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REVIEW ARTICLE

Acceptance of Mental Health Off Day in Malaysian Job Culture

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Abstract

The work life balance in Malaysian working culture had been showing concerning signs where the lack of the health working culture had triggered the impact on the mental state of the Malaysian employees. In the same direction, the initiative of the mental health off day had been introduced to promote better wellbeing practice within the employees. However, the employers in Malaysia are still having lack of the action into the initiative of the metal health off days due to multiple concerns. Based on the key findings, there is major highlights on the concerns for the employers towards the understanding on the mental health off day initiative which include the productivity impact, financial impact as well as the shift in the expectations for the employees. However, the employees had viewed the mental health off day as strong positive initiatives that could become a game changer for the working culture in Malaysia. It is believed that the mental health off day will become the big step for the Malaysian working culture to move into the positive direction to promote better mental health among the employees. Therefore, the recommendation had been clear where the mental health off day should be supported by employers and employees to provide the positive impact towards the development of the motivation and retention of the employees.

Keywords: Mental health off day; Malaysian employees; working culture; wellbeing

Introduction

The working environment had been very competitive in the jo market not excluding the job market in Malaysia. Malaysia had been voted as one of the highest stress levels at workplace in the working culture which slowly gaining more attention on addressing this issues and concerns (Greenwood & Anas, 2021). This had been contributed by the fact of the lack of work life balance in Malaysia which had becoming the norm in the expectations from the employers. Some of the examples to be addressed include the long working hours, working during off time and lack of guidance in the working environment (Bronkhorst et al., 2015). With this, there is significant input from the employees highlighting the lack of rest obtained by the group of employees raining major concerns for the employees to have good mental health.

The lack of emphasize on the mental health importance had slowly gather more attention among the employers where some of the employers are starting to take initiative to provide additional time off and even off day for the employees to enjoy as part of the recognition on the mental health off day (Elraz, 2017). The mental health off day provide the definition on the additional time provided for the employees to have rest mentally and physically to refresh the mind and body to improve the wellbeing of the employees. This had been crucial for the to maintain the motivation and productivity for the employees to ensure the positive contribution to the workplace.

Despite the increasing initiatives to provide the mental health off day event in Malaysia, the address for the need to provide mental health off day still not being widely organized within the employers in Malaysia as it is still being considered as uncommon practice in the Malaysian working culture (Yu, Park & Hyun, 2021). This had been contributed by the fact where the employers having concerns to lose out in terms of productivity when comes to providing additional day off for the employees as well as the reluctant to provide additional leverage and flexibility for the employees due to the traditional mindset of the Malaysian working culture (Bufquin et al., 2021). With this, the practice of mental health off day is still far being seen to be implemented in the level of employers.

This had lead to the problem statement for the study to further understand the challenges for the employers and feedback for the employees when comes to the initiative of the mental health off day within the organization. This will help the outcome of the study to understand the story from both side of the perspective which include the view from the employers and employees. The research objective had been designed to provide the target study to explore and investigate the recommendation on the mental health off day initiatives for the working culture in Malaysia.

Key Findings

The first highlight will look into the exploration of the development of strategic within the group of employers in Malaysia. To put into the major fact, one of the contributing reasons that lead to the employers to prefer the job market in Malaysia especially from the foreign MNCs had been the high productivity of the employees. This includes the extra miles contributed from the employees becoming the norm and culture in the working environment in Malaysia. Therefore, in the first look the suggestion to provide the flexibility on the off day does not fit he philosophy of the employers which will affect the performance and productivity negatively in an organization.

Despite the concerns on the productivity, the employers also emphasize the highlight on the financial impact. This is because the off day or leave will be directly translated to expenses in terms of salaries and wages when comes to the expenses impact in the income statement. In other words, the initiative of mental health off day which create additional off days for the employees will become a financial burden for the business. In other words, the financial statement recognized this as the cost and expense which create to the concerns to the stakeholders and shareholders on the business performance. In addition, the mental health off day may not be applicable for those that are working on significant roles which does not conveniently allowing off day to happen which will then force the organization to incurred additional overtime payout for the employees. This had significantly drawn the picture to address the co0ncenrs for the employers to take the iniative that will put thei rfinacnail health into further risk.

