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# Workforce Diversity and Organisational Survival of Manufacturing Firms in Rivers State

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**Abstract:** *Workforce diversity is the multitude of differences and similarities that exist among peoples working in an organization. The study investigates the extent to which workforce diversity (professional diversity, Age diversity, Ethnic diversity) relate to organizational survival of manufacturing firms in Rivers State. The study has a sample size of 109 with leadership climate as a moderating variable. Participant were drawn from a population of 150 management staff. The research instrument employed was questionnaires measured on five-point Likert' scale. Cross sectional survey method was adopted and inferential statistics of spearman's rank order correlation and partial correlation were used in testing the study hypotheses. The data analysis conducted reveals a positive significant relationship between the dimensions of workforce diversity and measures of organizational survival and leadership climate significantly moderates the relationship between the two variables in manufacturing firms in Rivers State. The study recommends that management of manufacturing firms should adopt and implement good policies on diversity and employs new innovative strategies so as to remain competitive in the dynamic environment therefore we conclude that business unit with healthy leadership styles and approaches will benefit from workforce diversity.*

**Key words:** *Survival of manufacturing firms, workforce diversity*

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## INTRODUCTION

Organizational survival is a very important issue to be discussed in this period of business turbulence and economic recession. For organization to remain competitive in the business environment the owners, leaders and employees in the organization must work together (Oke & Olughor, 2014) in order to survive. Organizational existence will depend on its ability to survive despite the internal and external environmental factors that tend to hinder business performance. Mindy (1998) stated that the larger effort of every organization is geared towards its survival. The competition within the manufacturing industry is growing stronger and firms should adopt different strategies in order to survive. Gross (1968) has defined organizational survival as internal organizational goals that requires abundant investment in both energy and other resources. He identified some factors that threatened the survival of organization as intensity of competition from multinational organization, lack of leadership skills, high labour turnover, change in customer demand etc. Schumpeter (1942) also argued the relevance of innovation as a component of organizational survival and its key role in ensuring that manufacturing firms maintain competitive advantage over others. For firms to survive foreign investor should be encouraged and diverse pools of employees should be recruited. There are previous studies done by other scholars on organizational survival. Erengwa, Nwuche & Anyanwu (2017) carried on a research in employee participation and organizational survival. Their findings indicate that team

work and information sharing have much influence on innovation and adaptability of manufacturing firms.

Gunn & Sanni (2016) in their work on the effect of learning organization on survival of manufacturing firms revealed that a positive relationship exist between the two variables. It showed that learning organization increase the ability of an organization to be innovative thereby increasing the chances of survival. Olughor & Oke (2014) in their research on organizational survival and employee mental ability showed that the sub-variables of innovation, leadership support and employee empowerment are positively related to employee mental ability. This research also emphasized that the greater involvement of employees in organizational activity leads to improvement in organizational performance and survival.

Osibanjo, Abiodun and Obamiro (2011) empirically examined the effect of succession planning on organizational survival. They found out that talent retention, supervisors support help to reduce employee turnover rate thereby enhancing the ability of organization to survive. Ibe & Olori (2016), research on employee work attitude and organizational survival of fast food companies in Port Harcourt. They found out that job involvement and job satisfaction has a positive influence on organizational innovation and adaptability of organization. Akhigbe & Ohiria (2017) in the works on workforce diversity and organizational survival of private hospitals in Nigeria showed that there is a positive relationship between the dimensions and measures of the predictor and criterion variables. They suggested that private hospitals managers should emphasizes more on the management of deep level diversity such as a personality traits, beliefs and values of employee to order to ensure organizational survival.

The importance of manufacturing firms in Nigeria cannot be underscored because of their ability to produce goods and offer valuable services to the entire populace. The point of departure of this study from previous ones is that this research is based on the effect of workforce diversity and organizational survival in manufacturing firms in Nigeria using leadership climate as a moderating variable.

However, empirical evidence has shown that other scholars had really worked on the issue of organizational survival but most of them related it with other variables. Little attention was given to its relationship to survival of manufacturing firms considering the effect of recession on manufacturing firms in Nigeria. Given this knowledge gap, it becomes paramount to access the influence of workforce diversity on organizational survival of these manufacturing firms.

## **Literature Review**

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Social Identity Theory**

This theory postulates that people tend to classify themselves into social categories that have meaning for them and this shapes the way individuals interact with others from their own identity groups and from other groups (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). The central propositions of this theory include:

(i) People's desire to belong to groups that enjoy distinct and positive identities (ii) Social identification with certain group leads to activities that are congruent with the group collective identity and foster stereotypical perception of self and others. (iii) Through social comparisons between the in-group and out group. In-group members will make effort to maintain

superiority over an out group member. (iv) Mere categorization creates in-group favouritism and out-group discrimination. Based on Tajfel (1978), Turner (1987), Social identity stems from categorization of individuals distinctiveness and prestige of the group, the salience of out group and the factors that traditionally are associated with group formation.

