



WORKFORCE DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEE INNOVATIVE WORK BEHAVIOUR IN A PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANIZATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of workforce diversity management through transformational leadership on employee innovative work behaviour within the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) in Abuja. The general objective was to explore how gender, ethnic, age, and educational diversity impact employee innovation, with a specific focus on the mediating role of transformational leadership. The study addressed some specific objectives such as to examine the effect of gender diversity on employee innovative work behaviour, to investigate the impact of ethnic diversity, and to assess the influence of age diversity. The research questions and hypotheses were framed to explore the extent to which each dimension of diversity affects employee innovative behaviour, with null hypotheses positing no significant effects. A descriptive survey research design was employed, with structured questionnaires administered to 375 FIRS employees. The ample size of 375 employees was determined using Yamane's formula, and a response rate of 98.7% was achieved. Data was analyzed using multiple regression analysis. The combined model demonstrated that workforce diversity explained 31.1% of the variance in employee innovative work behaviour, which increased to 36.6% when transformational leadership was included. These results highlighted that managing diversity through effective leadership enhances creativity, collaboration, and innovative work behaviour among employees. The study contributes to knowledge by highlighting the role of leadership in managing diversity to promote innovation in public sector organisations. It also suggests areas for future research, including exploring other leadership styles and investigating the long-term effects of diversity management on innovation.

Keywords: Behavior, diversity, diversity management, leadership, workforce diversity.

1. INTRODUCTION

Workforce diversity has become a defining feature of modern organizations as globalization, migration, and demographic changes reshape labour markets (Aboagye & Boateng, 2021). In modern organizations, effective workforce diversity management is increasingly recognized as a strategic tool for enhancing creativity, innovation, and organizational performance. Organizations that properly manage diversity, such as differences in gender, ethnicity, age, and educational background are more likely to benefit from a wider range of perspectives, knowledge, and experiences that stimulate innovative thinking among employees. When diversity is supported by inclusive policies and effective leadership practices, particularly transformational leadership, employees tend to feel valued and empowered to generate, promote, and implement new ideas that improve organizational processes and services. Consequently, scholars emphasize that organizations seeking sustainable growth must adopt diversity management practices that foster employee engagement and innovative work behaviour, as innovation has become a critical factor for organizational competitiveness and effectiveness in



both private and public sector institutions (Elamin et al., 2024; Pan et al., 2024; Jankelova et al., 2021).

Despite the recognized benefits of workforce diversity management, many organizations still struggle to effectively harness diversity for innovation. Differences in gender, ethnicity, age, and educational background may create communication barriers, conflicts, and unequal opportunities if not properly managed. Empirical studies indicate that poorly managed diversity can limit collaboration, reduce employee engagement, and hinder innovative work behaviour within organizations (Elamin et al., 2024; Wolor et al., 2026). In public sector institutions particularly, bureaucratic structures, rigid policies, and weak leadership practices often limit the effective utilization of diverse human resources for innovative outcomes. Within institutions such as the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) in Abuja, the workforce comprises employees from diverse cultural, ethnic, and educational backgrounds, yet there is limited empirical evidence on how diversity management practices influence employees' innovative work behaviour. Furthermore, previous studies have examined diversity and innovation separately, while fewer studies have investigated how transformational leadership mediates the relationship between workforce diversity management and innovative work behaviour, especially in the Nigerian public sector context.

If these challenges are not adequately addressed, organizations may fail to fully utilize the potential benefits of workforce diversity, resulting in reduced employee creativity, low innovative performance, and inefficiencies in service delivery. In public sector organizations like the Federal Inland Revenue Service, such limitations could weaken institutional effectiveness, reduce the capacity for policy innovation, and hinder improvements in tax administration and public service delivery. Ultimately, failure to effectively manage workforce diversity may lead to decreased employee motivation, limited knowledge sharing, and poor organizational adaptability in an increasingly dynamic and competitive environment. Therefore, it becomes necessary to investigate how workforce diversity management influences employee innovative work behaviour and the role of transformational leadership in strengthening this relationship within the Federal Inland Revenue Service, Abuja.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine the influence of workforce diversity management through transformative leadership on employee innovative work behaviour within the Federal Inland Revenue Service, Abuja.

