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Gender Diversity and Organizational Performance of 3 Star Hotels in South-South, Nigeria

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Abstract: *This study examined the relationship between gender diversity and organizational performance of 3-star hotels in South- South, Nigeria. Primary data was generated through self- administered questionnaire. The target population of the study is all the 3- star hotels in South-South, Nigeria registered with the Nigeria Tourism Development Commission. Five managers were selected from each of the 60 hotels in the South-South giving a total of 300 managers. The sample size of 171 was determined using the Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring coefficients above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Statistics. The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between gender diversity and organizational performance of 3-star hotels in South- South, Nigeria. The study concludes that gender diversity significantly predicts organizational performance of 3-star hotels in South- South, Nigeria. The study recommends that organizations should endevour to remove every subtle obstacle that hinders women from climbing up the managerial ladder. All forms of organizational practices and processes which create difficulties and limitations for women attaining the highest position of their particular field must be effectively removed.*

Keywords: *Gender Diversity, Organizational Performance, Cost Minimization, Time Minimization, Waste Minimization*

INTRODUCTION

Increased mobility and networking of people from diverse backgrounds as a result of improved economic and political systems and the recognition of human rights by most nations has put most organizations under pressure to embrace diversity at the work place (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). This diversity brings with it the heterogeneity that needs to be nurtured, cultivated and appreciated as a means of increasing organization's performance. Carrell (2006) defines workforce diversity as ways that people differ which can affect a task or relationship within an organization such as age, gender, race, education and ethnicity. The concept of diversity emerged mainly to further the availability of equal opportunities in the workplace with a philosophy of ensuring that organizations make the most out of the difference from a diverse workforce rather than losing talent which might assist the organization to be more efficient and effective (Jain & Verma, 1996).

In the last decades, those organizational barriers that hinder women from advancing to the top in their career have been a vital area in organizational research. Singh & Vinnicombe (2004) in their study discovered that women are almost if not completely absent when it comes to occupying senior positions in organizations. However, male directors often form an elite group at the top of the corporate world and only very few women are able to breakthrough these glass ceiling into this elite group, despite making inroads into middle management. This point out that gender in the board of directors in some big organization is a barrier for career advancement. Singh & Vinnicombe (2004) argued that this is a matter of concern, because the talents of women are not being fully utilized. One of the most prevailing metaphors used to describe women's absence in senior organizational positions has been that of the 'glass ceiling'. Mavin (2016) citing Morrinson & Von Glinow (1990) said the phrase 'Glass ceiling' was made up in the 1960s. This is used to describe a subtle obstacle that is so clear but yet very powerful that it can hinder women from claiming up the managerial ladder. Glass ceiling was coined to describe those organizational practices and processes which creates difficulties and limitations in which women encounter when trying to attain the highest position of their particular field. Here, women may be unable to reach the top of the management hierarchy even though they can see it (Gatrell & Swan, 2008).

Powell (2011) defined gender as the physiological inference of a someone being either male or female, like expectations and beliefs regarding what kind of attitudes, behaviors, values, knowledge, skills, and interests areas are more suitable for or typical of one sex than the other. The study of gender diversity focuses on how individuals believe that males and females differ. These gender variations influence the manner in which individuals react to the behaviors of others in the work settings or any other group coalition. Gender diversities are visible in prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination.

Mwatumwa (2016) argues that gender diversity is positively linked to employee and organisational performance. This concurs with Kyalo (2015) who used a resource-based view of a firm, stating that gender diversity at the management and organisational levels can provide a firm with better competitive advantage. However, Kirton and Greene (2015) argued that most organisations do not realise these benefits as gender-based imbalances still persist in organisations. According to Nishii (2013), most cultures around the world still adhere to the notion that the world is dominated by men. As such, the corporate world holds the same belief and organisations thus prefer to hire men compared to women because men are perceived to have better performance and ability to manage their jobs and women are stereotyped against feminine characteristics (Nishii, 2013).

This study therefore examines the relationship between gender diversity and organizational performance of 3 star hotels in South-South Nigeria.

Furthermore**,** this study will also be guided by the following research questions:

i. What is the relationship between gender diversity and cost minimization of three star hotels in South- South, Nigeria?
ii. What is the relationship between gender diversity and time minimization of three star hotels in South- South, Nigeria?
iii. What is the relationship between gender diversity and waste minimization of three star hotels in South- South, Nigeria?