### **Similarity and Attraction Theory**

This theory propounded by Byrne (1971) asserts similarity based on salient and non-salient attributes such as ethnic background, race, and belief among others. It negatively affects diversity in work groups because people prefer similarity in their interaction (Schneider 1987; Tsui, Egan and O' Reilly, 1992). This theory provides a parsimonious explanatory and predictive framework for examining how and why people are attracted and influenced by others in their social worlds. According to research carried out by Ellen and Elaine (1969); Dunn Byrne (1971), they found out that in general, people are most attracted to others who share similar attitudes. In addition to people's inclination to be attracted to others who share similar attitudes, people are easily attracted to others who manifest personality characteristics that are similar to theirs. Individuals in diverse groups feel less safe and trust each other less thereby increasing conflict among them.

### **Concept of Workforce Diversity**

The term workforce diversity was not widely used to describe the characteristics of the labour force until the mid-1980, after a widely circulated report gained substantial attention in the corporate world because it argued that "demography is destiny" and claimed that dramatic changes were happening in the labor force (Friedman and Dito Mason 1996; Johnston and Packer, 1987).

Diversity has been defined in different ways by different organizations, societies and national cultures without any unitary meaning (Cassel, 2001). According to Kreitner and Kinichi (2004), workforce diversity is the multitude of the individual differences and similarities that exist among the people working in an organization.

Wentling and Palma-Rivas (1997) proposed the narrow and broad definition of diversity. Its narrow definition reflect equal employment opportunity law and define diversity in terms of race, gender, ethnicity, age, religion, national origin, disability etc. Broad definition includes values, education, personality attributes, marital status, lifestyle, beliefs, geographical origins, tenure with the organization and economic status.

Workforce diversity refers to the composition of work units (work group, organization, professions, establishment in terms of the cultural or demographic characteristics in the relationship among group members (Ditomason, Post and Parks – Yancy, 2007). The research addressed a lot of categorical differences such as race (Dovidio, Kawakami & Gaertner, 2002), ethnicity (Portes and Rumbaut, 1996), gender (Chatman and O'Reilly, 2004), age (Zenger and Lawrence, 1989), education (Halaby, 2006), functional background of group members (Cunningham and Chelladurai, 2005) and Job tenure or length of service (Reagons and Zuchkerman, 2001; Sorensen, 2000).

William Choy (2007) introduces construct domain of diversity which classifies employee differences in terms of three distinctive categories. The first category, demographic diversity includes age, gender, ethnicity and nationality (Cox 1991; Cox and Blake, 1991; Jackson

and Ruderman, 1995). The second category is organizational diversity which include occupation of employees or professions, Job status, Job tenure, Hierarchical ranking, work experience, functional experience and the last category is socio-cognitive diversity which include cultural and religious values, beliefs, knowledge level and personality characteristics (Jackson and Ruderman, 1995).

### **Dimensions of workforce diversity**

The dimensions of workforce diversity adopted for this study was derived from the works of William Choy (2007). They include age diversity, professional diversity and ethnic diversity.

#### **Professional Diversity**

Diversity in profession will include people different occupation or professions such as marketing, finance, accountancy, manufacturing, production among others (William Choy, 2007). Heterogeneity in organization will bring about opportunities to share, learn and grow from the journey of others. Without it, limitations arise and knowledge is gained in the absence of understanding. Diversity, like a changing technology or a global economy is a reality and firms need to employ individuals from different professions so as to attract and retain diverse clients. If organization wants to form a lasting business relationship with their client, they must understand the diverse cultures and decision process of the client, not merely their language. It is a well-known fact that diverse, heterogeneous teams promote creativity and innovation. It is when we fully embrace diversity and maximize the well being and contribution of different professions in an organization can we really understanding the relevance. We therefore conclude that diverse profession will enhance the ability of an organization to survive.

From the research conducted by Andrews (2003), she opined that there is a critical shortage of nursing workforce of African American when compared with the general population. She suggested that strategies should be designed to encourage an increase in ethnic participation as efforts are directed towards recruitment, retention, graduation and practice of nurses.

Diversity is defined as those corporate agents of a large system that is heterogeneous in nature and exhibit different traits and functions. Luis, Horacio & Hyejin (2014) proposed a theoretical framework that classifies professions based on their appearance in urban social networks, occupations or specialization and co-ordination of labour. They concluded that professional diversity is both a consequence and an enabler of scale dependent system organization and that it is directly associated with higher individual productivity.

