

Minimizing Gender Diversity in the Workplace - A Case Study of the Catholic University Institute of Buea (Cuib) – The Entrepreneurial University

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ABSTRACT

Gender diversity means understanding that the sex that an individual was assigned at the time of birth, usually based on a combination of factors including intersex and sex factors: chromosomes, hormones, primary and secondary sex characteristics including internal and external organs. It is an attempt to rectify unfair treatment toward certain members of the society when the total pool of males and females are overly represented in a given population. Diversity should challenge people to not only be tolerant of others, but to try to learn from them. Each Individual brings diverse perspective, work experience, life style and culture and the strength of diversity is of course a source and driver of innovation, diversity is a “big idea” in University and in the community. Gender diversity in the Catholic University Institute of Buea (CUIB) will help the internal stakeholders i.e. faculty, staff and students to experience and learn from their peers in a way that they have never encountered before as a result of this gender diversity.

Keywords: Diversity, Gender, Gender diversity

INTRODUCTION

Gender Diversity in an organization means, equality and acceptance of both men and women. Also known as “Gender Equality,” infusing this culture in your workplace will surely add value to your bottom line results.

You may have the best of best technology for managing employees, however one area that has always been overlooked within an organization, is examining gender discrimination. Focusing on this becomes important; because the way how you treat your employees will enhance productivity, effectiveness and sustainable competitiveness (www.workhiveapp.com).

While diversity has traditionally referred to categories like race and gender, companies and diversity experts are increasingly considering a wide range of factors from age and sexual preference to disabilities and even weight. Really, it's any way any group of people can differ significantly from another group of people — appearance, sexual orientation, veteran status, your level in the organization (www.npr.org).

In 2010, 70% of the new entrants into the workforce consisted of women. Unfortunately,

even though women's presence in the business world is increasing, the compensation rewards and available success is not. The female lawyers' grievance list reflects the very trends that all women are currently facing in the marketplace. All of the women feel that there is a glass ceiling that is hampering their success. A glass ceiling is an invisible barrier that keeps women from rising above a specific level with a company (www.study.com).

According to Rev. Fr. (Dr) Nkeze George, President of the Catholic University Institute of Buea (CUIB) it's important to understand how these dimensions affect performance, motivation, success, and interactions with others institutional structures and practices that have presented barriers to some dimensions of diversity and which should be examined, challenged, and removed. CUIB knows value and affirm that social diversity contributes to the richness of the Catholic University Institute of Buea community and thus boosts the quality of campus life for individuals and groups, also the university institute take pride in its achievements and celebrate its differences (www.cuib-cameroon.org).

BACKGROUND OF THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE OF BUEA

The Catholic University Institute of Buea (CUIB) South West Region, Cameroon, was approved as a non-profit making university in two separate letters.

The authorization to create CUIB on 09/01/0194 of 11 June 2009 and the authorization to start was signed by the Honourable Minister of Higher Education Prof Jacque Fame Ndongo by decision no 10/02173/N/MINSUP/DDES/ESUP/SAC/NJE/ebm dated 26th of May 2010.

Its primary purpose is to train professional servant leaders with moral and spiritual values so that they may be responsible to their communities. The proprietor/chancellor of the Catholic University of Buea is the Bishop of the Diocese of Buea.

In June 2011, another arm of the University, the Business and Research Park was created as a legal entity of its own by the Cameroon laws no RC BUC.2031-B023 with the name CUIB-Centre for entrepreneurship research and innovation (Atem, 2014).

From the President's message of 2015/2016 academic year, he reiterated that anyone who steps into the CUIB campus will notice that CUIB has a strong sense of community and campus pride. It clearly makes a difference in the lives of students and the surrounding communities in Buea. The students, staff and faculty go out weekly to carryout volunteerism in surrounding communities. Just five years old, the rest of the country has begun noticing its accomplishments through its students who are not only likeable and humble but are strong academically as they can compete with their peers internationally and win internal awards. Examples include, the Tony Elumelu entrepreneurship awards, the Anzisha award etc. The Catholic University Institute of Buea Sport Academic (CUSA), Went operational in December 2014 with authorisation no 1106/G37/C84/VOL II/SAAJP with the main aim of assisting young, talented and excellent skilled Cameroonians in the various field of sport like football, volleyball, basketball, handball etc. (www.cuib-cameroon.org).