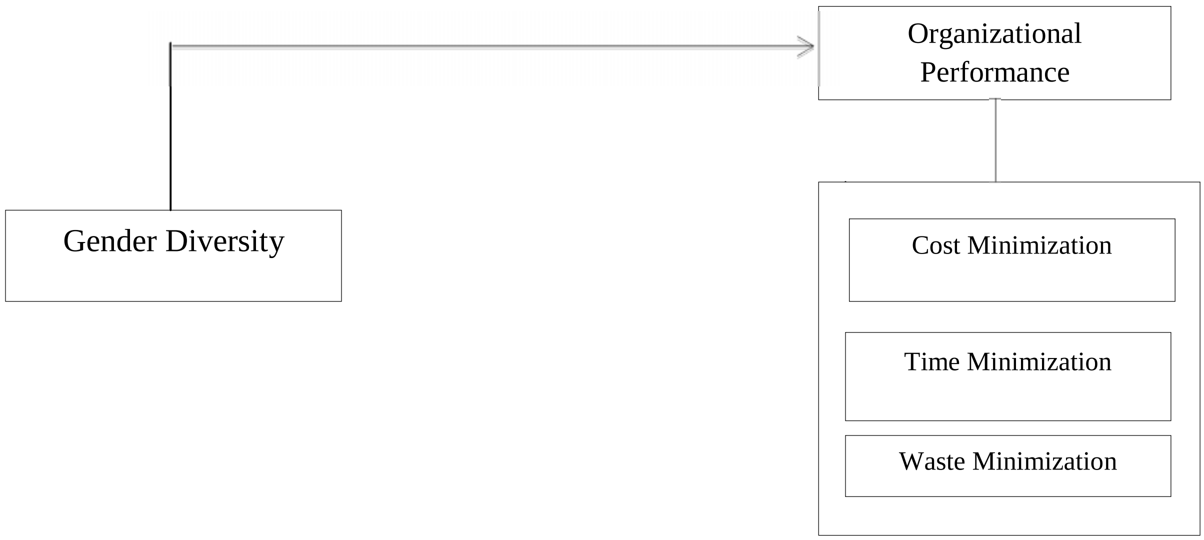

Fig.1 Conceptual framework for the relationship gender diversity and organizational performance

Source: Desk Research, 2020

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

Stereotyping and Prejudice Theory

Pitts (2009) defines stereotype as a fixed and over-generalized belief about a group of people. The author asserts that stereotypes helps people respond to situations because of sharing similar experiences. The main drawback with these stereotypes is that it makes people ignore differences and make generalizations about others that might not be true. Stereotyping in the workplace allows people to infer that an employee has a range of characteristics and abilities that members of his or her group are assumed to have. This inference leads to social categorization which forms the prejudice attitudes that cause people to form in-groups and out-groups.

Workplace prejudice and stereotyping can result to discrimination of a person or a group of people based on a certain range of characteristics. Such instances create a poor working atmosphere that may end up demoralizing the victim. Such effects can cause the victim to lose focus and morale which directly impacts on the productivity of the individual (Nayab, 2010). The individual may end up feeling unworthy, which can cause a loss in self-esteem and motivation. The productivity or performance of such a person is likely to drop. He further indicates that workplace prejudice and discrimination is a major cause of unemployment. People stay unemployed because of biasness in hiring companies or organizations. This biasness impacts on workplace diversity management which creates a ripple effect on performance.

Uwlax (2003) also introduced four theories describing the formation of prejudices among individuals. These were normative theory, scapegoating theory, exploitation theory, and authoritarian-personality theory. On normative theory, the author observes that one's family, friends, and community will be responsible for the creation and reinforcement of prejudices. In the scapegoating theory, people formed prejudices based on their need to apportion blame on a minority group for personal shortcomings and misfortunes. Uwlax observes that the exploitation theory describes the prejudices formed by individuals as a result of conflicting economic interests. These conflicting interests cause people to justify actions that would discriminate against other ethnic groups with whom they are in competition. Finally, authoritarian-personality theory described the formation of harsh prejudices based on an individual's personality of what is good or evil.

Levy (1997) introduced the stereotype embodiment theory (SET) to describe the process by which age stereotypes affect the health of older adults. This assertion was based on four main premises: that stereotypes become internalized across the lifespan; that stereotypes can operate unconsciously; that stereotypes can gain salience from self-relevance; and people could utilize multiple pathways in their stereotyping. Using these premises, Levy sought to explain why age stereotypes were internalized by older adults and how other types of self stereotypes operated (such as ethnic stereotypes). The findings will be useful in depicting how these stereotypes, once activated in the individual's sub-conscious, would eventually have an effect on his or her health.