In an article written by Victoria (2017), she proposed that the American workforce is a better reflection of the population with a significant mix in gender, race, religion, professions and age among others. She opined that for any business to be successful, a diverse body of talent from different professions is needed to bring in fresh ideas, perspectives and views to their work. The challenges posed by diversity enable managers to capitalize on the mixture of gender, professions, age to respond to business opportunities faster and in a more creative manner. Diversity is all about our relatedness, our connectedness, our interaction and where the lines cross (Harris, 2018). She opined that the goal of diversity is to create and sustain a work environment where diversity thrive and plan for the recruitment, selection and retention of talents.

### **Age Diversity**

Research has shown that more than ever employers value older workers or allow people to work longer for them than losing them unnecessary as retirees (CIPP2014).

On the research conducted in 2014 by CIPP, they found a strong link between life stages and working experience on work priorities. They found out that younger age groups focus more on values such a trust, recognition and freedom while the older age groups focus on achieving work life balance and flexibility. The key benefit of age diversity includes:

Young age group feel that older age groups can share practical experience and expertise while older colleagues look to younger group for skills training and new working method

The different work ethics of the different age group are seen as a way of harnessing new ideas and working styles. There can also be challenges posed by age diversity which can include

Different age groups have different work priorities which can cause friction and conflicting the organization.

Growing age diversity has become part of most organization (Kunze, Boehm and Bruch, 2009). The two major theories of workforce diversity which explain relationship are social identity theory and self-categorization. These theories explain that individual group themselves together on the basis of similarities and this makes them to discriminate other groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Consequently if the employee age is regarded as an important criterion for distinction, individual within the same age bracket will interact together and discriminate against other group leading to emotional conflict between the age groups (Kunze et al., 2009). Age heterogeneity can negatively affect productivity due to the presence of ‘generation gaps’ thereby affecting the ability of an organization to survive for a long time (Gelner & Stephen, 2009). In contrast, age heterogeneity can also make individual to be more productive when they decide to collaborate with each other focusing on the organization goals. Brown (2008) posit that increase age diversity may pose some difficulties for HR managers because as the workforce ages, employers will have to struggle with higher healthcare cost and pension contribution.

### **Ethnic Diversity**

Race and ethnic groups reflect the broad spectrum of employees of differing ethnicities or races which make up an ever increasing portion of the new workplace (Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn, 2005). There is increase in ethnic diversity over the last century resulting in a significant change in terms of ethnic workforce composition. These days, people work in organization that is more diverse in terms of ages, ethnicity, gender organizational tenure, educational background etc. than ever before (Williams and O’Reilly, 1998). Most organizations in Nigeria incorporate ethnic minorities in their workforce in order to comply with pressures exerted by federal government in the spirit of one Nigeria. However, it is argued that ethnic diversity can bring about informational, social and cultural networks which will in turn stimulate creativity, innovative and problem solving skills within organizations (Cox and Blake, 1991). Yet, others argue that inclusion of ethnic minorities in the workforce is also a moral issue (MorBarak, 2005; Linneha and Konrad, 1999) together with the inclusion of other disadvantaged group such as females, disabled, gays etc. As such, by encouraging diversity in the workplace, ethnic diversity will become a part of company’s corporate social responsibility e.g. in Rivers State, where oil companies are mandated to employ indigenes of the land in their companies. According to Ely

and Thomas (2001), some organizations diversify their staff ethnically as a means to get access to and legitimize their presence at multi-cultural markets.

Empirical research on diversity and its consequences in terms of work related outcome shows that ethnic diversity has its own opportunities and threats (for meta-analyses see Jackson, Joshi and Erhardt, 2003; Watson, Johnson and Zgourides, 2002). Threats can include conflict caused by ethnic diversity (Pelled, Eiserhardt and Xin, 1999), Poor team cohesion (Riordan and Shore, 1997) resulting in poor team performance and employee well-being (Jackson et al, 2003). On the other hand, ethnic diversity can foster creativity and innovative leading to a higher quality performance in ethnically diverse teams (Wittenbaum and Stasser, 1996).

### **Concept of Organization Survival**

Organizational survival is a rational , research based approach that creates a durable business strategy that help organization outperform others , impact positively on the society and also meet the needs of today's customer (Balestero & Udo, 2013). Organizational survival can be described as the running of an organization as a going concern by continuously restructuring it so as to keep abreast of challenges facing it (Akindele, Oginni and Omoyele, 2012). Gross(1968) described organizational survival as an unwritten law of every business organization which will contribute greatly to the achievement of other organizational goals if given priority. Organizational survival is an implicit organizational objective that requires an investment of both physical and human resources (Jones & Barlet, 2008). Organisation also maintains existing state of affairs which is geared toward survival (Mindy, 1998).

