

WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND ITS IMPACT ON EMPLOYEES PERFORMANCE IN COMMERCIAL BANKS IN NEPAL

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ABSTRACT

Workforce diversity means the heterogeneous composition of employees of an organisation in terms of age, gender, language, ethnic origin, education, marital status, etc. Managing such diversity is essential to add value to an organisation. If workforce diversity is handled correctly, it will give positive benefits. If not addressed correctly, it could lead to negative results. This study aims to analyse the impact of workforce diversity on employees' performance in Nepalese commercial banks. This study used a self-administered question to collect the different views regarding the workforce diversity of employees from a bank. Out of 27 commercial banks are operating, and 20 are taken as sample banks. Altogether 125 questionnaires were distributed among the employees and returned 99 questionnaires, which indicates a 79.2% sample size of respondents for the study. The empirical relationship of gender, age, education, and ethnicity was computed using the Software Package for Social Science (SPSS). The finding results of the study concluded that all the four workforce diversity variables are positively associated with the performance of the employees in a commercial bank. Thus, the bank has to manage workforce diversity to enhance the performance of the employees.

Keywords: Gender diversity, Age diversity, Education diversity, Ethnic diversity, Employee performance.

INTRODUCTION

Today's banking and corporate sectors must cope with a wide range of diversity. Diversity refers to gender, age, religion, language, personality, education, culture, social standing, and other differences between employees working in an organization. In addition, workforce diversity in an organization is the differences in employees' demographic, cultural, and personal qualities. Age, gender, race, education, religion, and culture are just some of the differences that affect a task or relationship within an organization (Carrell (2006). Workforce diversity refers to when members of a group or organization vary in age, size, colour, immigration status, and educational achievement. The workforce is more diversified than previous generations (Erasmus, 2007). Globalization, an ageing population, women and minorities in many occupations, knowledge-based professions, work teams, remote employment, and part-time or temporary workers have all contributed to a diverse workforce. (Agrawal, 2016; Adhikari & Shrestha, 2019)

According to Choi (2007), diversity leads to synergistic effectiveness because representatives from different organizations can value and understand each other's experiences, talents, and perspectives. The workforce composition affects employee production (Khan et al., 2019). Many

businesses, including banks, prioritize managing employee diversity to maximize employee efficiency and productivity. The banking industry is expanding rapidly (Khan& Ullah, 2021). In Nepal's service industry, commercial banks are the dominant player. It contributes 18% of GDP to the nation. Due to globalization and liberalization, the use of information technology, and mergers and acquisitions, the current banking industry has undergone significant reforms, resulting in substantial changes in the working environment of Nepalese commercial banks. As a result, the banking industry's rapid expansion has created many issues, including workforce diversity. However, this is a natural occurrence that can positively and negatively affect a company's success, depending on how well it is managed. Organizational capital has long been thought to be the foundation of a company's success because it can spark organizational excellence while still ensuring the highest standard of business success (Kyalo & Gachunga, 2015). The literature revealed that only a few studies on a similar topic in Nepalese commercial banks had been conducted in recent years. The researcher believes that a study on workforce diversity and employee performance is essential to perform in the current situation. This study investigates how workforce diversity impact employees' performance in terms of gender, age, education, and ethnicity in commercial banks

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In today's banking industry, workforce diversity is a critical concern. The study focuses on the impact of workforce diversity on employees' performance in a bank. Employees would appreciate all of the good benefits such as motivation, knowledge and skill transfer, creativity, and better decision making in an organization for the organization's success when the organization has a favourable environment condition for exercising workforce diversity (Amaram, 2007). Similarly, suppose workforce diversity is not handled appropriately. In that case, diverse groups can form in an organization, leading to miscommunication, emotional problems, a power struggle among employees, and, eventually, high employee turnover (Jackson et al., 1991; William and O'Reilly, 1998; Jehn, 1995). Apart from those mentioned above, most workforce diversity studies were conducted outside of Nepal, with the majority of them focusing on manufacturing companies and secondary schools (Selvaraj, 2015; Shifnas & Sutha, 2016).

Furthermore, the study of the elements that may influence employee performance has not given adequate attention to workforce diversity (Beziibwe, 2015). To achieve excellent work performance in an organization, today's Nepalese commercial bank has demonstrated wide variety in the workplace in terms of gender, age, education, linguistic culture, and ethnicity. Nepalese banks have also played a significant role in developing the financial sector. The banking sector is essential to the growth of a country's economy. Thus, this study analyses the impact of workforce diversity on employees' performance in Nepalese commercial banks, taking into account the effect of gender, age, education, and ethnic diversity on employee performance.