Moreover, the employers are believed to be having the concerns on the expectations of the employees where the initiative of providing the mental health off day had been targeted to provide the additional time off to create the rest and peace of mind to heal the mental sate of the employees which should be viewed as an additional bonus initiative provided from the employers. However, the leverage provided may ended up becoming an expectations for the employees forcing the employers to shift in the approach in the designation of the benefits for the employees where the question of the mental health off day to become mandatory practice will become very doubtful. The impact may not be affecting the individual organization but also at the job market and culture within Malaysia which will become concerning for majority of the employers to allow this new trend to take over the mindset of the employees.

Shifting the focus to the point of view of the employees, there is different say and opinion from the employees' perspective. The mental health off day had been positively viewed by the employees stating that the additional time off can be used to improve the work life balance for the employees as many countries had been increasing the initiative to provide higher flexibility and work life balance for the employees. For instance, country like Germany had been limiting the employees to work 35 hours per week where the additional hours should be compensate accordingly but not highly encouraged. On the other hand, the working culture in France had make it illegal for the employees to send business emails outside working hours to promote work life balance. With this absence of those similar initiatives in the Malaysian working culture, the mental health off day had been view as the upper hand advantage to provide the alternative to motivate the employees to go further motivating their job with the employers.

Besides, the working culture in Malaysia had been frequently deemed as unhealthy due to the high stress level as well as the long working hours committed by the employees. It is also understood that these expectations had been relay down from the management of the employers to push for higher performance a productivity for the employees. Therefore, his had slowly become the norm within the Malaysia job culture inducing the negative impact towards the mindset of the employees in the working environment. This will eventually lead to the burnout, decrease in motivation and drop in focus when delivering the quality of the roles and responsibilities in the long term. With the high commitment from the employees, the employees viewed the mental health off day not only as the day off to heal their mental but also an additional day off to perform personal duties and family matters due to the miss out in working long hours.

In addition, the mental health off day had been frequently viewed as part of the appreciation from the employers to the employees as the additional time off day provide the meaningful rest time for the employees to have their improvement in terms of the work life balance. This is because that many employers are actually having a hard time to show the appreciation and gratitude to the employees through the communication, but actions speak louder than the words which lead to the mental health off day initiative as part of the action to show evidence towards the employees in expressing the "thank you" for their hard work and contribution to the business. With the special treatment, the employees had also felt being special to become part of the team within an organization leading to not only higher motivation but also increase the retention of the employees.

Conclusion

From here, it had become obvious that the initiative of the mental health off day provides both challenges and benefits for employers and employees. The employers had been supporting such initiative at the first place, but the concerning impacts had put a lot of pressure for the employers to walk the talk to do the implementation of the mental health off day event for the employees. On the other hand, the positive impact towards the employees had no long in doubt where the employees will be improving their mental state with such initiatives but the lack of emphasize, and initiatives provided from the employer's side had led to the high concerns in the working culture in Malaysia. In country like US, the mental health off day had become common among the major MNCs but the similar practice still hardly being felt in the Malaysian working culture. With this, the clear recommendation had been drawn from the outcome of this study where the employers are still being advised to promote the practice on the mental health off day initiative in the job market. This had been triggered by the reasons where there is need of the direct shift into the job culture in Malaysia due to the lack of initiative to induce healthy working culture in Malaysia. The mental health off day could be the very first big step to ensure the Malaysian job culture to move into the positive direction for the future of the employment market.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Investigating Students' Perceptions on using Tech-books in the classrooms

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Abstract
Technology such as iPads has been increasingly popular in classrooms in recent years. Learners are gradually moving away from textbooks and toward digital books on iPads**.** This study lists the pros of learning with iPad learning. Furthermore, it deals with the benefits of using i Pads in the classroom from the students' perspective. To collect data and information for this study, the researchers used both a quantitative and qualitative technique. This qualitative study chose to use a questionnaire that was delivered to the target audience of Qassim university students. The data was then descriptively reviewed, and the majority of those engaged in this survey claimed that they preferred using an iPad in the classroom since it was more convenient and easier to use if a student wants to look for certain information. Nonetheless, a few respondents disagreed and wanted to use the textbook and learn in the usual manner. Some educators, on the other hand, believe it is an elephant in the room. However, I Pads are a solution for all of the untold sufferings of students and would usher us into the ultra digital era if this facility is provided to one and all of the student community irrespective of the countries they reside.

