



## **Diversity in the workforce: Benefits, challenges and the required managerial tools for improved staff productivity in secondary schools in Rivers State**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the workforce diversity and its benefits, challenges and the required managerial tools for improved staff productivity in secondary schools in Rivers State. Three research questions and hypotheses guided the study. The descriptive survey design was adopted and the stratified random sampling technique used in selecting the study sample of 132 principals from the population of 400, who responded to a structured questionnaire, tagged: Teaching Staff Diversity Management in the Workplace Questionnaire (TSDMWPO). The questionnaire items were properly validated by experts in the departments of educational management and measurement and evaluation respectively. The reliability index stood at 0.96. In analysing the data, mean scores and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while z-test was used in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Major findings of the study are that: today's principals should be more concerned with managing workforce diversity because it offers both potential costs high value and benefits for educational organizations especially; school principals are constrained with many factors that inhibit the management of secondary school teachers diversity and that they should manage more effectively diverse team whose members have different ages, genders and nationalities or even belong to distinct ethnic or cultural groups using different managerial tools. The study concluded that diverse work teams bring high value to educational organizations, therefore respecting individual differences will benefit the workplace, stakeholders in education should laise with the principals to address the identified challenges on diversity management of teaching staff as principals create a competitive edge using the required managerial tools to increase work productivity. Recommendations are that: (1) The government need to ensure periodic organization-wide employee training on diversity and diversity management to ensure that all organizational members understand and appreciate the role and benefits of diversity in educational organizations and why it should be effectively managed; (2) Principals should implement policies such as conducting various motivational and mentorship programmes to provide staff access to information and opportunities so as to benefit from workplace diversity, (3) The stakeholders in education should join coalitions and partnerships with the principals to face and solve the many challenges of workplace diversity for employee performance in secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Keywords:** diversity, workplace, managerial tools and staff productivity

### **Introduction**

The world we live in today is a global village. Due to increase in trade and investments, transportation and telecommunications technology, people travel from one country to the other for business, jobs and other related activities. In this interdependent global economy, the organizations have to hire an effective and efficient workforce that can handle such competitive environment. Employing diversified workforce is very essential for every organization.

Green, Lopez, Wysocki, Kepner, Farnsworth and Clark (2015) <sup>[1]</sup> buttressed further the above fact that the world's increasing globalization requires more interaction among people from diverse backgrounds. People no longer live and work in an insular environment; they are now part of a worldwide economy competing within a global framework. For this reason, profit and non-profit organizations need to become more diversified to remain competitive. Maximizing and capitalizing on workplace diversity is an important issue for management.

For social service organizations especially schools, the educational administrators (principals) and the supervisors need to recognize the ways in which the workplace is

changing and evolving. This is because the nature of the school's demand that the principals and her team identify the different dimensions of diversity so as to look for ways to become inclusive organizations. These include - from individuals and institutions that function with non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, colour, educational background, religion, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin and or various geographical regions, political opinions or affiliations, caste, physical abilities, parental status, attitude, language, work experience, job classification and or other ideologies (Saxenaa, 2014) <sup>[6]</sup>. Once the school leader recognises that workforce diversity is strength for any educational organization and manages it properly, productivity will increase.

Diversity can be defined as acknowledging, understanding, accepting, and valuing differences among people with respect to age, class, race, ethnicity, gender, disabilities among others (Green, Lopez, Wysocki, Kepner, Farnsworth & Clark, 2015) <sup>[1]</sup>. Similarly, diversity is about who we are, i.e., it is quantitative as it describes the extent to which an organization has people from diverse backgrounds and communities working together for the organization.

Diversity in the workplace should hover around these values – unwavering integrity, passion for innovation, living sustainability, memorable customer interaction/ experience and team engagement. The overarching idea behind diversity management in organizations, therefore, is that all employees need to be afforded full participation in the operations of the organization no matter who or what they are or where they come from. Such participation enables the diverse workforce to thrive, realize their potentials, engage meaningfully in institutional or organizational life and ultimately contribute to the flourishing of self and others (Rudhumbu & Chawawa, 2014) <sup>[4]</sup>. The above definitions, therefore, show that diversity is about differences among people.