2.1 Research Questions:

The research questions are as follows:

- a) Does it relationship between gender diversity and employees performance in a bank?

- b) Does it relationship between age diversity and employees performance in a bank?
- c) Does it relationship between education diversity and employees performance in commercial banks in Nepal.
- d) What are the impact of workforce diversity and employees performance in a bank?

2.2 Objectives of the Study:

The main objective of the study are:

- a) To investigate the relationship between gender diversity and employees performance in a bank?
- b) To examine the relationship between age diversity and employees performance in a bank?
- c) To identify the relationship between education diversity and employees performance in a bank?
- d) To analyze the relationship between workforce diversity and employees performance in a bank?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Workforce diversity refers to how age, gender, colour, education, religion, and culture influence employee performance in the workplace. Workplace diversity refers to various distinctions among employees, including race, gender, ethnic group, age, personality, cognitive style, tenure, organizational role, education, and background Greenberg (, 2004). Jonathan, David, and Aparna (2004) researched workforce diversity and concluded that variety could be helpful or damaging depending on the employee's performance. Employee performance can be positively correlated with diversity by promoting creativity, innovation, and improved decision-making, or adversely correlated with variety by causing conflict, decreased cohesiveness, and a lack of cooperation in the workplace (Timmermans, B et al., 2011). However, many studies have demonstrated that firms with solid diversity management may build fair corporate cultures with new viewpoints, innovative capabilities, and fresh ideas, all of which are critical for success.

3.1 Diversity of Gender:

Gender diversity is one of the most influencing variables in an organization's positive or poor job performance. It is considered the most influencing factor directly linked to the level of performance. Male or female employees are classified as gender diversity in the workplace. Using a resource-based approach, McMillan-Capehart (2003) and Frink et al. (2003) investigated the favourable effect of gender diversity on organizational performance. Gender diversity has been demonstrated to negatively affect group performance outcomes when the sample size is male-dominated, but no results when the sample size is female dominant in research (Pelled, 1997). According to Gupta (2013), a moderate level of gender diversity improves competitive advantage, but a more significant level of gender diversity lowers organizational performance. Powell (2011) discovered that gender is the biological inference of a person's gender. Gender diversity research focuses on how people perceive men and women

differently. Individuals' reactions to other people's behaviour in the workplace or any other group coalition are influenced by gender differences, prejudices and discrimination all reflect gender differences. If gender concerns are identified, discussed, and addressed, diversity in the workplace will be helpful (Ullah, 2020).

3.2 Age Diversity:

Workplace diversity is another factor that can aid an organization's performance. Age diversity in the workplace helps improve the tough decision-making activities because of the different ages of employees. Several studies show that older workers are just as active, engaged, and professional as their younger counterparts (Algahtani, 2013; Barrington & Troske, 2001). According to Williams and O'Reilly, employees from a diverse age group are more creative, diverse, and energetic than a single age group (1998). Businesses are underutilizing the talents of older workers due to misconceptions and stereotypes that they are more expensive, more prone to health issues, unable to adapt to workplace changes and new technology, perform poorly in comparison to younger workers, and provide a poor return on training investment (Taylor, 2003; Davey, 2006; Davey and Cornwall, 2003; McGregor and Gray, 2002). There is no significant relationship between an employee's age and performance (Ilmarinen 2005).

3.3 Education Diversity:

All personnel at a company need to be well-educated. Because different personnel have diverse educational backgrounds, education diversity in an organization aids in performing various tasks in a systematic order. According to Choi and Rainey (2010), a higher productivity level is fueled by a higher percentage of qualified employees. According to Emiko and Eunmi (2009), a person's productivity is determined by their level of education. Workers would have a solid educational background as a result of this.

3.4 Ethnic Groups Diversity:

The difference in ethnic diversity facilitates problem-solving from various racial perspectives, which leads to enhanced team productivity in an organization (Zgourides, John, and Watson, 2002). Because of the options for learning, ethnically diverse civilizations are more imaginative and thrive (Garen, 2003). Ethnic diversity in the workforce may be beneficial or harmful to businesses, according to Dastane and Eshegbe (2015). It may be helpful if ethnic variety is valued and managed appropriately, and vice versa. A diverse workforce may contribute to the organization's increased creativity and innovation, which improves performance (Van Knippenberg, Van Ginkel & Homan, 2013).