Gender Diversity

Gender diversity has become a hot boardroom topic across the globe and is becoming not only a critical issue for human resources (HR) executives, but a major part of corporate strategy. Gender diversity is equitable or fair representation between genders (Sharon & Sytsrna, 2006). Gender diversity most commonly refers to an equitable ratio of men and women, but may also include non-binary gender categories. Gender diversity on corporate boards has been widely discussed, and may' ongoing initiatives study- and promote gender diversity in fields traditionally dominated by men. Gender Diversity increases the awareness and understanding of the wide range of gender diversity in children, adolescents, and adults by providing family support, building community, increasing societal awareness, and improving the well-being for people of all gender identities and expressions (Taylor &Harison, 2003).

Gender issues in labor and legislation as needed to bring greater justice, parity and assure nondiscrimination in the work force. Women, like men, are creative and contributory agents and beneficiaries of change. The development and unleashing of women's potential should not be restricted by over protection, however the exploitation of women, either because of the absence of regulations or of insensitivity of their specific conditions, should be guarded against. The work place must constitute an environment where men and women enjoy the same good conditions and non-discriminatory practices. Women workers, like any others, must be able to enjoy balance and quality in their work environment in terms of gender, responsibility, reward and value, this is only when innovativeness can be achieved.

Gender is the state of being male or female typically used with reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones. Farrell (2005), in his study suggests that workforce gender diversity is on the increase daily in both developing and developed countries. According to Farrell, this trend is likely to increase with the increase in the level of awareness and diversity. Additionally, Naqvi (2012) summarizes diversity as the existence of employees from various cultural and social backgrounds within a company. It includes such as race, age, gender, color, physical ability, etc. Naqvi (2012) also notes that there are both positive and negative sides of gender diversity in work force.

According to the resource based view, a firm can gain a sustained competitive advantage if it takes advantage of its valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources (Barney, 2001). Barney (2001) noted that firms with intangible and socially complex resources such as employee competence are a better source of sustained competitive advantage than tangible resources such as scale of operations. Men's and women's different experiences provide insight into the different needs of male and female customers. In addition, gender diversity encourages employees' overall creativity and innovation because of the combination of different skills, perspectives and backgrounds (Egan, 2005).

In addition, a workforce that has better gender diversity management can produce high quality decisions because men and women bring different opinions to the organization. Different perspectives and opinions lead to a better understanding of the impact on all measures of organizational performance (Campbell &Minguez-Vera, 2008). The resources in the market insight, creativity, innovation, and improved problem solving are valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable. The resources are valuable because they drive business growth, by ensuring creative ideas are developed which lead to competitive strategies (Oetinger, 2001). These resources cannot be easily accessed by similar organizations (Frink et al, 2003). This study seeks to find out whether KRA has inimitable resources in terms of human resource and if the resources are well balanced in gender.

According to Jones et al. (2008), studies carried out in the US reveal that only a small percent of 5.2% of the top earners are women and only 7.9% of those have highest ranking tittles in Corporate America. However, women either control or influence nearly all consumer purchases, so it is important to have their perspective represented on boards. The research conducted indicated that female executives out perform their male colleagues on skills concerning motivating others, promoting good communication, turning out high quality work and being good listeners. Higher proportions of women in top-management positions have had significantly better financial performance than organizations with lower proportions of female top managers. Labor market data show that a sharp gender divide has developed in the working-age group since 1998. Many women professionals are mothers; losing them would mean losing many skilled employees. This has challenged human resource departments to develop strategies to attract and retain educated and skilled women workers. It is also important to develop initiatives to ensure that women return to work after childbirth, since the maximum attrition among women employees happens at this stage. The firm's ability to attract and retain women employees is influenced by its ability to provide family-friendly practices and facilities such as training for returners and career breakers such as women taking care of young children (Argarwala, (2010).

Leonard and Levine (2003) argued that gender-based imbalances in organizations are reinforced by stereotypes and biases that describe positive characteristics and therefore a higher status to the males. Brown (2008) and Carr-Ruffino (2003), argue that a significant amount of workforce diversity remains ineffective if gender issues are not first recognized and managed. According to both studies, the most constitutional challenge is overcoming the thought that women are not equal to men. Kossek et al. (2005), state that only 54% of the working-age women are in the workforce worldwide compared to 80% of men. They continue to assert that women continue to have the upper hand on the "invisible care" economy, which relates to care giving and domestic work. According to Kochan et al. (2002), however, providing an equal job opportunity to women is vital to improve performance of employees in an organization.According to Kochan et al. (2002), over the years, societies have eliminated policies that discriminated against certain classes of workers. This was done by raising the costs to organizations that failed to comply. Kenya has seen a tremendous increase in the number of educated women. This has led to women fighting for equal opportunities in top management jobs. This study seeks to find out whether there is gender balance at KRA that promotes gender equality and at the same time fulfills the governments' laws that require an equal opportunity for both males and females and the effect on this gender balance on organizational performance.