Njoku (2018) <sup>[3]</sup> sees managing diversity to mean approaching diversity at three levels simultaneously: individual, interpersonal, and organizational. The traditional focus has been on individual and interpersonal aspects alone. What is new is seeing diversity as an issue for the entire organization, involving the very way organizations are structured. Managing diversity is dealing with the way organizations are managed, and the way managers do their jobs.

Diversity in broad terms is supported by the following concepts: multiculturalism/ education, human beings, employment equity, social justice among others. Important elements embedded in all of these concepts, and purposes or goals common across them all form a foundation for understanding and addressing diversity. Common elements include equality, fair treatment, non-discrimination, inclusion and access. Common purposes or goals include full participation, elimination of barriers to participation, fair and equitable treatment, systems change and attitude change. However, in this study, teaching staff diversity is ingrained in all these concepts mentioned above. It also refers to the differences among the teaching staff with respect to culture, gender, social-economic status, political affiliations, religious beliefs, ethnicity and other human attributes among others.

On the benefits of diversity in the workplace, Rudhumbu & Chawawa (2014) <sup>[4]</sup> enumerated the following: increased organizational flexibility and adaptability making organizations and institutions that implement diversity management to respond to environmental changes leading to improved productivity; improved problem-solving, increased creativity and innovation, increased skill variety and improved organizational reputation leading to increased market share and also achieve mission and vision success.

Similarly, Shaban (2016) <sup>[5]</sup> explains that there are a lot of benefits in managing workplace diversity. These are: increase in the level of efficiency as well as effectiveness in the organization, managing diversity successfully could lead to more committed, more satisfied and better performing employees, which potentially could lead to better financial performance for the whole organization.

Numerous researches and reports confirm the benefits of implementing policies on diversity management. The European Commission, in the Study-Cost and Benefit of Diversity (2003) in Njoku (2018) <sup>[3]</sup> outlines the five most significant advantages that organizations/companies with active diversity policies derive:

1. reinforcement of cultural values within organizations;
2. enhancement of the organization and or company reputation;

3. attract and retain high-talented people;
4. increase of the employees' motivation and efficiency; and
5. increase innovation and creativity among employees among others.

Managing diversity is a key component of effective people management in the workplace. This will require organizations to review their management practices and develop new and creative approaches to managing people. Positive changes will increase work performance and customer service.

Diversity is beneficial to both employees (staff-teachers) and employers. Although employees are interdependent in the workplace, respecting individual differences can increase productivity. Diversity management in the workplace can reduce lawsuits and increase marketing opportunities, recruitment, creativity, and business image. In an era when flexibility and creativity are keys to competitiveness, diversity is critical for an organization's success (Green *et al*, 2015) <sup>[1]</sup>.

Saxenaa (2014) <sup>[6]</sup> explicitly explains that when organizations actively assess their handling of workplace diversity issues, develop and implement diversity plans, multiple benefits are reported such as diversity stimulates innovation and productivity and creates a world-class culture that can outperform the competition, a multicultural organization is better suited to serve a diverse external clientele in a more increasingly global market, in research-oriented and hi-tech industries, the broad base of talents generated by a gender-and ethnic-diverse organization becomes a priceless advantage. Creativity thrives on diversity; employees from diverse backgrounds bring individual talents, communicate varying points of view and experiences in suggesting ideas that are flexible in adapting to fluctuating markets and customer demands, and a diverse collection of skills and experiences (e.g. languages, cultural understanding) allows institutions/company to provide service to customers on a global basis.