Keywords: Students; perceptions; advantages; tech-books; classroom usage

Introduction

Due to the fear of the Coronavirus Disease (COVID) - 19 pandemic, the year 2020 forced academics to shift to distance education in the blink of an eye. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the education sector must reduce academic freezes and closures for the 2020-2021 school year. Instead, numerous nations have been undertaking a variety of alternative learning techniques and modalities in order to sustain the field of education and continue to provide quality education despite the health emergency situation in accordance with the "New Normal" way of life.(Hipolito, 2022 & Shet, 2022). However no one can deny the fact that technology has become part and parcel of teaching and learning modalities.
Technology in the classroom is a hot topic in education. While some believe technology improves learning, others believe it should not be utilized in place of traditional techniques that they have been acclimated to for many years. Dawadi. (2022) in his study on Audio Visual aids asserts Audio visual aids give pupils with aural and visual experiences that boost learning. In addition, with the use of educational aids, the instructor will additionally be able to pique the students' interest in the subject. thoughts of a pupil and stimulate them to the process of learning. As a result, it is apparent that the resources for instruction are highly motivating supplements to the teaching effective. According to Goodman (1986), the roots of literacy are the processes that generate meaning through reading, writing, and speaking. He continues, "Using I Pad applications to read with or communicate with may facilitate the emergence of literacy stems in a digital culture" (Goodman, 1986: p. 2).
I Pad, as well as mobile phones and laptops and e-books, etc., are the features of advanced education and university technology provision. Experimenters have tried to study pupil literacy and engagement in order to estimate the impact of new educational technologies. Still, it isn't yet obvious that the engagement of technology contributes to the enhancement of pupil literacy.

The case For I Pads

According to a research published by Subramanian (2012), iPads in the classroom do improve students' grades, and those who used the tablet performed better on literacy exams and were more enthusiastic about studying.
Electronic books (e-books) were first made available on the internet by Project Gutenberg in the late 1970s. Since a computer was the only device available at the time that

could read e-books, they were designed to be read on computers alone (Kossey & Brown, 2011). As personal computers became more prevalent in the 1980s, the differences between Specifically, whether people could comprehend information correctly and read material quickly enough from digital media, became a prominent subject of study between reading from paper and reading from computer screens (Ball & Hourcade, 2011).

People were curious to study the perceptions of the individuals, who use them. E-books will not be the death knell for printed books, but rather a bolstering product that will assist the publishing sector in the long run. Consumers might bring an e-reader to the beach or on their commute to work, but nothing beats the real thing when it comes to literature.(*This Survey Shows That People Prefer Printed Books – Even in the Digital Age*, 2021)