### **Measures of Organizational Survival**

The measures of organizational survival were adapted from the study conducted by Ibe & Olori (2016) to include innovation and adaptability.

Innovation is the implementation of a new improved product, a process, a new marketing technique or a new method in business practices or workplace (ECD and Eurostat, 2005). Innovation is a very important ingredient needed for a firm to survive for a long time. Baumol (2002) stated that innovative activity is mandatory and is a matter of life and death that must be addressed for any firm to survive. He also opined that innovation has replaced price as the most important in many organization and innovation matters for all types of firm whether it is new or already established. Previous literature has shown that innovation is a major factor in achieving organizational survival (Cho and Pucik, 2005; Bell, 2005) are for creating and sustaining competitive advantage.

Schumpeter (1942:83) emphasized that innovation is a powerful vehicle needed by new firms to successfully enter the market and compete favourably with established firms. Established firms also need innovation to maintain their competitive advantage in the face of changing or disruptive technology (Christensen, 1997).

In the research conducted by Cefis & Marshi (2004) where they investigated the impact of innovation on firm survival. It was found that innovation helps to increase the life expectancy of a firm independent of other traits such as age and firm size. The product life cycle theory as opined by Utterbact (1994) states that in the early stage of an industry, new firms enter on the basis of product innovation but as industries matures process innovation becomes dominant, though the importance of these types of innovation is essential for firm survival.

Management studies have also stressed the strategic role of innovation for firm survival. According to Christensen, Suarez and Utterback (1998) combination of technological and market strategies are important predictor for a firm probability of survival. Banbury & Michell (1995) has showed that established industries of cardiac pacemakers who more frequently introduce incremental innovations are able to support the market and have greater chances of survival. Soresen and Stuart (2000) have argued that the relationship between innovation and survival is an “unresolved” and “largely undocumented” issue of empirical enquiry.

### **Adaptability**

Organisation makes use of adaptation strategy to maintain equilibrium and adapt to the ever changing external environment by anticipating the difficulties ahead. To cope with the challenges, experts can be brought in, equipment and other physical facilities and objectives restated. In some situation, the whole entity can be restructured in order to accommodate the overall effects of change (Jones & Barlet, 2008). Some business organization can change their goals in a bid to adapt to changes in the business environment. Etzioni (1964) posit that business organization that provides services to different clients can easily attract resources more than those organizations with limited clients.

Adaptation has been defined as a process by which an individual move from being pre-occupied with changes to integrating the changes in his life (Scholsberg, 1981). Organizational adaptability is a change of behavioural patterns or traits in an organization so as to respond to changes in the external environment (Tikka, 2010:19). Successful organizational adaptation can result into building a more effective structure, process, replacement of obsolete facilities that better suit the emerging environmental conditions. Organizational adaptation starts from a change in ideas to a corresponding changes in expectation, behaviour and relationships (Schlossberg, 1981; Marks, 2003).

In nature, organisms can take generations to evolve but companies do not have the luxury of time to adapt to emerging changes in their environment. Advancing technology, new competitors, global recession and other changes in the external environment requires cost-cutting and revised plans for growth and survival. To survive, some companies drastically change themselves to an entirely new sector and these changes can make a significant impact in an organization depending on how it is addressed by the leadership (Birkel, Kelly and Welch, 2013). Some authors posit that adaptation is a core competency and critical factor in survival and success. It has strategy instead of operative character (Ivens, 2005).

Adaptability can involve changing the customer's focus and learning in the organization (Denison, 2007). Organization that want to survive and be relevant in the present dispensation must understand and react quickly to current trends and anticipate future changes. Organization must be apt to learn in order to adapt and cope with the changing trend (Lee, 1999; Amah, 2009) and this will ultimately lead to organizational survival. For organization to survive in the midst of globalization and fierce competition, leaders must develop some interpersonal skills to be more effective, cross-cultural managers must take the world's change as an opportunity to foster organizational growth and survival. In a bid to cope with these changes, managers of organization should respond swiftly to the impacts of demographics, technology and globalization (Aggarwa, 2011). Leaders need to build up their skills to deal with ethnic conflicts that occur among diverse workforce and develop employees in the workplace (Byrd, 2007).

### **Professional Diversity and organizational Survival**

The demand for skilled labour (professional qualification) has led to liberal immigration laws that admit about 200,000 new immigrants to Canada every year. Most of these immigrants were visible minorities, people of color who make up at 50 per cent of the population in Vancouver and Toronto which are the fastest growing communities in Canada's eight largest cities. These new immigrants possess professional skills, university qualification or have met specified business criteria. Oliver (2005) further stated that Canada's workforce growth and economic prosperity depends on these new immigrants. These factors have led to increasing recognition of diversity by several Canadian companies, for example RBC financial group has ensured that 22% of the workforce comprised of visible minorities. Telecommunication giants such as Telus and Rogers have also set examples by recruiting diverse employees (Dugale, 2006). Similarly, Felix has a high proportion of visible minorities about 7% in senior management position.