Since diversity could enhance performance, Shaban (2016) <sup>[5]</sup> notes that however, if adversity is not managed effectively, it could lead to multiple adverse implications. These implications and or challenges could include conflicts, less social cohesion, miscommunication, higher levels of employee turnover and other unintentional effects. Likewise, Njoku (2018) <sup>[3]</sup> states that increased diversity in the workplace generates interpersonal and organizational challenges that require direct managerial attention. Teaching staff in the educational industry must learn to interact with each other as well as new members and the school leaders must learn the art of mediating conflicts between them. These challenges such as using uncommon language in the organization among the employees, not conducting various motivational and mentorship programmes, not keeping channels of communication open among the staff and employers and so on must be addressed by the school leaders (principal) if quality has to be maintained.

Relevant empirical literature reveals that there are challenges to managing a diverse work population. This is confirmed by Green *et al* (2015) <sup>[1]</sup> that managing diversity is more than simply acknowledging differences in people. It involves recognising the value of differences, stereotyping, combating discrimination, and promoting inclusiveness. School leaders may also be challenged with losses in

personnel and work productivity due to prejudice and discrimination, as well as complaints and legal actions against the school. Negative attitudes and behaviours can be barriers to organizational diversity because they can harm working relationships and damage morale and work productivity. These include: prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination, which should never be used by management for hiring, retention and termination practices (could lead to costly litigation).

Shaban (2016)<sup>[5]</sup> was quick to observe that school leaders have to possess certain values, managerial skills and attitudes in order to manage diversity effectively. Diversity management involves respect, acceptance and acknowledgement that individuals are different and unique from each other. They should develop the correct performance and business-oriented attitudes, correct ethical values, ensure fairness regarding the compensation of the diverse workforce and of course, increase the diversity awareness. In order to increase diversity awareness inside the organization, people have to be aware of the multiple experiences, attitudes and perspectives of others.

In a similar study by Green *et al* (2015)<sup>[1]</sup>, it was observed that effective school leaders are aware that certain skills are necessary for creating a successful diverse workforce as follows:

*The need for school leaders to identify discrimination and its consequences; recognise their own cultural biases and prejudices, must be willing to change the organization if necessary, should focus on personal awareness, their personal biases, develop, implement and maintain ongoing training because a one-day session of training will not change people's behaviours, encourage change, promoting a safe place for staff to communicate and should never be denied necessary, constructive, critical feedback for learning about mistakes and success (p.2).*

The foregoing research evidence shows school leaders recognise that diversity is not about differences among groups but rather, about differences among individuals. Each individual is unique and does not represent or speak for a particular group. Therefore, success mainly depends on the school leaders' ability to appreciate what is best for the education industry based on teamwork and the dynamics of the workplace. They should be able to create a work environment that includes everyone noting that managing diversity is about more than equal employment opportunity and affirmative action.

The researcher's observation coincides with Shaban (2016)<sup>[5]</sup> that a crucial skill or tool that school leaders should have is to be able to communicate with a diverse workforce. A diverse workforce usually has a distinct style of communication, as team members could have different languages, levels of fluency, non-verbal signals through using body language and facial expressions. The members could even differ in the ways of perceiving and interpreting the information. Therefore, to resolve such communication problems, it is extremely crucial that organizational members get educated about differences in ways of communication in order to resolve misunderstandings.

More importantly, school leaders need to gain some skills, as well as the confidence to manage a diverse workforce. Therefore, they need to take some development programmes that could help them in managing a diverse workforce such as equal opportunities awareness training. Additionally, encouraging flexibility is considered a core step in

promoting the management of diversity in an effective way. School leaders as well as staff should learn how to be open to distinct methods of performing tasks.

Available literature on diversity in the workplace indicate that most school leaders should pay close attention to how organizational members are evaluated which is also one of the main steps required to promote the management of diversity in organizations. It is essential that school leaders rely on objective quality indicators of performance, as they are considered to be less subject to bias. Therefore, the performance standards have to be objectively and clearly established, used and effectively communicated on objective criteria without any bias.