Specific objectives are; to:

- i. examine the effect of gender diversity on employee innovative work behaviour in the Federal Inland Revenue Service, Abuja.
- ii. investigate the effect of ethnic diversity on employee innovative work behaviour in the Federal Inland Revenue Service, Abuja.



- iii. assess the effect of age diversity on employee innovative work behaviour in the Federal Inland Revenue Service, Abuja.
- iv. examine the effect of educational diversity on employee innovative work behaviour in the Federal Inland Revenue Service, Abuja.

1.2 Research Hypotheses:

Based on the objectives of this study, the following hypotheses are tested for this study:

- H₀₁: Gender diversity has no significant effect on employee innovative work behaviour in the Federal Inland Revenue Service, Abuja.
- H₀₂: Ethnic diversity has no significant impact on employee innovative work behaviour in the Federal Inland Revenue Service, Abuja.
- H₀₃: Age diversity has no significant influence on employee innovative work behaviour in the Federal Inland Revenue Service, Abuja.
- H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between educational diversity and employee innovative work behaviour in Federal Inland Revenue Service, Abuja.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the relevant literature that underpins this study on workforce diversity management and employee innovative work behaviour in the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), Abuja. It is structured into the conceptual review, theoretical review, and empirical review, followed by a summary of literature. The conceptual review clarifies the definitions and dimensions of the study variables. The theoretical review examines the major theories that explain workforce diversity and innovation, highlighting their relevance to this study. The empirical review synthesizes past research findings globally, regionally, and locally. Finally, the chapter identifies the gaps this study seeks to address.

2.1 Diversity Management

Workforce diversity management is a critical concept that focuses on managing and leveraging differences within a workforce to improve organizational performance. Workforce diversity management refers to the deliberate strategies and practices implemented by organizations to create an inclusive environment where employees from diverse backgrounds such as gender, ethnicity, age, and educational levels can work effectively together (Cox, 1993). Diversity management aims not only at compliance with equal opportunity legislation but also at leveraging differences to drive innovation and improve organizational performance (Shore et al., 2011).

It encompasses a range of differences among employees, including but not limited to race, gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, physical ability, and cultural background. According to Cox (1991), diversity management refers to the organizational policies, practices, and strategies that aim to ensure that all employees, regardless of their



differences, have equal opportunities to contribute and succeed. The concept emphasizes inclusivity, recognizing that diverse perspectives lead to improved decision-making, problem-solving, and creativity within an organization. Cox and Blake (1991) further assert that effectively managing diversity can enhance organizational effectiveness and competitiveness by fostering a workplace that values and integrates diverse talents and perspectives.

In the context of organizational management, diversity management goes beyond simply achieving numerical diversity to focus on creating an inclusive environment where employees from diverse backgrounds can thrive. Thomas (1990) defined diversity as the variety of personal experiences, values, and worldviews that arise from differences of race, ethnicity, gender, and other characteristics. Diversity management, therefore, involves not only attracting a diverse workforce but also cultivating a culture that appreciates and values these differences, ensuring that all employees feel respected and included. This approach highlights the importance of organizational culture and leadership in shaping an environment where diversity can be a source of strength rather than a potential source of conflict or division.

Moreover, workforce diversity management is often linked to strategic human resource management practices aimed at attracting, retaining, and developing talent from diverse groups. In their study, McKay et al. (2007) highlighted that diversity management is a strategic process aimed at fostering an inclusive environment that supports the growth and development of all employees, regardless of their background. This includes providing equal opportunities for career development, addressing unconscious bias, and implementing training programs that promote cultural awareness and sensitivity. McKay et al. (2007) further emphasized that organizations that actively manage diversity are better positioned to adapt to changing demographics and global markets, thereby gaining a competitive edge in their industries.