3.5 Employees Performance:

"The successful fulfilment of one's obligations to achieve sound outcomes," Hashim, Ullah, and Khan (2017) define employee output. It refers to an employee's ability to meet the job's demands. An organization's sound and the healthy worker is usually the foundation for good employee performance. Consider productivity, effectiveness, job quality, and performance evaluation (Kyalo & Gachunga, 2015). Human resource managers feel that effective workforce

diversity strategies are required to boost employee and company productivity (Khan & Ullah, 2021; Shaikh, Channar, & Shaikh, Ullah, 2021).

3.6 Hypothesis:

Compared to a homogeneous team, a gender diverse team makes better decisions (Rogelberg and Rumery, 1996). Based on a resource-based view of the organization, a positive association between gender diversity and employee performance is predicted; however, social identification and self-categorization theory predict a negative relationship (Mohammad et al., 2007). On the downside, gender diversity slows down decision-making (Jackson et al., 2003). According to Kochan et al. (2003), it is critical to give equal job opportunities for women to improve an organization's employee performance. Based on these discussions, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H1: There is a significant relationship between gender diversity and employee performance in a bank.

Older personnel are being used as mentors for younger team members because of their knowledge and experience (Uschi and Stephan, 2013). According to Lazear (1999), organizations may only benefit from age diversity if they can overcome the higher communication costs and challenges associated with their emotional conflicts. According to Williams and O'Reilly III (1998) and Wegge et al. (2008), age diversity positively impacts the organization and work performance. It is suggested that a mixed age group of workers will be more inventive, diversified, and profitable than a homogeneous age group of workers. Based on these discussions, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H2: There is a significant relationship between age diversity and employee performance in a bank.

According to Benschop (2001), cities with a higher percentage of employees with a tertiary degree will encourage people of all levels of education to earn better incomes. According to Daniel (2009), higher education levels may lead to greater workforce mobility. Furthermore, employees' performance would be better if they had a higher level of education (Kumar & Suresh, 2018). Based on these discussions, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H3: There is a significant relationship between education diversity and employee performance in a bank.

Compared to racially homogeneous teams, ethnically diverse groups were proven to make better decisions (McLeod et al., 1996; Watson et al., 1993). Because of complementarities and learning opportunities, multicultural teams foster more creativity and innovation (Lee & Nathan, 2011; Ozgen et al., 2011); However, some studies have found that organizational diversity reduces communication and coordination and increases employee turnover (Lazear, 1999; Morgan & Vardy, 2009). (Jackson et al. 1991). De et al. (2009) concluded that ethnic diversity leads to rejection of heterogeneous group members and poor performance. Based on these discussions, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H4: There is a significant relationship between ethnic diversity and employee performance in a bank.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is conducted on the basis of the following theoretical framework.



Figure 1: Workforce Diversity and Employees' Performance

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is used a descriptive research design. This study aims to analyze the impact of workforce diversity on employees' performance at commercial banks. All Employees working in a bank are the target respondents for the survey. This study used convenience sampling techniques and data distributed to the respondents through the structural questionnaire. Currently, 27 commercial banks operate, and 20 are taken as sample banks. Altogether 125 questionnaires are distributed among employees and returned 99 questionnaires, which indicates a 79.2% sample size of respondents. The respondents were asked to provide their opinion on the Likert scale of 1-5, 1- Strongly disagree, 2- Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree, and 5- Strongly disagree. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation (S.D.) and Pearson correlation analysis, are used to analyze the relationship between workforce diversity and employees' performance. SPSS - 25 software is used to calculate the collected data. The demographic profile of the respondents is presented in the following table.

Table 1: Demographic Profiles of Respondents (n = 99)

Respondents	No. of Responses	Percentage
Gender		
Male	58	58.6
Female	41	41.4
Age		
20 - 29	74	74.7
30 -39	23	23.2
40 -49	2	2
Ethnicity		
Dalit	1	1
Janjati	47	47.5
Others	51	51.5
Education		
Bachelor's level	34	34.3
Master's level	64	64.6
PhD	1	1

Department of the Bank		
Cash and Deposit	23	23.2
Executive	1	1
Finance	9	9.1
Loan and advance	23	23.2
Marketing	5	5.1
others	38	38.4
Work Experience		
1- 5 years	82	82.8
6 – 10 years	14	14.2
11 - 15 years	3	3