Another step that could help in managing diversity effectively according to Shaban (2016)<sup>[5]</sup> is through empowering staff to challenge discriminatory behaviours, actions and remarks. This means that if school leaders or teaching staff found any organizational member being unfairly treated, they should speak up in order to rectify the situation. School leaders can achieve this by creating an organizational culture that has zero-tolerance for discrimination.

### Statement of the Problem

The increasing number of collaborations, partnerships, mergers, joint ventures and strategic alliances that is bringing people from district cultures and types to teach in educational institutions especially secondary schools is worth commending. As a result, the principals must be concerned with managing diversity in their institutions. Disturbingly, even though, research reports show growing recognition of the importance of workplace diversity in all types of organizations, the secondary school level is yet to achieve this. Due to the diversified workforce in secondary schools, the principals are facing a lot of problems at the workplace. The lapses observed on the part of the principals to address critical areas of diversity that affects teaching staff such as multicultural education, equity, human rights, social justice among others must be looked into the bring about quality results altogether. If diversified workforce which is the latest and current trend in every organization today is properly embraced and is brought to bear on secondary schools, it will yield endless positive results that will lead to productivity.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to discuss the benefits of managing diversity among teaching staff in secondary schools, to identify the challenges inhibiting secondary school teachers' diversity management and to investigate the required managerial tools for managing teachers' diversity to improve productivity in secondary schools in Rivers State.

### Research Questions

The following research questions were used in investigating the problems already identified:

1. What are the benefits of workplace diversity management among teaching staff in secondary schools in Rivers State?
2. What are the challenges inhibiting teachers' diversity management for enhanced performance in secondary schools in Rivers State?
3. What are the required managerial tools for managing

teachers’ diversity for improved productivity in secondary schools in Rivers State?

**Hypotheses**

**The following hypotheses were tested in the study**

1. There is no significant difference between urban and rural principals on the benefits of workplace diversity management among teaching staff in secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference between urban and rural principals on the challenges inhibiting teachers’ diversity management for enhanced performance in secondary schools in Rivers State.
3. There is no significant difference between urban and rural principals on the required managerial tools for managing teachers’ diversity for improved productivity in secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Theoretical Framework**

One multiple leadership theory that was used in this study is the Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX) by Lunenburg (2010). This theory could help in managing workplace diversity management in order to increase the level of efficiency as well as effectiveness in the organization. It requires a leader to guide the whole group in a productive and common direction and align the team members’ efforts. It is the responsibility of team leaders to delegate tasks appropriately which means that they need to know each team member’s likes, dislikes, strengths and weaknesses. This could be achieved through open communication. The LMX theory is concerned with what is known by the dyad, which is the relationship between a leader and each subordinate independently rather than the relationship between the leader and the whole team. The LMX highlights the importance to recognize the existence of all employees (staff) groups as a team.

The relevance of the LMX theory to this study is that teaching staff will have a higher level of productivity when there is improved relationship, interaction, motivation, job satisfaction and when the diverse groups work as a team. Therefore, the LMX theory allows leaders to invest in more

resources on members who are performing well. This will definitely increase the efficiency of the team. The LMX theory is related to positive outcomes for the organization. The theory is related to organizational commitment, innovation, distributive justice and career progress. Since the LMX theory promotes distributive justice, as the principles outlined in the theory that explains how they should evaluate all members without bias, it serves as good reminder for leaders to be equal and fair in how they approach each of their followers. Therefore, it warns leaders to avoid all biases regarding race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age among others.

**Research Methodology**

The research design was a descriptive survey. Answers were sought to research questions and the hypotheses tested for results. The population of the study was four hundred (400) principals in public secondary schools in Rivers State. The stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting the sample of one hundred and thirty-two (132) principals (88 urban and 44 rural) from the population. The instrument for gathering data using a four (4) point Likert scale called: Teaching Staff Diversity Management in the Workplace Questionnaire (TSDMWPQ) designed by the researcher after the modified Likert scale model and which had its reliability index established at 0.92.