2.2 Dimensions of Workforce Diversity

Gender diversity

Gender diversity refers to the equitable representation and inclusion of individuals of different genders in the workplace. It refers to the balanced representation of men and women in the workplace (Ali, Kulik, & Metz, 2011). The earliest conceptualization of gender diversity emerged from equal employment opportunity discourse in the 1970s, emphasizing legal compliance with anti-discrimination laws such as Title VII of the U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Kanter, 1977). Kanter's (1977) pioneering work on "tokenism" highlighted how skewed gender ratios affect workplace dynamics.

Age diversity

Age diversity represents the spread of different age cohorts within a workforce (Kunze, Böhm, & Bruch, 2011). Age diversity describes the range of age groups represented within a workforce and their ability to contribute unique perspectives. Early workforce studies treated age diversity



primarily in terms of generational replacement and retirement planning (Rosen & Jerdee, 1976). These early approaches often carried stereotypes about younger employees being more innovative and older employees being less adaptable.

By the early 2000s, the definition evolved to recognize the complementary skills and experiences across generations (Posthuma & Campion, 2009). Today, age diversity is viewed through the lens of multigenerational collaboration, where Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z bring varying work styles, technological familiarity, and cultural perspectives (Ng & Parry, 2016). Each age group brings unique strengths: older employees may offer experience and stability, while younger employees contribute digital fluency and innovation. Ng and Feldman (2010) emphasize that age diversity, when well-managed, contributes to team synergy and knowledge sharing. However, if unmanaged, it may lead to generational misunderstandings or discrimination.

Ethnic diversity

Ethnic diversity refers to the presence of individuals from different cultural, racial, or national backgrounds in an organization. Early conceptualizations, such as Cox and Blake (1991), positioned ethnic diversity within the framework of cultural diversity, focusing on potential conflicts, language barriers, and stereotyping.

By the 2000s, research began emphasizing the innovation potential of ethnically diverse teams, noting their ability to generate varied problem-solving approaches due to distinct cultural frames of reference (Ostergaard et al., 2011). More recent studies highlight that ethnic diversity's benefits depend heavily on inclusive organizational climates that prevent social fragmentation (Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007).

Educational diversity

Educational diversity is the variation in employees' educational qualifications, fields of study, and academic backgrounds within an organization. Early work on this concept was tied to human capital theory (Becker, 1964), which linked educational attainment to productivity.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, researchers like Horwitz and Horwitz (2007) recognized that diverse educational backgrounds could enhance creativity and decision-making by introducing different analytical frameworks. Contemporary scholarship views educational diversity as critical for interdisciplinary problem-solving, especially in complex policy and service environments (Joshi & Roh, 2009).

2.3 Employee Innovative Work Behaviour

Employee innovative work behaviour has become a central concept in organizational research, especially in the context of improving organizational performance and adapting to dynamic and competitive environments. It is defined as the generation, promotion, and realization of novel



ideas within the workplace. Innovative work behaviour is a key factor in driving organizational success. Janssen (2000) emphasized that innovative work behaviour includes both the cognitive process of idea generation and the behaviours associated with implementing these ideas into actionable innovations within the organization. In a rapidly evolving business environment, employee innovation is increasingly seen as a source of competitive advantage that allows organizations to respond to market challenges and enhance service delivery (Scott & Bruce, 1994).

Innovative work behaviour encompasses a range of activities that span from the initial idea generation to the eventual implementation and dissemination of those ideas. The process begins with idea generation, where employees use their creativity to come up with novel concepts or solutions to existing problems (Amabile, 1996). This stage is crucial as it serves as the foundation for the subsequent phases of innovation. Following idea generation is the promotion phase, where employees work to communicate and advocate for their ideas to colleagues, supervisors, or decision-makers within the organization (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010). Finally, the realization phase involves the implementation of these ideas, ensuring that they are put into practice and lead to measurable improvements in organizational processes or products (Janssen, 2000).

The relationship between leadership and employee innovative work behaviour has been a subject of extensive research. Leadership plays a vital role in fostering an environment that supports and encourages innovation. Transformational leadership, in particular, has been shown to positively influence innovative work behaviour by inspiring employees, providing them with intellectual stimulation, and supporting them in taking risks (Bass & Avolio, 1994). In this context, leaders who exhibit transformational behaviours can motivate employees to think outside the box and challenge existing practices, fostering a culture of continuous innovation (Janssen, 2000). This dynamic is particularly relevant in public sector organizations like the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), where leadership can guide employees towards innovative problem-solving to improve service delivery and compliance.