LITERATURE REVIEW

GENDER refers to the socially constructed roles for women and men, which are often central to the way in which people define themselves and are defined by others. Gender roles are learned,

changeable over time, and variable within and between cultures. Gender often defines the duties, responsibilities, constraints, opportunities and privileges of women and men in any context. Gender equality refers to the equal enjoyment of rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men, girls and boys. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of each gender are respected.

DIVERSITY refers to different values, attitudes, cultural perspectives, beliefs, ethnic background, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, health, social status, skill and other specific personal characteristics. While the age and gender dimensions are present in everyone, other characteristics vary from person to person. These differences must be recognized, understood and valued by United NHCR in each specific context and operation in order to ensure protection for all people (www.unhr.org).

Diversity aims to recognise, respect and value people's differences to contribute and realise their full potential by promoting an inclusive culture for all faculty, staff and students, thus ensuring individuals or groups of individuals are treated fairly and equally and no less favourably, specific to their needs, including areas of race, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and age (www.ed.ac.uk).

In broad terms, diversity is any dimension that can be used to differentiate groups and people from one another, it means respect for and appreciation of the differences in ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, education, and religion (www.rbc.com).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Veal (2006) indicated that an empirical approach is the collection and analysis of data; it could be quantitative or qualitative, primary or secondary. No research is purely empirical; it is usually informed by some sort of theory or conceptual frame work. Some researchers are of the opinion that a single research method may use both quantitative and qualitative techniques and procedures in combination as well as use primary and secondary data. The quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques and analysis procedure each have their own strength and weaknesses.

For this research work, the researchers used both primary and secondary data that was information collected from the Catholic University Institute of Buea bulletins and other

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University documents and websites. Primary data was collected from oral interviews administered by the office of Human resource management with all the personnel (faculty and staff) of CUIB.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The Catholic University Institute of Buea recruit

its employees based on their competencies and skill, without regard to gender or disability. Figure 1 above shows the numerical strength of its employees according to Divisions in Cameroon with Mezam and Manyu Divisions having 14.38% of the total workers and Nigerians and Italians having 0.63% of the total workers.

Figure1. Strength According to Denomination and Gender Diversity

S/N	RELIGION	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE (%)
01	CATHOLIC	70	36	106	69.74
02	PRESBYTERIAN	21	07	28	18.42
03	PENTECOSTAL	14	03	17	11.18
04	MOSLEM	01	00	01	0.66
	TOTAL	106	46	152	100.00

Source: Office of Exams, Records and Publications (CUIB, 27/09/2016)

Figure 3 above shows the strength of employees of CUIB according to denomination with the Catholic denomination having a greater majority (69.74%) and the Moslem denomination having (0.66%).

LIMITATION

This researcher encountered the following limitation while carrying out this research:

- The researcher could not find enough literature as textbooks concerning this area of study was not available in the University as well as the public libraries.

CONCLUSION

Gender diversity in the workplace has become an increasingly important part of the Business or company as women feel that there is a glass ceiling that is hampering their success and this glass ceiling is an invisible barrier that keeps women from rising above a specific level with a company.

The Catholic University of Buea recruit its employees based on their competencies and skill, without regard to gender or disability. In business, cultural diversity within an organization is considered beneficial to the retention of staff as well as their productivity. It is also likely to increase an organization's flexibility and responsiveness to the diversity of its clients, customers and partners in an increasingly globalized world. Access to a larger talent pool is one of the biggest advantages of having an employment recruitment policy that values diversity.

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