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 1 reveals the number of male respondents is 17.2 % is higher than the number of female respondents. It means that commercial banks have still male-dominated in terms of gender, and the inadequate responses of females may be the unwillingness to participate in the survey. Out of 99 respondents, 74.7 % are between the ages of 20 to 29 years, 23.2% are between the 30 to 39 age group, and only 2% are found between 40 to 49 age. It means young employees are more engaged in the banks. Regarding ethnicity, 1 % is found in Dalit, 47.5 % in Janjati, and the rest of the respondents are in other categories. Likewise, in terms of education, 64 respondents hold master level, 34 are in bachelor's group, and only one respondent is found to be a PhD holder. The employees of the Nepalese bank has to be found a high level of qualification. Twenty-three respondents are located in the cash and deposit section; nine respondents are in the finance department, 38 respondents in others and 1, 5 and 23 participate in executive, marketing and loan and advances, respectively. 82.8 % of the participants found in work experience between 1 to 5 years, 14.2 % in 6 to10 years and the rest are in 11 to 15 years.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

6.1 Gender Diversity:

Table 2: Gender Diversity

S.N	Statement	Mean	SD
1.	This organization offers equal opportunity for males and females in terms of growth and development.	3.99	0.875
2.	Management is committed to helping women in work related to the organization.	3.73	0.855
3.	The evaluation system for success is expected to be higher in men than women.	2.87	1.094
4.	Gender diversity plays a great role in making a corporate image of a bank.	3.45	0.918
5.	The bank hires women for good jobs because they are good listeners.	2.97	1.054
6.	Gender diversity helps to develop the overall performance of the bank.	3.62	0.944

(Source: Primary data generated using SPSS)

Table 2 shows the results of gender diversity in a bank. The employees feel that they have got an equal opportunity for growth and development in a bank, and female employees are found

to be happy with the management team. Additionally, to make an excellent corporate image of the bank, gender diversity plays an essential role and the development of good performance for it. From the survey, participants feel that Nepalese bank hires more female employees than males because they are good listeners. From the survey, an evaluation system for success rate found more in male staff than females in a workplace.

6.2 Age Diversity:

Table 3: Age Diversity

S.N	Statement	Mean	SD
1.	Management includes different age group employees in problem-solving and decision-making processes.	3.47	1.003
2.	Both young and old employees can interact freely with each other in terms of age diversity in our organization.	3.72	0.821
3.	A younger employee takes more risks to make the organization successful.	3.63	0.985
4.	The younger employee contributes more than the older in an organization.	3.43	1.032
5.	There is no conflict in an organization in terms of diversity of age.	3.21	1.043
6.	Employees of different ages are respected and valued in an organization.	3.79	0.848

(Source: Primary data generated using SPSS)

Table 3 reveals the results of age diversity in a bank. Employees feel that to solve the problem and take a necessary decision of the bank, management has included employees on different age groups. The Survey of this study also indicated that young and old employees could exchange their viewpoints in terms of age group. Younger employees are more risk-taking and contribution comparison to the older ones. Age diversity in a bank does not matter in terms of respect and value given to the employees, also found that there is no conflict due to the difference in age group in a bank.

6.3 Education Diversity

Table 4: Education Diversity

S.N	Statement	Mean	SD
1.	Growth opportunity exists for only those employees who have a higher qualification in education.	3.31	0.996
2.	Lack of confidence in employees due to the lower level of education.	3.17	1.011
3.	The bank gives equal treatment to all employees in terms of diversity of educational background.	3.23	0.956
4.	The organization assigns the different tasks to the staff based on their qualification.	3.24	1.060
5.	Employee qualification is also the key factor for the growth and development of the organization.	4.15	0.705
6.	A high level of qualification staff deals better with customers in a bank than the low level.	3.30	1.102

(Source: Primary data generated using SPSS)

Table 4 shows the results of education diversity in a bank. Employees feel that having higher education have a good chance of growth opportunity. Different job assignments to the employees in a bank are also based on the qualifications. Work confidence is very important in a job, so participants feel that a low level of qualification of education declines the confidence in employees. Bank treats equal treatment to all the employees in a workplace even though they came from a different educational background and also agree that higher employee qualification is also one of the key factors for the growth and development of a bank.

6.4 Ethnic Diversity

Table 5: Ethnic Diversity

S.N	Statement	Mean	SD
1.	The ethnic diversity group is most likely to solve a complex problem in a bank.	3.37	0.852
2.	Ethnic diversity creates a variety of perspectives related to the development of the bank.	3.55	0.773
3.	The ethnic diversity group affects the performance of employees.	3.28	0.846
4.	The bank treats equally to all employees even there came from a different ethnic group.	3.95	0.896
5.	The ethnic diversity group generally improves the quality of decision making.	3.38	0.792
6.	The professional relationship between employees is not affected by the diversity of the ethnic group.	3.79	0.918

(Source: Primary data generated using SPSS)

Table 5 reveals the results of ethnic diversity in a bank. Respondents agree that a bank's complex problem can be solved by the diversity of the ethnic group and creates a variety of perspectives related to the development of a bank. Performance of employees and improves the quality of decision making are also affected by the ethnic diversity group. Further, the study shows that bank treats equally all employees even though there come from the different ethnic group and also feel that professional relationship between employees is not affected by ethnic diversity.