2.4 Theoretical Review

This study was built on transformational leadership theory. The theory was introduced by James MacGregor Burns in 1978, and later expanded by Bernard M. Bass in the 1980s. Burns initially conceptualized transformational leadership in the political sphere, focusing on leaders who could inspire and motivate followers to transcend their self-interest for the collective good. Bass's extension of the theory introduced the idea of transformational leadership within the organizational context, emphasizing the leader's role in driving change, fostering innovation, and enhancing employee motivation and performance through charisma, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation (Bass & Avolio, 1994). The central tenet of transformational leadership is that leaders not only influence their followers to achieve



common goals but also transform their attitudes and perceptions, cultivating a workforce that is more engaged, committed, and innovative.

The assumptions of Transformational Leadership Theory suggest that leaders can and should motivate followers beyond their self-interests, fostering an environment where employees feel empowered to go beyond routine tasks. Bass (1990) posits that transformational leaders work to raise the level of moral and motivational commitment in their followers, encouraging them to contribute more meaningfully to organizational goals. The rationale for the study of transformational leadership lies in its ability to stimulate creativity, facilitate innovation, and drive organizational change. In environments that require adaptability and responsiveness to challenges such as public organizations like the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), transformational leadership is seen as a valuable approach for enhancing employee performance and engagement, particularly in the context of managing workforce diversity and promoting innovative behaviour.

Several scholars have strongly supported the transformational leadership approach due to its positive impact on employee motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational performance. For example, Judge and Piccolo (2004) conducted a meta-analysis and concluded that transformational leadership was more strongly associated with job satisfaction and motivation than transactional leadership. They found that transformational leaders are better at inspiring trust and commitment, thus fostering a more productive and innovative workforce. In the context of workforce diversity, transformational leaders can harness the diverse perspectives of employees by encouraging them to contribute unique ideas and solutions, thereby promoting a more inclusive and creative work environment (Bass & Avolio, 1994). This makes transformational leadership particularly relevant in organizations like FIRS, where innovation and efficiency are critical for improving service delivery and tax compliance.

However, the theory has faced several criticisms. One of the major critiques is the overemphasis on the leader's role as the central change agent, which can inadvertently downplay the contributions of followers and the organizational context in which leadership occurs. Yukl (2010) argues that the focus on the leader's charisma and vision may result in an overly idealistic view of leadership, neglecting the complex, relational, and systemic factors that influence organizational outcomes. Additionally, critics like Northouse (2018) have pointed out that transformational leadership may not be universally applicable, particularly in highly hierarchical or rigid organizations where followers may not have the autonomy to engage in creative or innovative behaviours. Such limitations suggest that transformational leadership is not a one-size-fits-all solution and must be adapted to fit the specific needs of the organization.

The relationship between transformational leadership and workforce diversity management in the context of employee innovative work behaviour is particularly significant. As the FIRS study



aims to examine, transformational leadership can act as a mediator between workforce diversity and innovative behaviour by fostering an environment where diverse employees feel valued and empowered. By encouraging intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration, transformational leaders can ensure that employees from various backgrounds whether in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, or education are able to contribute their unique perspectives and ideas. As such, transformational leadership is essential in managing diversity in a way that promotes inclusivity and encourages employees to engage in innovative behaviours that contribute to organizational effectiveness and problem-solving.

2.5 Review of Empirical Studies

Alshemmari and Al Monawer (2024) conducted a study to analyze the relationship between workplace diversity and innovation and its influence on organizational performance in the Kuwaiti banking sector. Using a survey of 294 managers and employing regression analysis as the methodology, the study found a significant positive relationship between workplace diversity and innovation, which subsequently enhanced organizational performance. The findings revealed that diversity factors such as socioeconomic status and religion particularly influenced innovation and overall performance. The authors concluded that workplace diversity is a critical driver of innovation and a source of competitive advantage for organizations. Based on these outcomes, the study recommended that organizations embrace and effectively manage diversity and inclusion practices to harness innovative potential and improve performance outcomes.