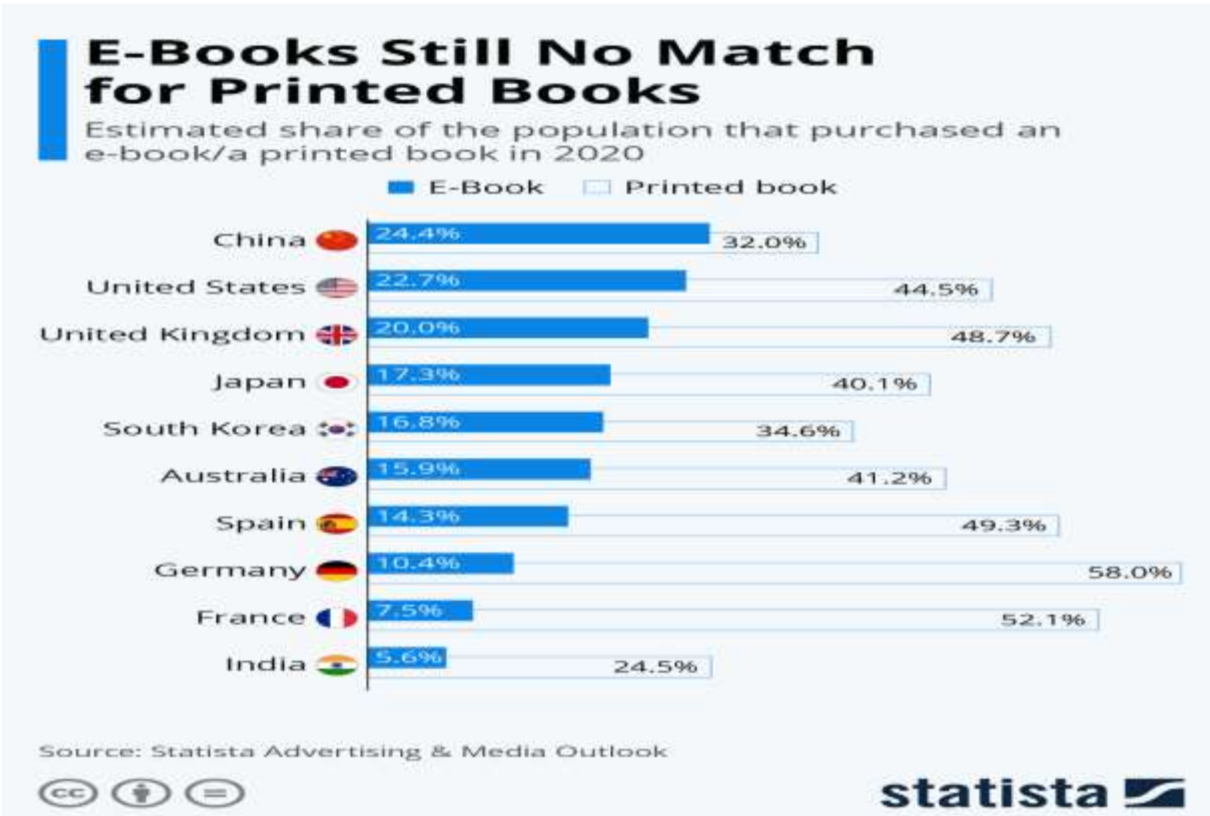

Fig.1. Adapted from (This Survey Shows That People Prefer Printed Books – Even in the Digital Age, 2021)

No one can deny the fact that the iPad can promote seamless learning by allowing learners to easily transition from formal to casual or social to personal learning situations, as well as take care of their own learning. According to Tay (2016) The popularity of i Pads now makes it simple to forget that they originally entered classrooms and campuses in 2010. There is little empirical study on how they affect teaching and learning as a consequence of this.

One-to-one devices have been proven to improve student performance (Lin, Shao, Wong, Li, & Niramitranon, 2011) and engagement (Looi et al., 2011; Milman, Carlson-Bancroft, & Boogart, 2012). However, we argue that for mobile devices in the classroom to be successfully adopted, contribute value to the learning environment, and ultimately affect student learning, teachers and students must recognize their educational worth and benefits. Unfortunately, despite the fact that millions of tablets have been bought for use in schools (Lytle, 2012; Ogg, 2012), very little study has been done on what kids, particularly those who are elementary-aged students, believe about utilizing mobile devices to learn (Hwang & Tsai, 2011; Wu et al., 2012).Hence this study probes to better understand how learners perceive utilizing i Pads and what are the advantages and disadvantages of I Pads in the classrooms.

Literature Review

Many studies have been conducted emphasizing the importance of technical education in broad terms, as well as the effects of ebooks in specifically.

Several studies have been carried out on different facets of technological education.

