf, 1993). This study therefore concluded that non-discriminatory practices significantly influences employee work attitudes oil and gas companies in Nigeria.

The study made the following recommendations;

- The companies should have good non-discriminatory practice policies in order to maintain and increase good employee work attitudes.
- There should be adequate diversity management practices, in order to trigger positive employees' work attitudes for better performance in the companies.

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