The study's cross-sectional design limits its ability to capture the dynamic nature of diversity's impact on innovation over time. Additionally, focusing on the Kuwaiti banking sector restricts the generalizability of the findings to other industries or geographic regions, and it does not integrate leadership theory in mediating the diversity-innovation relationship. The current study will address the gaps identified in Alshemmari and Al Monawer's (2024) research by using a mixed-methods approach, focusing on a public sector organization, integrating transformational leadership into the theoretical framework, and broadening the conceptualization of diversity to include multiple dimensions. These contributions will offer a more comprehensive understanding of how workforce diversity management, through transformational leadership, fosters innovation in the Federal Inland Revenue Service, Abuja, and will help inform both academic and practical approaches to diversity management in the public sector.

Elamin et al. (2024) conducted a study in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to examine how diversity management influences innovative work behaviour, with a focus on the mediating role of employee engagement. Surveying 120 employees across various service organizations, the study found that diversity management directly impacts employee engagement, which in turn significantly influences innovative work behaviours. Notably, employee engagement fully mediated the relationship between diversity management and innovation. These findings underscore the importance of fostering an inclusive work environment to enhance innovation.



The study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence from an emerging economy context, highlighting the crucial role of diversity management in fostering a culture of innovation. The study does not assess the role of transformational leadership or explore the specific diversity dimensions (gender, ethnicity, age, education) in the Nigerian public sector, limiting its applicability to similar settings like the FIRS. This study will specifically address the gap in Elamin et al.'s work by focusing on the Nigerian public sector, particularly within the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS). It will also consider the mediating role of transformational leadership, which Elamin et al. did not explore, while investigating the impacts of gender, ethnicity, age, and educational diversity on employee innovative work behaviour, addressing the contextual and theoretical limitations.

Tajeddini et al., (2022) investigated the effect of diversity management on employees' innovative work behaviour through human resource management (HRM) practices and affective commitment in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The study employed structural equation modelling to analyze data from 358 employees and found that diversity management significantly influences HRM practices and affective commitment, which in turn positively affect innovative work behaviour. The research emphasizes the mediating role of HRM and affective commitment in the relationship between diversity management and innovation. This study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence from the Middle East and highlighting the mechanisms through which diversity management influences innovation. The current study will address the gap in Tajeddini et al.'s research by focusing on specific diversity dimensions (gender, ethnicity, age, and education) within a Nigerian public sector context (FIRS). It will also include the mediating role of transformational leadership in the diversity-innovation link, something that was absent in Tajeddini et al.'s study, enriching the understanding of how leadership shapes innovation in diverse settings.

Ghasempour et al., (2021) explored the direct and indirect effects of diversity management on innovative behaviour in Iranian universities. The study utilized structural equation modelling to analyze data from 225 respondents and found that diversity management positively influences employee engagement and affective commitment, which in turn enhance innovative behaviours. The research highlights the importance of institutionalizing effective diversity management practices, such as training and promotion, to foster innovation. This study contributes to the literature by addressing the gap in understanding how diversity management impacts innovative behaviour through employee engagement and affective commitment. The study by Ghasempour Ganji et al. (2021) provides valuable insights into the effects of diversity management on innovative behavior in Iranian universities, focusing on employee engagement and affective commitment as mediators. However, the research is limited by its focus on the higher education sector, which may not generalize to other industries or public sector organizations like the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS). Additionally, while the study uses structural equation modelling to analyse data, it does not explore the role of leadership in mediating the relationship



between diversity management and innovation. The current study will address these gaps by focusing on a public sector organization (FIRS) in Nigeria, incorporating a broader range of diversity dimensions (gender, ethnicity, age, and education), and integrating transformational leadership as a mediating variable. This will provide a more comprehensive understanding of how diversity management and leadership jointly influence employee innovative work behaviour, particularly in a developing country context.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted for this study describes the research design, study area, population, sampling technique and sample size, methods of data collection, research instrument, data analysis procedures, and the statistical model employed. These methodological procedures ensure that the study is scientifically rigorous, reliable, and capable of producing findings that address the research objectives.