CORRELATION ANALYSIS

7. Table 6: Pearson Correlation between Gender and Employees Performance

		Gender	Employee Performance
Gender	Pearson Correlation	1	0.584**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	99	99
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	0.584**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	99	99

(Source: Primary data generated using SPSS)

Table 6 shows the Pearson correlation between gender and employees' performance. There is a positive relationship (0.584) between gender and the performance of the employees. The value of the correlation coefficient (0.584) falls in the range of 0.50 to 0.70, which is interpreted as a

"moderate positive correlation". The significance of the relationship is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Thus, an alternative hypothesis is accepted, that is H1. So, there is a moderate positive significant relationship between gender and performance of the employees, which agrees with the findings discussed with McMillan-Capehart (2003) and Frink et al. (2003).

Table 7: Pearson Correlation between Age Group and Employees Performance

		Age group	Employee Performance
Age group	Pearson Correlation	1	0.738**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	99	99
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	0.738**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	99	99

(Source: Primary data generated using SPSS)

Table 7 shows the Pearson correlation between age group and employees' performance. There is a positive relationship (0.738) between the age group and the performance of the employees. The value of the correlation coefficient (0.738) falls in the range of 0.70 to 0.90, which is interpreted as a "high positive correlation". The significance of the relationship is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Thus, an alternative hypothesis is accepted, that is H1. So, there is a high positive significant relationship between age group and performance of the employees, which agrees with the findings discussed with Williams & O'Reilly III (1998) and Wegge et al. (2008).

Table 8: Pearson Correlation between Education and Employees Performance

		Education	Employee Performance
Education	Pearson Correlation	1	0.703**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	99	99
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	0.703**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	99	99

(Source: Primary data generated using SPSS)

Table 8 shows the Pearson correlation between education and employees' performance. There is a positive relationship (0.703) between education and the performance of the employees. The value of the correlation coefficient (0.703) falls in the range of 0.70 to 0.90, which is interpreted as a "high positive correlation". The significance of the relationship is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Thus, an alternative hypothesis is accepted, that is H1. So, there is a high positive significant relationship between education and performance of the employees, which agrees with the findings discussed with Daniel (2009).

Table 9: Pearson Correlation between Ethnic Group and Employees Performance

		Ethnic Group	Employee Performance
Ethnic Group	Pearson Correlation	1	0.739**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	99	99
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	0.739**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	99	99

(Source: Primary data generated using SPSS)

Table 9 shows the Pearson correlation between ethnic groups and employees' performance. There is a positive relationship (0.739) between ethnic groups and the performance of the employees. The value of the correlation coefficient (0.739) falls in the range of 0.70 to 0.90, which is interpreted as a "high positive correlation". The significance of the relationship is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Thus, an alternative hypothesis is accepted, that is H1. So, there is a high positive significant relationship between ethnic group and performance of the employees, which agrees with the findings discussed with Lee and Nathan, 2011 and Ozgen et al., 2011.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis, the study concluded that male employees are more than females, and the young employees' aged between 20 to 29 are highly engaged in today's banking services. An ethnic group such as Janjati and other caste are also found more in the bank. The bank's management gives more priority to job opportunities that have a higher degree of education. The study also showed that more employees worked in the cash and deposit department. More employees are found 1 to 5 years based on work experience in the bank. There is a positive and significant relationship between gender and employees' performance in the banks. Gender diversity refers to gender equity, gender ratio, female employees, fair consideration of the female in hiring and making promotion based on their task has a significant impact on the performance of employees.

Further, the study revealed a high positive and significant relationship between the age group and employees' performance. Good experience of older employees are better in problem-solving and equal opportunities for training and development of different age group has a vital role in the employees' performance of the bank. Similarly, there is a positive association between education and employees' performance. A high level of education helps employees increase job performance and make good decisions related to the particular subject matter of the organization. Educated employees are important human assets of the organization and have a significant impact on employees' performance of the bank. Lastly, the study concluded that ethnic group has a high positive relationship with employees' performance. Ethnic diversity groups make better decisions, lead to more creativity and new innovative performance due to heterogeneous combination of an ethnic group in a bank.

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