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) directed that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Philippines implement the Flexible Learning Modality (FLM), a paradigm change in teaching-learning to distance learning. To address this, Hipolito's (2022) Grounded theory study of aimed to describe the students' perception on the use of FLM, to determine the challenges and opportunities that students face in the new normal, and to determine ways to improve the teaching-learning process through the use of FLM. Purposive sampling was used in the study to obtain the number of informants, and constructionist coding design was used to generate assumptions, motifs, and core categories. According to Dawadi (2022), the learning process is mostly focused on sensory experiences. As a result, the availability and utilization of audio and visual aids in making science learning permanent, transferring learning, and understanding the science structure. The primary goal of his research was to determine the availability of instructional materials as well as teachers' talents and capabilities in the construction and usage of teaching materials. His research found that private schools had a higher availability and utilization of instructional materials than public schools in Kathmandu, and that the availability of instructional materials in schools was inadequate. Even supplies offered in classrooms were not utilized correctly by teachers when teaching science.
York, Lowenthal, Fabrikant & Mayall (2016). inquired about students' opinions about using iPads in the classroom. In 2011, the study's participants attended a PK–12 autonomous college-preparatory school in the Southeast of the country. Overall, the 46 students who took part in the survey had favorable opinions about utilizing i Pads.
Boon, Boon and Bartle's (2020) systematic literature study set out to find out whether students in the years 9 through 14, who use iPads or other mobile technologies have better academic results. 43 articles that expressly addressed the research topic were found in the review, which was carried out in March 2019 using the PRISMA declaration. These studies were published between 2010 and 2019. They ended by stating that additional research utilizing within-subject designs is necessary to defend the current extensive use of mobile devices in the classroom, such as iPads. The effectiveness of using an iPad to get particular topic area outcomes must be compared in this type of research.The results of a three-year study conducted by Tay (2016) in an all-girls secondary school that experimented with the use of the iPad through a project called Prototype 21st Century Class (P21C2), for which actual data was gathered through lesson observation was combined with perception surveys and group interviews with both teachers and students, were that the use of an iPad was connected to learning. Additionally, Hutchison, Beschorner, and Schmidt-Crawford (2012: p. 23) proved that "using iPads for literacy instruction not only supported student learning, but students were also highly engaged and able to demonstrate unique and creative ways of responding to text using a tablet."

The impact of e books on storytelling has been extensively researched.
According to Sadik's (2008) findings from the digital storytelling study, students were engaged in realistic learning tasks and produced tales that proved that students did well in projects and that their stories fulfilled many of the educational and technological requirements identified in digital stories. Furthermore, Sadik illustrated how i Pads may help kids understand the story content they were reading. He suggested that using I Pad technology strengthens the bond between teachers and students. According to Robin and Pierson (2005), digital storytelling has caught both students' and teachers' attention. "When compared to traditional storytelling, digital storytelling audiences are seen not only as listeners, but also as learners who can interact with and shape the story" (Dorner et al.).Digital storytelling has been found to facilitate four student-centered strategies: student interaction, reflection for deep learning, project-based learning, and successful technology integration into education (Robin & Pierson, 2005).
According to Robin and Pierson (2005), digital storytelling has caught both students' and teachers' imaginations. "When compared to traditional storytelling, audiences for digital storytelling are seen not only as listeners but also as learners who can interact with and shape the story" (Dorner et al., 2002: p. 44). Digital storytelling has been found to promote four student-centered strategies: interaction among learners, deep learning reflection, project-based learning, and successfully incorporating technology into education (Robin & Pierson, 2005).Whether using digital storytelling or just reading a narrative on an iPad, Willis (2014) claims that this method of incorporating technology is more engaging and captivating for both students and teachers. The use of i Pads can extend learning, provide access to a large library of information, reduce the need for printed materials and books, improve STEM skills, engage kids who are hard to reach, and help students prepare for the workplace, according to Willis (2014). They also found that using i Pads for literacy teaching not only boosted student learning but also engaged students who were able to exhibit creative and new ways of engaging with literature using a technology tool that provides users with a few unique concordances.

Methodology

This research used a mixed method.
A qualitative investigation in a grounded theory was used in the inquiry.
The Theory Approach, in which researchers refer to the process of developing theories/models from facts.

Accumulated (Birks and Mills, 2015). As referred to as "the Hypothesis discovery through systematic data collection Glaser and Straus (1967) introduced this phrase. A strict qualitative research strategy that would allow systematic data collection, coding, and analysis data.
So, at first this study conducted its examination using a qualitative and descriptive research design, as well as elements from previous researches and studies. Qualitatively this research lists the various advantages and disadvantages of the usage of I pads in educational settings. Were derived from several Internet references based on studies and information gained via an online study of a community of students.
Secondly in a Quantitative measurement it likes to check whether the student- respondents use i pads and what are their perceptions of using i pads. The data was collected from the 464 respondents of the Questionnaire. The participants were mainly Qassim University students, KSA.

Fig.2 The participants of the Survey

As shown in Fig.1 the majority of the responses were got from which is from Al-Qassim, the targeted audience.

Pie charts will be used to explain the data obtained from the participants.

Results and Analysis

Advantages and Disadvantages of the Usage of I pads.