In today's global urban business environment, building a more diverse workforce that brings in different perspectives, experiences, insights and international multicultural contacts is increasingly being recognized as crucial to enhancing organizational compositeness and effectiveness (Findlay (2006), Nkoro & Cox (1996). A diverse workforce can maximize talent and creativity and foster innovation which can lead to increased profits and positive public image for a successful business to innovate provides the breakthrough in today's competitive world where groups composed of different professions are more alternative than a homogenous group (Oliver, 2005; Hamlet, 2000).

### **Age Diversity and Organizational Survival**

In Nigeria, research has shown that there are different age generations at work. According to Fajana (2009), age based diversity is the intergenerational behaviours among old and young employees which constitute the differences in observed workplace behaviours and he classified the age group into five categories: a) The swig generation: In Nigeria, most of those in this group experienced the colonial era though most of them have retired from service. Their work behaviour includes job consciousness, adherence to rules and regulations, time consciousness and conservation. b) The silent generation: This generation were born during the great depression but were not actively involved in the world war. They are the educated elites who attended the best colleges both in Nigeria and abroad. They were highly paid by their employers so they gave their heart and soul to make their employers happy. c) Baby Boom Generation tends to be idealistic, accepting rules as given, seek pragmatic solution to problems, finds it difficult to overcome challenges. d) Generation X (Baby Buster) according to Cascio (2006) is independent, often challenge authority and reject rules and often take technology for granted. e) Generation Y (Millennial Children). This generation has great advances in science, technology and adopts information technology not only for communication but for fun and games. Their work behaviours include self-confidence, great intelligence for innovation in marketing and management practices. McShane & Glinow (2000) posited that the last three generation are more prevalent in today's business organization and brings more value to their profession and environment and it is important for management leaders to understand this. Rhodes (1983) stated that the older employees are more committed to their organization than



younger ones. Glass (2007) also noted that the millennial group grow because of self confidence and are needed more in the workplace.

Another implication of age diversity at work centres on the method of communication while the older generation prefer face to face communication, the younger ones prefer quick messaging through e-mail and instant messaging (Glass, 2007). The older generations were also afraid of new technology because such innovation is a threat to their jobs and has led to downsizing in most companies.

They concluded that age-diverse team will promote innovation and adapt easily to changes in the environment thereby increasing the chances of organization to succeed.

#### Ethnic diversity and Organizational Survival

Ethnic diversity with its accompanying demographic developments has a significant impact on the composition of their workforce. The demographic features of most organizations about fifty years ago has been homogenous (Williams and O'Reilly, 1999) with employees coming from the same ethnic background, usually males and working for the same organization throughout the working life. But, nowadays, things have changed because managers are confronted with teams and departments that are diverse in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, educational background etc. This has led to most companies like IBM, Shell to formulate diversity policies aimed at managing the diverse workforce. These policies reflect a labour force that is diverse in demographic and personal characteristics which can stimulate creativity and help a company gain a competitive advantage. For example, Shell states in their policy paper that "we believe that by attracting and developing the best people of all background and experience we uphold our value of respect for people and improve our ability to form relationships and compete in diverse cultures and markets (Shell, 2006).

Previous studies done on ethnic diversity and organization has shown that ethnically diverse workforce co-operate more than homogenous group.

O'Reilly, Williams & Barsade (1997) in their study showed that ethnic diversity relates positively to creative and implementation ability in teams thereby increasing the chances of organization to survive. Similarly, Cady & Valentine (1999) in their study of 50 teams of high-tech fortune 500 company has shown that racial diversity related positively to quality of innovation.

In the midst of globalization and increased competition diversity is a competitive advantage, it opens greater access to new markets, talents and improved organizational performance leading to high levels of revenue and profit. (Bleigerberg, Peters and Poutsma, 2010; Lockwood, 2005). An ethnic diverse business organization has a diverse representative that has a better understanding of the diverse needs, taste and preferences of consumers leading to production of products and services to meet consumer demands. A diverse organization has employees that have different perspectives which will lead to more innovative ideas and better decision making (Mcccuiston and Wooldinge, 2004; Ollapally and Gbatnager, 2009).

The capacity to be innovative has been seen as one of the most important factors for organizational survival and growth (Goyal and Akhilesh,2007).Innovation can lead to improved performance, problem solving, and value and also help to create organizational competitive advantage over others (Gloet and Terziovski, 2004). Baregheh, Rowley & Sambrook (2009) were of the opinion that the need for organization to innovate springs from changes in customer

demand and lifestyles, advances in technology and changing market places, structure and dynamics.