Frink et al. (2003), conducted two studies to investigate the association between women's representation and performance, measuring performance in a different way in each study. The findings support the authors' theory that an organization's performance would increase when gender diversity is maximized with a fifty-fifty representation from each gender. It is significant for most organizations to give women equal opportunities as men. Additionally the inclusion of both males and females at work place promotes competition among employees, which lead to the growth of the organization (Thorsteinson&Highhouse, 2003). Researchers indicated that the more an organization emphasizes on gender diversity management programs, the more positive effect on the organization. The Kenyan government has embraced and adopted gender diversity as there slots of power set aside for women. The aim to promote equality has extended to numerous other public institutions as guided by the constitution.

Naqvi et al. (2013) examined the relationship between gender diversity and team performance in the telecom sector of Pakistan with moderating role of organizational culture. 350 questionnaires were distributed but only 225 people filled the questionnaires and submitted them. Three hypotheses were developed and all of them were accepted. Results indicated that an increase in gender diversity in a team leads to creativity and innovation. Decision making becomes better and the end result is enhanced team performance.

Organizational Performance

Organizational performance is defined as an analysis of a company's performance as compared to goals and objectives (Jamrog, 2002). Within corporate organizations, there are three primary outcomes analysed, financial performance, market performance and shareholder value performance (Adler, 2005). The concept of organizational performance is based upon the idea that an organization is the voluntary association of productive assets, including human, physical, and capital resources, for the purpose of achieving a shared purpose (Carton, 2004). Organizational performance comprises the actual output or results of an organization as measured against its intended outputs. According to Richard, Devinney, Yip & Johnson (2009) organizational performance encompasses three specific areas of firm outcomes, financial performance such as profits, return on assets and return on investment), product market performance such as sales, market share and shareholder return measure through total shareholder return and economic value added.

Organizational performance is therefore the ability of an organization to fulfil its mission through sound management, strong governance and a persistent rededication to achieving results. Parasuraman (2002) proposed that firms delivering services must broaden their examination of productivity from the conventional company-oriented perspective to a dual company-customer perspective. This broadened approach can help reconcile conflicts or leverage synergies between improving service quality and boosting service productivity (Parasuraman, 2002). This research considers organization performance relative to the competition from multiple organizational perspectives including quality, productivity, market share, profitability, return on equity, and overall firm performance. Other non-financial measure of performance such as increase in customer base, market share increase, quality service delivery and increase in firm branch networks (Bernthal & Wellins, 2006).

Performance is a measure of results achieved by individual, group, and organization. Organization performance is defined as a continuous and action oriented with focus on improving performance by using objective, standards, appraisal, and feedback (Ababnch, 2008). Organizations performance comprises the actual output or results of an organization achievement as measured against its intended goals and objectives. Organizations adopt performance measurement because it creates accountability, provides feedback to operations, and result in more effective planning, budgeting and evaluation (Ammons, 2001).

The performance as stated by Hunger and Wheelen (2007) is an end results of an activity, and an organizational performance is accumulated end results of all the organizations work processes and activities. Managers measure and control organization performance because it leads to better assessment for management, to increase the ability to provide customer value, to improve measures of organizational knowledge, and measure of organizational performance do have an impact onan organization's reputation. When the performance of the organization is assessed, the past management decisions that shaped investments, operations and financing are measured to know whether all resources were used effectively, whether the profitability of the business met oreven exceeded expectations, and whether financing choice were made prudently (Shaukat *et al.,* 2008). Organizational performance is conducted to support decisions concerning whether program or project should be continued, improved, expanded, or curtailed (Rossi et al., 1999).

The traditional approach to performance measurement is based on productivity measures, including such measures as service inputs and outputs (Holmes *et al.*, 2006). In recent years, many organizations have attempted to manage organizational performance using the balanced scorecard methodology where performance is tracked and measured in multiple dimensions such as: financial performance (e.g. shareholder return) customer service-social responsibility (e.g. corporate citizenship, community outreach) - employee stewardship. As this study focuses on measurement of efficiency and effectiveness part of organizations performance, therefore, these concepts are elaborated in detail.