The goal of this action research study was to see if i Pads were better than books at improving pupils' reading comprehension skills. In the parts that follow, I will examine the beneficial benefits that technology can have in the classroom, as well as the negative repercussions that may be experienced. I will also explore how we can all look at technology in different ways to help it succeed and become an asset to our students' educational journey.
Without a question, technology has become a critical and life-changing aspect in schooling. Technology, such as SMART boards and i Pads, have been integrated into classrooms.
These technologies are currently replacing traditional chalk boards, notebooks, and reading materials. Instead of writing the alphabets on paper with a pencil, children can now pick through an iPad and write with their finger while selecting from a range of styles and hues. Instead of selecting a textbook from the classroom library, learners can use their iPad to scan a Quick Response (QR) code and begin reading any book that is available with a single swipe of a finger. With so much resources being invested in the use of technology in the classroom, it is critical to understand the benefits of employing these high-tech methods over traditional ways. Are there any distinctions?

Pros of the Usage of I pads

This section will discuss the benefits of using iPads in the classroom. IPads can provide fresh and exciting methods to learn while also providing In the classroom, this is a benefit.

The perception that some of us have influences on how we look at strange effects, including technology. People are occasionally just reluctant to attempt new effects that they are unfamiliar with it.It's critical to consider several approaches to turning negatives into positives so that technology can demonstrate its value in the classroom.While there's an important debate about the use of technology in the classroom, many believe that the discoveries have helped to prove that technology is overall precious in our classrooms, and preceptors and scholars will find it to be veritably salutary in numerous ways once they get to know and understand the correct way to use technology more. Kumar, Shet and Parwez (2022) opine that the effectiveness of technologically integrated education is based on three factors. The increase in student learning speed during training, a decrease in costs, and an efficient learning process.

I Pads are precious, and with so important plutocrats being put into technology in the classroom, it's critical to determine how learners are served from it. According to Leonard (2013)," the Los Angeles Unified School District began to roll out a $ 50 million plan in September to equip 1,000 teenagers in 47 schools from the abecedarian academy to the high school academy with an iPad."

When kids are instructed to acquire a book and read to themselves, they don't stay focused or interested for a veritably long time, as far as many teachers claim to say...Some researchers discovered that the students' interest in literature lasts between five and ten minutes. They appear to be more engaged and interested in reading when they read a tale on their iPad.

They can concentrate for at slightest 30 minutes. students were unfit to recollect as much important knowledge during listening appreciation examinations given after reading from books as they did while perusing from iPad applications.

The preface of the iPad handed an occasion to make similar ways a reality.

Unlike desktop computers, which needed excursions to computer labs, the mobility handed in by the feather-light iPads and permitted Internet access to online accouterments readily available wherever the courses were held .

In addition, unlike the laptop, the iPad had a battery life that went vastly beyond the typical academic hours. This, along with the iPad's quick charge-up time and trust ability against crashes, makes it a popular learning device in schools. Eventually, the intuitive touch interface demonstrated the simplicity of use which is critical to the success of any learning contrivance (Milrad & Spikol, 2007).

In rundown, the vacuity and responsibility of literacy backing and course content via a mobile, stoner-friendly particular device handed more options for learner-centered pedagogues. i Pads can store hundreds of handbooks as well as schoolwork, quizzes, and other accouterments on one single device. While this eliminates the need for a physical storehouse of books and academy accouterments, people who read published textbook study and learn further than those who read a digital textbook.As preceptors consider colorful styles to subsidize on the operation of the iPad in the alphabet classroom, they might begin allowing scholars to use the iPad to pierce the Internet in order to probe crucial points or to pierce online interactive Conditioning. Scholars constantly come from numerous fields of study and are either' internal' scholars who study at an academy or' outside' scholars studying online, youthful or mature, full-time scholars or full-time workers, pursuing their first degree or indeed seasoned academics in a different field of exploration.

Cons of the Usage of I Pads

Next, consider some of the disadvantages that may be enco untered when using

While it is important to focus on the positive sides of any s ituation, there will always be some drawbacks.

According to the article by Sadik (2008), even if the usage of iPads can be quite fascinating, some teachers are simply not comfortable utilizing them in the classroom since they are unfamiliar with how they work.

According to Sadik (2008), some teachers are entrenched i n the "old school" or more traditional form of instruction th at they have been accustomed to for years.