Ethnicity has been seen as a concept that involves perception, cognition and knowledge structures about how a person thinks, and feels about himself and others in the society (Jamal, 2005) while Tajfel (1981) see ethnicity as a person's ethnic identity which determines his sense of belonging to a group and the feeling that go with being a part of that group. Albrecht & Hell (1991) are of the opinion that member heterogeneity can act as a conduit for introducing creativity and innovation in teamwork while the works of Richard, McMillan, Chadwick & Dwyer (2003) found out that racial diversity promote performance for banks pursuing innovative strategy. Miliken & Martins (1996) saw ethnic diversity as a double edged sword which increases the chances for creativity and innovation in an organization while at the same time can increase the likelihood of dissatisfaction and failure of individual to identify with its workgroup.

Conclusively, the work of Hong (2010) on the relationship between ethnic diversity and innovation proves that there is a positive relationship between them.

### **Leadership Climate as a Moderating Variable**

Leadership climate refers to the emotional tone set or climate created by leaders within the work environment. Research shows that positive workplace climate lead to higher performance, engagement and well-being. Emotionally intelligent leaders create more productive and innovative organisation because they maintained a healthy, engaged and motivated staff. The concept of leadership started long before organizations were established (Wren, Hicks & Price, 2004) and is as old as civilization itself. Leadership was defined as a process that enables an individual to set direction for others to follow with competence and full commitment (Jacques & Clement, 1991). In the contemporary context, leadership is the art of transforming people and organization in order to produce positive result. Leaders develop respect, appreciation and care for their followers and make them understand that they are the powerful source of knowledge, innovation and performance in the organization (Oyetunji, 2006).

Leadership climate are the shared perception of the policies and procedure formulated and implemented by organizational leaders (Wilson-Evered et al., 2001). The leaders influence this climate through their actions and that subsequently becomes the employees' perceptions. Early theorists such as Blake & Mouton (1964); Litwin & Stringer (1968); Indik (1968) argued that leadership plays an important role in the employees' perception of the climate that exist in the organization. Momeni (2009) agreed with the other researchers that a leaders' attitude towards his employee influences their attitude, emotions, morale and perception. Thus, it is perceived that a leaders' behaviour can potentially lead to the creation and continual survival of a positive and thriving climate in the organization.

Research has showed that different types of leadership styles can result in different forms of organizational climate. Burns (1978) works on transactional and transformational leadership showed that transactional leaders are those who attempt to meet the current needs of their followers by focusing attention on exchanges while transformational leaders met the needs of their followers by promoting changes in the individual, groups and organization .Arnold et al (1998) argued that transactional leaders use appropriate reward to award the performance of their employees but Bass (1985) was of the opinion that followers will show the right behaviour at work when they experience a certain authority and ability in their leaders as well as

contingencies in reward. Transactional leaders provide their employees with the necessary motivation, equipment, supplies and technical assistance they need to complete their task (Northhouse, 2010). They also help their leaders to accomplish their goals by defining roles, setting targets and showing how their goals are achieved.

Transformational leadership tend to change the followers' need and redirect their thinking. They create a vision of the corporate culture in the organization, communicate it to the employees, stimulate them to develop their abilities while accepting feedbacks and suggestions from them. Northhouse (2010) suggested that these types of leaders understand their employees' problem and help them to develop their careers. They give a level of autonomy to their employees to carry out their duties and also appreciate them for that. Burns (1978) argued that transformational leaders develop a relationship of stimulation and elevation that converts followers to leaders.

The concept of charismatic leadership shares some similarities with idealised influence component of transformational leadership. Charismatic leaders have a self promoting personality, high energy level and willingness to take risks (Bryman, 1992). Charismatic leaders have a high level of confidence in their beliefs and ideals with a stronger need to influence their followers. They articulate ideological goals and have an appealing vision of where they intend to achieve in the future (Yuki, 1998). These types of leaders have a persuasive manner of speaking that help them enunciate the hope, ideal and fears of their followers thereby inspiring them to work towards a better tomorrow. Koene et al (2002) asserted that charismatic leaders help their followers to make sense of their work by motivating them towards greater commitment.

Managers through the use of correct leadership styles can improve the way their employees' perceive their organizational climate (Punia et al, 2004). Supportive leadership styles that encourage a climate of interaction between supervisors and subordinates are perceived positively by employees and can contribute to effective communication in the organization (Ruiz-Moreno et al, 2008). The research conducted by Punia et al (2004) revealed that a positive organizational climate results when the organizational structure is more democratic than autocratic, allowing employees' to participate adequately in setting both personal and organizational goal.