Measures of Organizational Performance

Cost Minimization

According to Drury (2004), cost minimization focuses on cost reduction and continuous improvement and change rather than cost containment. The term cost reduction could be used instead of cost optimization. Whereas traditional cost control systems are routinely applied on a continuous basis, cost optimization tends to be applied on an ad hoc basis when an opportunity for cost reduction is identified. Cost minimization consists of those actions that are taken by managers to reduce costs, some of which are prioritized on the basis of information extracted from the accounting system. Although cost optimization seeks to reduce costs, it should not be at the expense of customer satisfaction. Ideally, the aim is to take actions that will both reduce costs and enhance customer satisfaction.

Cost minimization has become an essential emphasis in today's highly competitive business environment. This study was aimed at defining cost optimization and discussing the philosophies that underpins optimization. Over the past 25 years, we have seen a significant shift in the cost accounting and management accounting (Maher and Deakin, 1994, Günther 1997 and Götze, 2004). This shift is the result of an increasing competitive environment due to the introduction of new manufacturing and information technologies, the focus on the customer, the growth of worldwide markets, and the introduction of new forms of management organization (Blocher et al, 1999).

The idea of cost minimization of a production unit was first introduced by Farell (1957), under the concept of “input oriented measure”. According to Farell, a technical optimization measure is defined by one minus the maximum equi-proportionate reduction in all inputs that still allows continuous production of given outputs. Technical optimization is linked to the possibility of avoiding wasting by producing as much outputs as the use of input allows it (output oriented measure), or by using as less as input that the production objective plans it (input oriented measure). This optimization is measured by comparing observed and optimal values of production, costs, revenue, profit or all that the production system can follow as objective and which is under appropriate quantities and prices constraints. Optimization measurement is one aspect of investigating a firm’s performance. Cost minimization can be measured in three ways; maximization of output, minimization of cost, and maximization of profits. In general, optimization is divided into two components (Kumbhakar & Lovell, 2003).

A firm is regarded as technically efficient if it is able to obtain maximum outputs from given inputs or minimize inputs used in producing given outputs. The objective of producers here is to avoid waste. According to Koopmans (1951) a producer is considered technically efficient if, and only if, it is impossible to produce more of any output without producing less of some other output or using more of some inputs. On the other hand, a locative optimization relates to the optimal combination of inputs and outputs at a given price. The objective of producers might entail the following: to produce given outputs at minimum costs; to utilize given inputs so as to maximize revenue; and to allocate inputs and outputs so as to maximize profit. This technique of production is widely known as economic optimization where the objective of producers becomes one of attaining a high degree of economic optimization (cost, revenue or profit optimization). Theoretically, competition is good because it ensures that the costs of production are minimised and at the same time it promotes optimization (Nickell, 1996). Increased competition could force firms to operate more efficiently in order to survive. It forces the banks to produce products and provide services that are most demanded by the customers. If they can provide services demanded efficiently and with the least cost, there is no reason why they cannot make more profits. Otherwise, they will make losses and possibly go out of business.

Time Minimization

When the employees are productive, they accomplish more in a given amount of time. In turn, efficiency saves their company money in time and labour. When employees are unproductive, they take longer time to complete projects, which cost employee’s more money due to the time lost (Olajide, 2000). The importance of higher productivity of the employees in public enterprise cannot be overemphasized, which include the following; Higher incomes and profit; Higher earnings; Increased supplies of both consumer and capital goods at lower costs and lower prices; Ultimate shorter hours of work and improvements in working and living conditions; Strengthening the general economic foundation of workers (Banjoko, 1996).Armstrong (2006) stated that productivity is the time spent by an employee actively participating in his/her job that he or she was hired for, in order to produce the required outcomes according to the employers' job descriptions. As suggested by Bloisi (2003) the core cause of the productivity problems in the South African society are people's motivation levels and their work ethics.

Time minimization is recognized as an important component of work performance (Downs, 2008) Time minimization is a way of developing and using processes and tools for maximum efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity (Downs, 2008) It involves mastery of a set of skills like setting goals, planning and making decisions better. At the end we have better performance (Brogan, 2010). According to Thompson *et al* (2010), accurate and timely information about daily operations is essential if managers are to gauge how well the strategy execution process is proceeding. Time is an essential resource since it is irrecoverable, limited and dynamic (Downs, 2008) Irrecoverable because every minute spent is gone forever, limited because only 24hours exist in a day and dynamic because it's never static (Claessens, Roe & Rutte, 2009). According to North (2004) time management is the organization of tasks or events by first estimating how much time a task will take to be completed, when it must be completed, and then adjusting events that would interfere with its completion is reached in the appropriate amount of time. Effective time management is the key to high performance levels. Effective time management not only affects the performance of employees, but also helps to cope with stress, conflicts and pressure more efficiently North (2004).