The study adopts a quantitative cross-sectional survey research design. This design is appropriate because it enables the researcher to collect quantitative data from a large number of respondents at a single point in time, making it suitable for examining existing relationships among variables without manipulating the research environment. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), survey research is effective for gathering information on the characteristics, opinions, and behaviours of a population. The cross-sectional approach further allows the researcher to assess workforce diversity management practices and employee innovative work behaviour as they exist during the period of the study, thereby providing a realistic picture of the prevailing organizational situation.

The study was conducted at the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), Abuja, the headquarters of Nigeria's foremost tax administration agency. Abuja was selected because it houses the organization's central administrative units and supervises operations nationwide. In addition to the headquarters, the FIRS Abuja comprises 30 field offices, making it an ideal setting for examining workforce diversity across different organizational units. The organization employs 5,983 staff members, including top management, middle-level management, and junior employees drawn from diverse educational, ethnic, gender, and professional backgrounds. This diversity provides an appropriate context for investigating the influence of diversity management on employee innovation.

The target population consists of all 5,983 employees of the FIRS Abuja. Since the workforce comprises different categories of employees with varying demographic characteristics, a stratified random sampling technique was adopted. The population was divided into homogeneous strata based on organizational hierarchy, namely top management, middle management, and junior staff. Thereafter, respondents were randomly selected from each stratum in proportion to its size to ensure adequate representation of every employee category. This



sampling approach minimizes sampling bias and enhances the representativeness of the study sample.

The sample size was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula for finite populations at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. Based on the population of 5,983 employees, the computed sample size was 375 respondents, which is considered sufficient for statistical analysis and generalization of the findings.

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed specifically for the study. The questionnaire consisted of four sections. Section A elicited respondents' demographic information such as gender, age, educational qualification, ethnicity, and years of service. Section B measured workforce diversity management dimensions, including gender, ethnic, age, and educational diversity. Section C assessed transformational leadership using indicators such as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, while Section D measured employee innovative work behaviour through indicators relating to idea generation, implementation, and continuous improvement. Responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5).

The validity of the instrument was established through expert review, while reliability was ensured through appropriate reliability testing to confirm the internal consistency of the measurement items before full-scale administration. This process enhanced the credibility and accuracy of the data collected.

Data analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and describe responses to the study variables. Inferential analysis was conducted using multiple regression analysis to examine the influence of workforce diversity dimensions on employee innovative work behaviour and to assess the mediating role of transformational leadership.

The regression model for the study is specified as: $IWB = \beta_0 + \beta_1 GD + \beta_2 ED + \beta_3 AD + \beta_4 EDD + \beta_5 TRL + \varepsilon$

Where: IWB represents Employee Innovative Work Behaviour; GD denotes Gender Diversity; ED represents Ethnic Diversity; AD refers to Age Diversity; EDD denotes Educational Diversity; TRL represents Transformational Leadership; β_0 is the intercept; β_1 – β_5 are the regression coefficients; and ε is the error term. This model provides the analytical basis for testing the study hypotheses and determining the extent to which workforce diversity management influences innovative work behaviour among employees of the Federal Inland Revenue Service, Abuja.



4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.742	.551	.546	.42185	2.031

The results indicate a strong positive relationship between workforce diversity variables and employee innovative work behaviour ($R = .742$). The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = .551$) shows that gender diversity, ethnic diversity, age diversity, and educational diversity jointly explain 55.1% of the variation in employee innovative work behaviour among employees of the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), Abuja. The adjusted R^2 of 54.6% confirms that the explanatory power of the model remains substantial after adjusting for the number of predictors. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 2.031 suggests the absence of autocorrelation among the residuals.

Table 2: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	82.743	4	20.686	116.251	0
Residual	67.566	380	0.178		
Total	150.309	384			

The ANOVA results show that the regression model is statistically significant ($F(4,380) = 116.251$, $p < .001$). This implies that the independent variables collectively have a significant effect on employee innovative work behaviour in the Federal Inland Revenue Service, Abuja.