The instrument had two major sections A and B. A contained the personal data (demographic variables) of the respondents while B delved into the major variables of the study – the benefits, challenges and the required managerial tools for managing teachers’ diversity for improved productivity in secondary schools in Rivers State. For answering the research questions, mean and mean sets of individual items were used while the critical ratio test was performed and used in testing the hypotheses.

**Results**

**Research Question 1**

What are the benefits of workplace diversity management among teaching staff in secondary schools in Rivers State?

**Table 1:** Mean and mean sets of urban and rural principals’ opinion on the benefits of workplace diversity management among teaching staff in secondary schools in Rivers State.

S/N	Items Benefits Variable	$\bar{x}_1$	$\bar{x}_2$	$\bar{x}$	$\bar{x}$	Remark
1.	Reduce lawsuits.	3.05	3.02	3.04		High agreement
2.	Reinforcement of cultural values within institutions.	3.11	3.01	3.06		High agreement
3.	Enhancement of the institution’s reputation.	2.94	3.00	2.97		High agreement
4.	Attraction and retainment high-talented people.	3.14	3.10	3.12		High agreement
5.	Increase motivation for teaching staff and efficiency as well as effectiveness.	2.84	2.96	2.90		High agreement
6.	Increase innovation and creativity among staff.	3.00	3.04	3.02		High agreement
7.	Diversity lead to more committed, more satisfied and better performing teaching staff.	3.06	3.01	3.04		High agreement
8.	Increase in organizational flexibility and adaptability.	3.05	3.07	3.06		High agreement
9.	Improve problem – solving.	3.04	2.92	2.98		High agreement
10.	Increase skill variety.	3.02	3.04	3.03		High agreement
11.	Achieve mission and vision success.	3.04	3.06	3.05		High agreement
	Aggregate Mean	3.12	3.05	3.05		

**Legend Scale**

$\bar{x}_1$  =Mean (Urban Principals)  $\bar{x}_1, \bar{x}_2, \bar{x}, \bar{x}$  1.00-1.49: Very low agreement

$\bar{x}_2 =$  (Rural Principals)  $\bar{x}_1, \bar{x}_2, \bar{x}, \bar{x}$  1.50-2.49: Low agreement  
 $\bar{x}_1, \bar{x}_2, \bar{x}, \bar{x}$  2.50-3.49: High agreement

$\bar{x}$   $\bar{x}$  = Mean Sets  $\bar{x}_1$ ,  $\bar{x}_2$ ,  $\bar{x}$   $\bar{x}$  3.50-4.00: Very high agreement

Table 1 shows that urban and rural principals have a high agreement on all the benefits of workplace diversity management among teaching staff in secondary schools examined and high agreement confirm that these benefits listed above are the best ways urban and rural principals bring high value to the institutions and create a fair and safe environment where everyone has access to opportunities. In

summary, urban and rural principals have high agreement on the benefits of workplace diversity management in secondary schools for it offers both potential costs and benefits for educational organizations especially.

**Research Question 2**

What are the challenges inhibiting teachers’ diversity management for enhanced performance in secondary schools in Rivers State?

**Table 2:** Mean and mean sets of urban and rural principals’ opinion on the challenges inhibiting teachers’ diversity management for enhanced performance.

S/N	Items Challenges Variable	$\bar{x}_1$	$\bar{x}_2$	$\bar{x}$ $\bar{x}$	Remark
12.	Lack of awareness and information in diversity management in the workplace and quality tools.	1.49	1.20	1.35	Very low agreement
13.	Interpersonal and organizational challenges.	1.51	1.55	1.53	Low agreement
14.	Conflicts among and between staff.	1.50	1.54	1.52	Low agreement
15.	Inadequate training on motivational and mentorship programmes for staff.	1.39	1.46	1.43	Very low agreement
16.	Poor communication between departments, staff and within the staff.	1.58	2.01	1.80	Low agreement
17.	Negative attitudes and behaviours exhibited are barriers to organizational diversity.	1.56	1.49	1.53	Low agreement
18.	Lack of commitment by staff.	1.53	1.59	1.56	Low agreement
	Aggregate Mean	1.51	1.55	1.53	