Waste Minimization

Waste is defined by Gobbi (2008) as unnecessary work or holding stocks as a result of errors, poor organization or communication. Contributing to the same, Li &Olorunniwo (2008) focused on the disastrous implication of having wastes in the form of repairs, recalls and image control. On their part, Elmas and Erdogmus (2011) summarize the importance of waste reduction as positive environmental impact, legal compliance, competitiveness advancement and improved customer service. Liu (2008) defines waste minimization as the process and the policy of reducing the amount of waste produced by an entity. This is shared by Wang (2005) who adds that waste reduction involves efforts to minimize resource and energy use during manufacture. For the same commercial output, usually the fewer materials are used, the less waste is produced. Waste reduction usually requires knowledge of the production process and detailed knowledge of the composition of the waste. In any manufacturing process, there will always be wastes and scraps. In Srivastava (2008), waste is further defined as unnecessary work or holding stocks as a result of errors, poor organization or communication, while scrap refers to defective product or material that cannot be repaired, used or sold. Gobbi (2011) found that reasons for the creation of waste sometimes include requirements in the supply chain. For example, a company handling a product may insist that it should be packaged using particular packing because it fits its packaging equipment.

Total quality management (TQM) philosophy advocates for getting it right the first time and all the times (Lysons, 2006). This would ensure minimum waste is generated in the supply chain. Material waste in publishing includes tree parts not turned into pulp, packaging materials, rejected print runs and wastes, returns and used publications (Agrawal, 2010). In addition, Prahinski and Kacobasoglu (2006) argues that idle labour time as a waste leads to increased overhead costs. In efficient production processes and defective equipment may also lead to increased wastes, which Cheng & Wu, (2006) notes would have disastrous implications in form of repairs, recalls and image control. Companies have been pushed by competitive pressures towards cost reduction and performance improvement of operations to provide better quality products to very demanding markets. The approach of waste reduction and performance has been gaining importance in organizations operations (Gurumurthy & Kadal, 2011; Taj & Morosa, 2011). Waste reduction can be achieved through implementation of lean production systems that includes assessing current situation and designing a production system based on lean system concepts &techniques (Womack &Jones, 2003).

Gender Diversity and Organizational Performance

Debates are rife on the impact of gender diversity in the top-level management and organizational leadership on the general performance of the organization. Chin (2013) reports that a study found that firms that had high gender diversity in their top-leadership reported significant abnormal returns. Van Knippenberg, De Dreu and Homan (2014) found that while most top leadership and management in most firms are dominated by men, an inclusion of women in such teams make them not only become diverse but also improves the quality of the leadership and top-level management.

Gender diversity in senior management teams has increased, probably due to three important reasons. According to the Research Institute (2012) these are; the changing proportion of women board-level positions, increase in government intervention and change in debates on the issue of gender as an issue of equality and fairness to one of superior performance. Van Knippenberg, *et al.* (2014) are in consensus contending that gender diversity improves the quality of organizational leadership and management by stating that gender diversity enhances managerial information processing and decision making of the managerial team resulting in effective strategy formulation and decision making key processes. Nakagwa (2015) found that gender diversity in addition to other kinds of diversities in the workforce provided more innovative and higher-quality solutions, due to a combination of gender-based perspective presented by both males and females in the managerial teams.

In other words, gender diversity accrues a spectrum of insights into the vital strategic leadership and managerial decision enhancing the quality and potential effectiveness of such decisions for the firm. Dezo and Ross (2012) contend that heterogeneous groups (in terms of gender) provide different perspectives and bring different views and experiences that inform leadership and managerial roles and lead to high quality decisions at this level. The authors go further to postulate that a mere presence of a woman, having congruent information on the issue at hand may stimulate a broader and a deeper deliberation of alternative in the top management team (TMT).

Organizational leadership may also benefit in terms of leadership styles. Research has determined that women and men exhibit disparities in their managerial behavioral propensities (Van Knippenberg, *et al.*, 2014). Dezo and Ross (2012) posits that women lean towards a more interactive leadership accentuating inclusion, participation and power sharing while men tend towards a less interactive leadership style, one focused on goal attainment with little participation. It follows then that moderate to high gender diversity may have a positive result in the leadership style that the organization adopts which can be a hybrid between the managerial behavioral and leadership propensities of males and the females.