Table 3: Coefficient

Variables	Unstandardised B	Std. Error	Standardized Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.814	0.173	—	4.705	0.000
Gender Diversity	0.248	0.043	0.276	5.767	0.000
Ethnic Diversity	0.181	0.046	0.192	3.935	0.000
Age Diversity	0.126	0.041	0.149	3.073	0.002
Educational Diversity	0.301	0.045	0.336	6.705	0.000

The multiple regression results indicate that all the dimensions of workforce diversity examined have a positive and statistically significant influence on employee innovative work behaviour in the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), Abuja. Specifically, gender diversity has a significant positive effect on employee innovative work behaviour ($\beta = 0.276$, $t = 5.767$, $p <$



0.001), indicating that improved gender diversity management is associated with higher levels of employee innovation. Similarly, ethnic diversity significantly predicts employee innovative work behaviour ($\beta = 0.192$, $t = 3.935$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that an ethnically diverse workforce contributes positively to innovation. The results further reveal that age diversity has a positive and significant effect on employee innovative work behaviour ($\beta = 0.149$, $t = 3.073$, $p = 0.002$), implying that a workforce comprising employees of different age groups enhances innovative outcomes. Among all the predictors, educational diversity exerts the strongest positive influence on employee innovative work behaviour ($\beta = 0.336$, $t = 6.705$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that diversity in employees' educational backgrounds contributes most substantially to innovation within the organization.

Hypotheses Testing

H₀₁: Gender diversity has no significant effect on employee innovative work behaviour in the Federal Inland Revenue Service, Abuja.

The regression result reveals that gender diversity has a positive and statistically significant effect on employee innovative work behaviour ($\beta = .276$, $t = 5.767$, $p < .001$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that improved gender diversity management significantly enhances employee innovative work behaviour in FIRS, Abuja.

H₀₂: Ethnic diversity has no significant impact on employee innovative work behaviour in the Federal Inland Revenue Service, Abuja.

The coefficient for ethnic diversity is positive and statistically significant ($\beta = .192$, $t = 3.935$, $p < .001$). Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that ethnic diversity contributes significantly to employee innovative work behaviour.

H₀₃: Age diversity has no significant influence on employee innovative work behaviour in the Federal Inland Revenue Service, Abuja.

Age diversity has a positive and statistically significant influence on employee innovative work behaviour ($\beta = .149$, $t = 3.073$, $p = .002$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, suggesting that age diversity significantly influences innovative work behaviour among employees.

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between educational diversity and employee innovative work behaviour in the Federal Inland Revenue Service, Abuja.

Educational diversity exhibits the strongest positive effect on employee innovative work behaviour ($\beta = .336$, $t = 6.705$, $p < .001$). Accordingly, the null hypothesis is rejected. This finding suggests that educational diversity significantly enhances employee innovative work behaviour.



Discussion of Findings

The regression analysis revealed that gender diversity has a significant positive influence on employee innovative work behaviour ($\beta = 0.276$, $t = 5.767$, $p < 0.001$), leading to the rejection of the first null hypothesis. This finding suggests that gender-diverse teams are more likely to generate creative ideas and develop innovative solutions because they draw upon different experiences, perspectives, and cognitive approaches. The result supports the empirical findings of Ali, Kulik, and Metz (2011), who reported that gender diversity enhances organizational innovation when supported by inclusive management practices. Similarly, Cox and Blake (1991) argued that gender diversity improves organizational effectiveness by increasing creativity and problem-solving capabilities. Within the context of FIRS, the findings imply that equitable gender representation encourages knowledge sharing and collaborative decision-making, thereby fostering innovative work behaviour. Consequently, FIRS should strengthen gender-inclusive policies and leadership practices that create equal opportunities for participation and career advancement.