Gino & Gray (2011) research on the relationship between organizational leadership and organization success concluded that leadership styles do influence the achievement of organizational goals which will ultimately lead to organizational survival.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a cross sectional survey research design in studying the 32 manufacturing firms in Rivers state (Ph. manufacturer. Nigeria.org<member) but the accessible population are the management staff of the 5 manufacturing firms in Rivers state totalling 150 persons selected using simple random sampling. The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane formula. The instrument with which we elicited data from the respondent is the questionnaire (150 copies of questionnaire) and was analyzed using Spearman's rank order coefficient of correlation statistical tool.

## **OPERATIONAL MEASURES OF VARIABLES**

Workforce diversity was measured using three items as developed by William Choy (2007) and they include professional diversity, age diversity and ethnic diversity. Professional diversity

has 4 items; eg (There are different professionals engaged in my organization as developed by the researcher). Age diversity has 6 items as developed by Abbas, Qaisar, Hameed and Abdul (2010).eg ( the age differences in work groups do not cause conflict);Ethnic diversity has 6 items eg (People from the same ethnic group tend to look out for each other) adapted from the works of Larkey (1996).Organizational survival has two items; Innovation from Schumpeter (1964) and adaptability (Zahra, Sapienza & Davidson, 2006).Innovation has 7 items, eg (My organization is innovative because its human resources is fair in recruiting people of different ages) as adapted from the works of Odita and Egbule (2015); adaptability has 4 items eg (we respond well to competitors and other changes in the business environment) as developed by Denison (2001). Lastly, Leadership climate was developed by Bass and Avolio (1995) and it has 6 items, eg ( my lesders consider the moral and ethical consequences of their decision).

**RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSES**

Control Variables			Workforce Diversity	Org. Survival	Leadership Climate	
-none-a	Workforce Diversity	Correlation	1.000	.983	.964	
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	
		Df	0	129	129	
	Org. Survival	Correlation	.983	1.000	.951	
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	
		Df	129	0	129	
	Leadership Climate	Correlation	.964	.951	1.000	
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	
		Df	129	129	0	
	Leadership Climate	Workforce Diversity	Correlation	1.000	.800	
			Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000	
			Df	0	128	
Org. Survival		Correlation	.800	1.000		
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.		
		Df	128	0		

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

Source: SPSS Output-Version 20(field study)

**Discussion of Findings**

The findings examined the relationship between workforce diversity and organizational survival of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State; seven (7) hypotheses were formulated as provisional answers to research questions raised and were tested to find hold for the propositions, thus;

The result of the tested H01 indicated a strong relationship between professional diversity and innovation ( $\rho = .994^{**}$ ,  $p = .000 < 0.05$ ), this empirical position is supported by Oliver (2005) in positing that a diverse workforce can maximize talent and creativity and foster innovation which can lead to increased profits and positive public image for a successful business outcome. Heterogeneity in professionals creates opportunities for individual to share, learn and grow from other people’s experience and ideas.

Accordingly, the second hypothesis revealed a significant relationship between professional diversity and adaptability ( $\rho = .849^{**}$ ,  $p = .000 < 0.05$ ), this is supported by Hamlet (2000) by asserting that professional diversity engenders innovativeness which undoubtedly provides breakthrough for the corporation in today's competitive world as well as adaptive capacity. Diversity in profession enables professionals to bring in unique thinking, improved decision-making, diverse skills either by creating a larger talent pool that help organization to adapt effectively to the external environment.

The findings of the tested H03 reported a significant relationship between age diversity and innovation ( $\rho = .824^{**}$ ,  $p = .000 < 0.05$ ); the study by McShane & Glinow (2000) lends support for this empirical position in stating that a generation of workers prevalent in today's business organization tend to bring more value for the business establishment. Catsouphes et al. (2013) held that organizations can leverage age diversity for innovation while Glass (2007) is of the opinion that the millennial group will be more needed in the workplace of their self-confidence.

Also, correlation value from H04 for age diversity and adaptability revealed the existence of a significant relationship between them ( $\rho = .963^{**}$ ,  $p = .000 < 0.05$ ); according to Fajana (2009), age based diversity is the intergenerational behaviors among old and young employees which constitute the differences in observed workplace behaviours which lends adaptive behaviour for the organization. Age heterogeneity can also make individual to adapt and become more productive when they agree to focus on organizational goals.

The findings of the tested H05 showed a significant relationship between ethnic diversity and innovation ( $\rho = .941^{**}$ ,  $p = .000 < 0.05$ ); theoretical position of Shell (2006) lends support to this position; policies that incorporate a labor force that is diverse in demographic and personal characteristics stimulates creativity and helps a company gain a competitive advantage in the business arena. Similarly, Cady & Valentine (1999) in their study of 50 teams of high-tech Fortune 500 companies has shown that racial diversity related positively to quality of innovation. Cox & Blake (1991) argued that ethnic diversity will stimulate creativity, innovativeness and problem solving skills in organization.