2.8.2.2 Competitive Advantage

According to Ali, Metz and Kulik (2007) the resource-based perspective holds that a firm can achieve sustained competitive advantage (C.A) by exploiting the valuable, rare, inimitable and non-sustainable (VRIN) resources. Gender diversity is associated with the VRIN resources that are capable of helping the firm to attain a competitive advantage. Ali, *et al.,* (2007) identify these resources including creativity and innovation, improved problem solving and market insight. It follows that a gender diverse workforce has the potential to enhance the team's general market insight as well as creativity and innovation. Darwin and Palanisamy (2015) make this point when they argue that a diverse workgroup brings different experiences, skills set and insights that enhance overall team performance which promote the performance of the organization.

Studies have found diversity to be a strategic source for the attainment of competitive advantage. For instance, Raza, Ishtiaqi, Kanwal, Butt & Nawaz (2013) found that gender, education, cultural and age diversities has a positive influence on the organizational competitive advantage. According to Darwin and Palanisamy (2015), some studies have found that mixed gender groups are perform more effectively than same gender groups. In this sense, it is arguable that gender diversity does accrue competitive advantages to firms that are more diverse in the gender composition of their workforce than firms that have a more homogeneous gender workforce. Ali, *et al.*, (2007) looks at gender diversity and decision-making and contends that gender diversity enhances organization's C.A by facilitating the making of quality decisions.

A more gender diverse workforce brings to the firm a spectrum of perspectives, skills and knowledge that an organization can tap into and base its strategic goals up (Ali, *et al.*, 2013). Such a spectrum of perspectives is indispensable when it comes to decision making, and the resultant quality and informed decision accord the firm a competitive advantage when it comes to market analysis and determining a working business strategy.

From the foregoing arguments, the study hypothesized thus:

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between gender diversity and cost minimization of hotels in South- South, Nigeria.

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between gender diversity and time minimization of hotels in South- South, Nigeria.

Ho_3: There is no significant relationship between gender diversity and waste minimization of hotels in South- South, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

Primary data was generated through self- administered questionnaire. The target population of the study is all the 3- star hotels in South-South, Nigeria registered with the Nigeria Tourism Development Commission. Five managers were selected from each of the 60 hotels in the South-South giving a total of 300 managers. The sample size of 171 was determined using the Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring coefficients above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Statistics.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Bivariate Analysis

The Spearman Rank Order Correlation coefficient is calculated using the SPSS 21.0 version to establish the relationship among the empirical referents of the predictor variable and the measures of the criterion variable. Correlation coefficient can range from -1.00 to +1.00. The value of -1.00 represents a perfect negative correlation while the value of +1.00 represents a perfect positive correlation. A value of 0.00 represents a lack of correlation.

Table 1: Correlation for gender diversity and organizational performance

			Gender Diversity	Cost Minimization	Waste Minimization	Time Minimization
Spearman's rho	Gender Diversity	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.600**	.805**	.719**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.	.000	.000
		N	148	148	148	148
	Cost Minimization	Correlation Coefficient	.600**	1.000	.905**	.919**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.	.000	.000
		N	148	148	148	148
	Waste Minimization	Correlation Coefficient	.805**	.905**	1.000	.922**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	148	148	148	148
	Time Minimization	Correlation Coefficient	.719**	.919**	.922**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	148	148	148	148

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Version 23.0 Output

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between gender diversity and cost minimization of hotels in South- South, Nigeria

Table 1 shows the result of correlation matrix obtained for between gender diversity and cost minimization. The correlation coefficient of 0.600 confirms showed that there is a positive strong correlation between gender diversity and cost minimization of 3- hotels in South- South, Nigeria. Similarly displayed in the table is the statistical test of significance (p - value), which makes possible the generalization of our findings to the study population. Therefore, based on this finding the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between gender diversity and cost minimization of hotels in South- South, Nigeria.

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between gender diversity and waste minimization of hotels in South- South, Nigeria

Table 1 shows the result of correlation matrix obtained for between gender diversity and waste minimization. The correlation coefficient of 0.805 confirms showed that there is a positive very strong correlation between gender diversity and cost minimization of 3- hotels in South- South, Nigeria. Similarly displayed in the table is the statistical test of significance (p - value), which makes possible the generalization of our findings to the study population. Therefore, based on this finding the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between gender diversity and waste minimization of hotels in South- South, Nigeria.

Ho_3: There is no significant relationship between gender diversity and time minimization of hotels in South- South, Nigeria

Table 1 shows the result of correlation matrix obtained for between gender diversity and time minimization. The correlation coefficient of 0.719 confirms showed that there is a positive very strong correlation between gender diversity and cost minimization of 3- hotels in South- South, Nigeria. Similarly displayed in the table is the statistical test of significance (p - value), which makes possible the generalization of our findings to the study population. Therefore, based on this finding the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between gender diversity and time minimization of hotels in South- South, Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results from the analysis reveal significant relationship between gender diversity and organizational performance of hotels in South- South, Nigeria. This finding confirms the views of Chin (2013) who reported that a study found that firms that had high gender diversity in their top-leadership reported significant abnormal returns. Van Knippenberg, De Dreu and Homan (2014) found that while most top leadership and management in most firms are dominated by men, an inclusion of women in such teams make them not only become diverse but also improves the quality of the leadership and top-level management.