\* **The legend and scale for Table 1 apply.**

Table 2 shows that urban and rural principals have both very low agreements in two (2) and low agreements in five (5) (seven challenges in all) examined – lack of awareness and information in diversity management in the workplace and quality tools (mean scores 1.49 and 1.20 for urban and rural principals respectively); interpersonal and organizational challenges (mean 1.51 and 1.55); conflicts among and between staff (mean 1.50 and 1.54); inadequate training on motivational and mentorship programmes for staff (mean 1.39 and 1.46); poor communication between departments, staff and within the school (1.58 and 2.01); negative attitudes and behaviours exhibited are barriers to organizational diversity (mean 1.56 and 1.49) and lack of

commitment by staff (mean 1.53 and 1.59) respectively. These are prime justification of how these inhibitors affect both urban and rural secondary school principals (see mean scores and interpretation in table 2). In summary, school principals show both very low and low agreement on the challenges inhibiting teachers’ diversity management for enhanced performance. By implication, school leaders are constrained with many factors that inhibit effective management of secondary school teachers’ diversity.

**Research Question 3**

What are the required managerial tools for managing teachers’ diversity for improved productivity in secondary schools in Rivers State?

**Table 3:** Mean and mean sets of urban and rural principals’ opinion on the required managerial tools for managing teachers’ diversity for improved productivity

S/N	Items Managerial Tools Variable	$\bar{x}_1$	$\bar{x}_2$	$\bar{x}$ $\bar{x}$	Remark
19.	Develop the correct performance and business-oriented attitudes.	3.52	3.56	3.54	Very high agreement
20.	Correct ethical values.	3.50	3.52	3.51	Very high agreement
21.	Have constructive, critical feedback for learning about mistakes and successes.	3.51	3.62	3.57	Very high agreement
22.	Develop effective communication skills with all staff.	3.60	3.60	3.60	Very high agreement
23.	Have confidence to manage the teaching staff.	3.54	3.51	3.53	Very high agreement
24.	Take some development programmes such as equal opportunities awareness training for updating themselves for the school tasks.	3.64	3.67	3.66	Very high agreement
25.	Flexibility.	3.58	3.66	3.62	Very high agreement
26.	Pay close attention to how organizational members are evaluated.	3.53	3.51	3.52	Very high agreement
27.	Create an organizational culture that has zero tolerance for discrimination.	3.67	3.62	3.65	Very high agreement
	Aggregate Mean	3.57	3.59	3.58	

\* **The legend and scale for Table 1 apply.**

Table 3 shows that principals have very high agreement on the fact that there is no single recipe for success. It mainly depends on the principal’s ability to use the best managerial tools that will yield best results for the institution based on teamwork and the dynamics of the workplace. In summary, the principals recorded very high agreement on the required managerial tools for managing teachers’ diversity for

improved productivity.

**Hypothesis 1**

There is no significant difference between urban and rural principals on the benefits of workplace diversity management among teaching staff in secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Table 4:** Comparison of urban and rural principals on the benefits of workplace diversity among teaching staff in secondary schools.

Categories	N	Scores	Mean	SD	df	C. Crit.	t. crt.	Remarks
Urban	88	300	10.12	11.11	130	0.09	1.990	Not significant (Accepted)
Rural	44	260	11.20	1.52				
	132							

Table 4 shows a summary of scores, means, standard deviations, and critical ratio test of difference between urban and rural principals on the benefits of workplace diversity among teaching staff in secondary schools. The calculated t-value used in testing the hypothesis stood at 0.09 while the critical table value of t. stood at 1.990 using 130 degrees of freedom (df) at 0.05 level of significance. At 130 degree of freedom, at 0.05 level of significance, the calculated value of 0.09 is by far less than the critical t-value of 1.990, hence no significant difference exists between urban and rural principals. Based on the above observation, we accepted the

null hypothesis that, there is no significant difference between urban and rural principals on the benefits of workplace diversity management among teaching staff in secondary schools.