Empirical findings from the tested H06 revealed a significant relationship between ethnic diversity and adaptability ( $\rho = .890^{**}$ ,  $p = .000 < 0.05$ ); O'Reilly, Williams & Barsade (1997) in their study showed that ethnic diversity relates positively to creative and implementation ability in teams thereby increasing the chances of adaptability and consequent outcome of survival. Ethnic diversity also help organization to gain access to and adapt effectively in multicultural market. (Ely and Thomas, 2001)

The findings of the tested H07 showed that leadership climate moderates the relationship between workforce diversity and organizational survival of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State ( $r(128) = .800$ ,  $n = 131$ ,  $p = .000$ ) and  $r(129) = .983$ ,  $n = 131$ ,  $p = .000$ ) an indication of change in the introduction of a moderating variable to the factors (workforce diversity and organizational survival); this empirical finding is in consonance with the view of Gino & Gray (2011) who postulated that research on the relationship between organizational leadership and organization success concluded that leadership styles do influence the achievement of organizational goals which will ultimately lead to organizational survival

### **Conclusion**

Empirical findings from data analyzed inform the following conclusions relative to the scope of our study;

Professional diversity significantly relates with organizational survival such that a diverse workforce can maximize talent and creativity and foster innovation which can lead to increased profits and positive public image for a successful business outcome.

Again, age diversity is significantly related with organizational survival such that it engenders innovativeness which undoubtedly provides breakthrough for the corporation in today's competitive world as well as adaptive capacity.

Accordingly, ethnic diversity is related with organizational survival having that it contributes positively to creative and implementation ability in teams thereby increasing the chances of adaptability and consequent outcome of survival.

Accordingly, from our empirical findings; leadership climate has significant influence on the relationship between workforce diversity and organizational survive thus strengthening the existent relationship between the predictor and criterion variables, thus we conclude that business units with healthy leadership styles and approaches will benefit from diversities predominant in the workforce to their competitiveness and survival.

### **Recommendations of the Study**

Drawing from the findings and conclusion, this study recommends that;

There should be diversity in the professional careers and contribution of organizational members as this can bring about an increase in productivity and competitive advantages. There should be inclusion and diversity relative to age (young and old generation of workers alike); there are benefits of the younger generation as well as the older generation of workers, therefore modern business organizations should respond to this strategic mix to derive positive outcomes for their institutions.

Companies that plan to expand into global markets benefit from language diversity in the workplace which delineates ethnic diversity and inclusion; with an adequate ethnic diversity in the workplace, there will be positive image and reputation of the firm as well as an increased presence in other geographical areas.

Business organizations should institute healthy leadership approaches and also constantly train their leaders to approach workforce diversity and inclusion as should to that they reap benefit emanating from such strategic position

Firmsshouldbeencouragedtoinventnewinnovationstrategiesbybrainstormingonbetterwaysofcreatingquality product so as to reduce cost and increase profit.

### **Contribution to Knowledge**

This study has contributed to knowledge in the following ways;

Theoretical: This study has widened the literatures linking workforce diversity and organizational survival thereby giving a clearer picture of the role of workforce diversity in enhancing organizational survival. Studies conducted in this regards have been theoretical in nature and mostly concerned with review of theories and related literature in the field, however this study contributes to knowledge by approaching the study from an empirical stance to find out the functionality within an industrial scope.

Some past researchers had examined the relationship between these variables without studying any contextual factor that could have a moderating effect on the relationship between the variables, nevertheless filling up this identified gap we add to the body of knowledge by having examined the effect of leadership climate in moderating the relationship between the variables.

Practical: This study will help managers of manufacturing firms to incorporate the kind of organizational climate that will enable employees participate in making decision that concerns them. It will also enable managers of organization to develop good strategies and policies that will enable them provide equal and fair treatment of all employees despite their differences.

### **Suggestions for Further Studies**

Some gaps are identified which we suppose that subsequent research efforts should attend to; The industrial and geographical scope of the study is limited to the manufacturing firms operating in Rivers State, Nigeria; it becomes necessary that subsequent studies should seek to widen the scope by examining the practicality of the variables in other scopes.

Methodology adopted in carrying out this study – cross sectional survey, the instruments for data collection as well as statistical tools could be changed to other designs in subsequent studies. Having examined the response of organizational survival using workforce diversity, studies following after should endeavor to ascertain the effect of other predictor variables on organizational survival of business organizations operating in this era of stiff competition; such variables could include reward systems, stakeholder relationship management, leadership styles etc.

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