The study further established that ethnic diversity significantly predicts employee innovative work behaviour ($\beta = 0.192$, $t = 3.935$, $p < 0.001$), resulting in the rejection of the second null hypothesis. This indicates that employees from different ethnic backgrounds contribute diverse cultural values, viewpoints, and experiences that enrich organizational creativity and innovation. The finding corroborates the work of Arokiasamy (2013), who found that ethnic diversity enhances innovation through increased creativity and broader knowledge exchange, particularly where organizations promote collaboration and inclusiveness. Likewise, Cox and Blake (1991) maintained that cultural diversity broadens employees' perspectives, thereby improving organizational adaptability and innovation. In a multicultural institution such as FIRS, effective management of ethnic diversity can facilitate cross-cultural learning, improve communication, and generate novel solutions to complex tax administration challenges. However, these benefits can only be sustained when organizational policies promote inclusion, mutual respect, and cultural competence.

The results also indicate that age diversity has a positive and statistically significant influence on employee innovative work behaviour ($\beta = 0.149$, $t = 3.073$, $p = 0.002$), leading to the rejection of the third null hypothesis. Although the effect is weaker than those of the other diversity dimensions, it remains important in explaining innovative behaviour among employees. The finding suggests that combining the experience and institutional knowledge of older employees with the creativity, technological competence, and adaptability of younger employees creates an environment conducive to innovation. This finding is partially consistent with Ostergaard, Timmermans, and Kristinsson (2011), who reported that age diversity contributes positively to innovation, although its influence is often weaker than educational diversity. It also aligns with Dahlin, Weingart, and Hinds (2005), who argued that moderate age diversity enhances creativity through knowledge exchange but may reduce team cohesion when generational differences are



poorly managed. The positive relationship observed in this study may indicate that FIRS has established an organizational climate that enables productive collaboration across generations. Therefore, initiatives such as mentoring programmes, reverse mentoring, and cross-generational project teams should be strengthened to maximize the innovative benefits of age diversity.

Among all the predictors, educational diversity emerged as the strongest determinant of employee innovative work behaviour ($\beta = 0.336$, $t = 6.705$, $p < 0.001$), leading to the rejection of the fourth null hypothesis. This finding suggests that employees with diverse educational backgrounds contribute complementary knowledge, technical expertise, analytical skills, and problem-solving approaches that significantly enhance innovation. The result strongly supports the findings of Ostergaard, Timmermans, and Kristinsson (2011), who concluded that educational diversity improves innovation by expanding the organization's knowledge base and facilitating the integration of diverse competencies. Harrison and Klein (2007) similarly argued that informational diversity derived from educational differences enhances creativity and decision quality, while Dahlin, Weingart, and Hinds (2005) emphasized that educational diversity stimulates knowledge exchange and innovative thinking. Within FIRS, where tax administration increasingly requires multidisciplinary expertise in taxation, accounting, economics, law, information technology, data analytics, and public administration, educational diversity provides a valuable source of intellectual capital that promotes innovative work behaviour. Consequently, management should continue to recruit employees from varied academic disciplines while encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration, continuous professional development, and knowledge-sharing initiatives to sustain innovation across the organisation.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that workforce diversity management significantly influences employee innovative work behaviour in FIRS. Gender, ethnic, age, and educational diversity all positively impact innovation, with educational diversity having the most substantial effect. Transformational leadership serves as a crucial mediator, enhancing the positive effects of diversity on innovation. Therefore, the study highlights the critical role of diversity and leadership in fostering a more innovative and efficient workforce within public sector organizations like FIRS.

The findings also underline the importance of adopting inclusive and strategic diversity management practices that not only aim to increase the representation of diverse groups but also harness the potential of these diverse perspectives to drive innovation. Transformational leadership practices are essential in ensuring that the diverse talents of employees are maximized, leading to better organizational outcomes.

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are made:

- i. FIRS should prioritize gender diversity and inclusive leadership to enhance innovation.
- ii. FIRS should foster an inclusive environment and cultural competence training to leverage ethnic diversity.



- iii. FIRS should recruit from diverse educational backgrounds to foster creative problem-solving.
- iv. FIRS should address generational gaps through mentorship programs to optimise innovation by encouraging mentorship and collaboration across generations to enhance age diversity
- v. FIRS should invest in leadership development programs focused on transformational leadership to unlock diversity's full potential

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