**Hypothesis 2**

There is no significant difference between urban and rural principals on the challenges inhibiting teachers’ diversity management for enhanced performance in secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Table 5:** Comparison of urban and rural principals on the challenges inhibiting teachers’ diversity management for enhanced performance in secondary schools

Categories	N	Scores	Mean	SD	df	C. Crit.	t. crt.	Remarks
Urban	82	280	10.24	12.10	120	0.09	1.990	Not significant (Accepted)
Rural	40	200	11.04	1.51				
	122							

Table 5 shows a summary of scores, means, standard deviations, and critical ratio test of difference between urban and rural principals on the challenges inhibiting teachers’ diversity management for enhanced performance in secondary schools. The calculated t-value used in testing the hypothesis stood at 0.09 while the critical table value of t. stood at 1.990 using 120 degrees of freedom (df) at 0.05 level of significance. At 120 degree of freedom, at 0.05 level of significance, the calculated value of 0.09 is by far less than the critical t-value of 1.990, hence no significant difference exists between urban and rural principals. Based

on the above observation, we accepted the null hypothesis that, there is no significant difference between urban and rural principals on the challenges inhibiting teachers’ diversity management for enhanced performance in secondary schools.

**Hypothesis 3**

There is no significant difference between urban and rural principals on the required managerial tools for managing teachers’ diversity for improved productivity in secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Table 6:** Comparison of urban and rural principals on the required managerial tools for managing teachers’ diversity for improved productivity

Categories	N	Scores	Mean	SD	df	z-value	2-tailed sig.	Sig. level	Remarks
Urban	80	278	3.24	.36	116	1.262	.083	0.05	Not sig. (Accepted)
Rural	38	240	3.33	.35					
	118								

Table 6 shows that at 116 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance, the calculated z-value yielded a z-value of 1.262 which was deemed to be significant at .083. Since this 2-tailed significant value is higher than 0.05 at which the hypothesis is tested, we consider that the difference is not significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis is not rejected. We therefore uphold the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between urban and rural school principals on their extent of required managerial tools for managing teachers’ diversity for improved productivity.

organizations and institutions to respond to environmental changes leading to improved productivity; improved problem-solving, increased creativity and innovation, increased skill variety, achieve mission and vision success among others. For Shaban (2016) [5], managing diversity successfully could lead to more committed, satisfied and better performing employees, which potentially could lead to a better financial performance for the whole organization. Njoku (2018) [3] outlined five (5) most significant benefits/advantages that organizations and or institutions with active diversity policies derive: reinforcement of cultural values within organizations/ institutions; enhancement of the institution’s reputation; attract and retain high-talented people; increase of the employees’ motivation and efficiency and increase innovation and creativity among employees among others. Green *et al* (2015) [1] advised that diversity management in the workplace can reduce lawsuits and that principals should be conscious of the fact that in an era when flexibility and

**Discussion**

It was found out that principals have high agreement on all the benefits of workplace diversity management among teaching staff in secondary schools. This finding agrees with Rudhumba and Chawawa (2014) [4] who enumerated the following benefits that the principals and institutions would enjoy from workplace diversity if implemented: Increased organizational flexibility and adaptability making

creativity are keys to competitiveness, diversity is critical for an organisation's and or institution's success. Saxenna (2014) pointed out that creativity thrives on diversity, therefore, employees from diverse backgrounds bring individual talents, communicate varying points of view and experiences in suggesting ideas that are flexible in adapting to fluctuating markets and customer demands, and a diverse collection of skills and experiences that allows institutions to provide service to customers on a global basis.