Gender diversity in senior management teams has increased, probably due to three important reasons. According to the Research Institute (2012) these are; the changing proportion of women board-level positions, increase in government intervention and change in debates on the issue of gender as an issue of equality and fairness to one of superior performance. Van Knippenberg, *et al.* (2014) are in consensus contending that gender diversity improves the quality of organizational leadership and management by stating that gender diversity enhances managerial information processing and decision making of the managerial team resulting in effective strategy formulation and decision making key processes. Nakagwa (2015) found that gender diversity in addition to other kinds of diversities in the workforce provided more innovative and higher-quality solutions, due to a combination of gender-based perspective presented by both males and females in the managerial teams.

In other words, gender diversity accrues a spectrum of insights into the vital strategic leadership and managerial decision enhancing the quality and potential effectiveness of such decisions for the firm. Dezo and Ross (2012) contend that heterogeneous groups (in terms of gender) provide different perspectives and bring different views and experiences that inform leadership and managerial roles and lead to high quality decisions at this level. The authors go further to postulate that a mere presence of a woman, having congruent information on the issue at hand may stimulate a broader and a deeper deliberation of alternative in the top management team (TMT).

Organizational leadership may also benefit in terms of leadership styles. Research has determined that women and men exhibit disparities in their managerial behavioral propensities (Van Knippenberg, *et al.*, 2014). Dezo and Ross (2012) posits that women lean towards a more interactive leadership accentuating inclusion, participation and power sharing while men tend towards a less interactive leadership style, one focused on goal attainment with little participation. It follows then that moderate to high gender diversity may have a positive result in the leadership style that the organization adopts which can be a hybrid between the managerial behavioral and leadership propensities of males and the females.

According to Ali, Metz and Kulik (2007) the resource-based perspective holds that a firm can achieve sustained competitive advantage (C.A) by exploiting the valuable, rare, inimitable and non-sustainable (VRIN) resources. Gender diversity is associated with the VRIN resources that are capable of helping the firm to attain a competitive advantage. Ali, *et al.*, (2007) identify these resources including creativity and innovation, improved problem solving and market insight. It follows that a gender diverse workforce has the potential to enhance the team's general market insight as well as creativity and innovation. Darwin and Palanisamy (2015) make this point when they argue that a diverse workgroup brings different experiences, skills set and insights that enhance overall team performance which promote the performance of the organization.

Studies have found diversity to be a strategic source for the attainment of competitive advantage. For instance, Raza, Ishtiaqi, Kanwal, Butt & Nawaz (2013) found that gender, education, cultural and age diversities has a positive influence on the organizational competitive advantage. According to Darwin and Palanisamy (2015), some studies have found that mixed gender groups are perform more effectively than same gender groups. In this sense, it is arguable that gender diversity does accrue competitive advantages to firms that are more diverse in the gender composition of their workforce than firms that have a more homogeneous gender workforce. Ali, *et al.*, (2007) looks at gender diversity and decision-making and contends that gender diversity enhances organization's C.A by facilitating the making of quality decisions.

A more gender diverse workforce brings to the firm a spectrum of perspectives, skills and knowledge that an organization can tap into and base its strategic goals up (Ali, *et al.*, 2013). Such a spectrum of perspectives is indispensable when it comes to decision making, and the resultant quality and informed decision accord the firm a competitive advantage when it comes to market analysis and determining a working business strategy.

CONCLUSION

Gender diversity enhances employees' overall creativity and innovation because of the combination of different skills, perspectives and backgrounds (Egan, 2005). In addition a gender-diverse workforce can produce high quality decisions because men and women bring different perspectives leading to varied alternatives (Rogelberge&Rumery, 1996). Empirical research supports the argument that gender diversity is positively linked to an organization's performance. McMillan-Capehart (2003) used the resource-based view of the firm to argue that gender diversity at the management and organizational levels can provide a firm with a competitive advantage. Therefore, this study concludes that gender diversity significantly influences organizational performance of hotels in South- South, Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion above, the following recommendations are hereby made:

i. Organizations should endevour to remove every subtle obstacle that hinders women from climbing up the managerial ladder. All forms of organizational practices and processes which create difficulties and limitations for women attaining the highest position of their particular field must be effectively removed.

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