The study revealed that principals have low acceptance on the challenges inhibiting teachers' diversity management for enhanced performance in secondary schools. By implication, this means that principals encounter a lot of challenges in diversity management. This study confirmed Shaban's (2016) [5] view that if diversity is not managed effectively, it could lead to multiple of adverse implications such as: conflicts, miscommunication, less social cohesion, higher levels of employee turnover and so on, Njoku's (2018) [3] that increased diversity in the workplace generates interpersonal and organizational challenges that would require direct managerial attention. Green's *et al* (2015) [1] that school leaders may also be challenged with losses in personnel and work productivity due to prejudice and discrimination, negative attitudes and behaviours as well as complaints and legal actions against the school.

Another pertinent finding of the study is that principals have very high agreement on the required managerial tools for managing teachers' diversity for improved productivity in secondary schools. In agreement with this finding, Shaban's (2016) [5] that school leaders have to possess certain values, managerial skills/tools and attitudes in order to manage diversity effectively. They should develop the correct performance and business-oriented attitudes, correct ethical values, communicate freely, have confidence, take some development programmes such as equal opportunities awareness training, ensure fairness regarding the compensation of the diverse workplace and of course, increase the diversity awareness and lastly, empower staff to challenge discriminatory behaviours, actions and remarks in the workplace. Again, principals should be able to create a work environment that includes everyone noting that managing diversity is about more than equal employment opportunity and affirmative action (Green *et al*, 2015) [1].

Another finding of the study is that there is no significant difference between urban and rural principals on the benefits of workplace diversity among teaching staff in secondary schools. These benefits as enumerated by Rudhumba and Chawawa (2014) [4], Shaban (2016) [5], Njoku (2018) [3], Green *et al* (2015) [1] and Saxenna (2014) [6] are: reduce lawsuits, reinforcement of cultural values within institutions, enhancement of the institution's reputation, attracting and retaining high talented people among numerous others.

It was found that there is no significant difference between urban and rural principals on the challenges inhibiting teachers' diversity management for enhanced performance in secondary schools. This finding agrees with Green *et al* (2015) [1] as well as numerous others who outlined so many challenges inhibiting teachers' diversity management which include: negative attitudes and behaviours in the workplace-prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination, which should never be used by management for hiring, retention, and termination practices (could lead to costly litigation). Efforts should be made by all the stakeholders in education to

address these challenges religiously.

There is no significant difference between urban and rural school principals on their required managerial tools for managing teachers' diversity for improved productivity. This is in tandem with Shaban (2016) [5] and Green *et al* (2015) [1] that management tools in a diverse workforce should be used to educate everyone about diversity and its issues, including laws and regulations. Most workplaces are made up of diverse cultures, so institutions need to learn how to adapt to be successful.

## Implications

### There are some implications from this study

1. Lots of benefits abound when diversity in the workplace is properly managed, in terms of cognitive outcomes such as: greater innovation, ideas and creativity that employees from distinct social backgrounds could bring to the organization, productivity will increase.
2. In terms of behavioural and affective outcomes such as more social cohesion, relative peace and higher staff turnover due to employees' perceived similarity, there will be more interactions among staff and teamwork will be encouraged as challenges are faced head long to reduce strifes among colleagues.
3. Diversity in the workplace when properly coordinated using the required managerial tools/skills could lead to organizational commitment, more satisfied and better performing employees, creativity, variety of information as well as increased performance.

## Conclusion

Diverse work teams bring high value to educational organizations, therefore, respecting individual differences will benefit the workplace, stakeholders in education should liaise with the principals to address the identified challenges on diversity management of teaching staff as principals create a competitive edge using the required managerial tools to increase work productivity.

## Recommendations

1. The government need to ensure periodic organization-wide employee training on diversity and diversity management to ensure that all organizational members understand and appreciate the role and benefits of diversity in educational organizations and why it should be effectively managed.
2. Principals should implement policies such as conducting various motivational and mentorship programmes to provide staff access to information and opportunities so as to benefit from workplace diversity.
3. The stakeholders in education should join coalitions and partnerships with the principals to face and solve the many challenges of workplace diversity for employee performance in secondary schools in Rivers State.
4. Required management tools in a diverse workforce should be used by principals to educate everyone about diversity and its issues, including laws and regulations.

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