Although research has stressed the need of incorporating iP ads into the educational system, their use can only be limit ed. Kumar, Shet and Parwez (2022) make the point that effective use of technological tools in education requires a high level of competence in classroom management. Wilson & Whitlock (1998), Yunus et al. (2013), Mirici & Ekşi (2016), and others have also shown that a teacher's failure to successfully incorporate technology into the classroom can have a detrimental influence on motivation, cause pupils to lose track of time and interrupt conversation, and distract students.

Perceptions of Students about I pads in educational setting

The first and foremost quest was whether the respondents have a I pad with them. There were 462 responses.

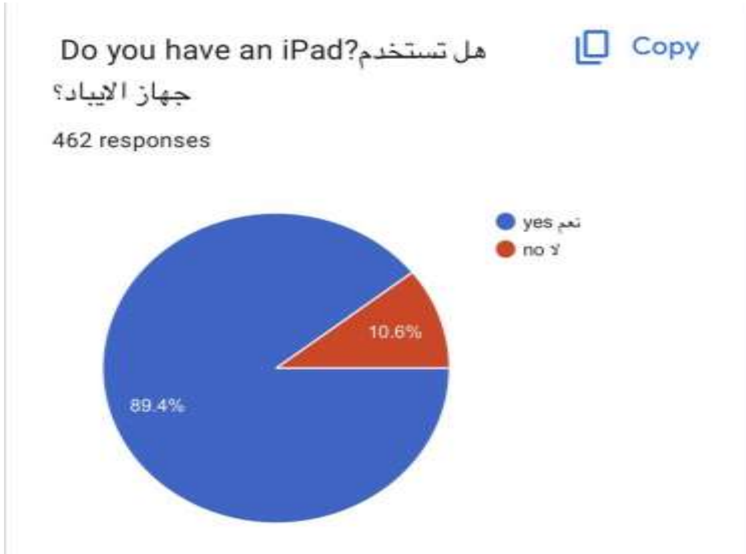

Fig.3 The Percentage of Participants that own I pads

As Fig.3 indicates around 90% of the Respondents owned an I pad. In this part of the world like many other developed countries, people depend on I pads for many different things.

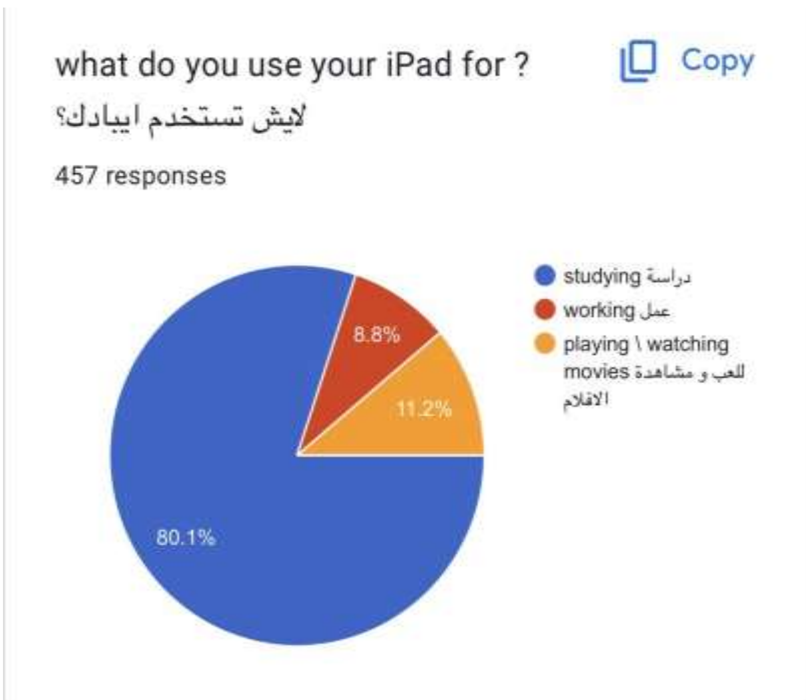

Fig.4 The Purpose of using an I pad.

Fig.4 demonstrates that 80.1% of the respondents use their devices for studying.
There was an open question: What apps do you use for studying?

The most common ones were Notability and Collanote. The others also mentioned blackboard, office, PDF expert, onenote etc.,

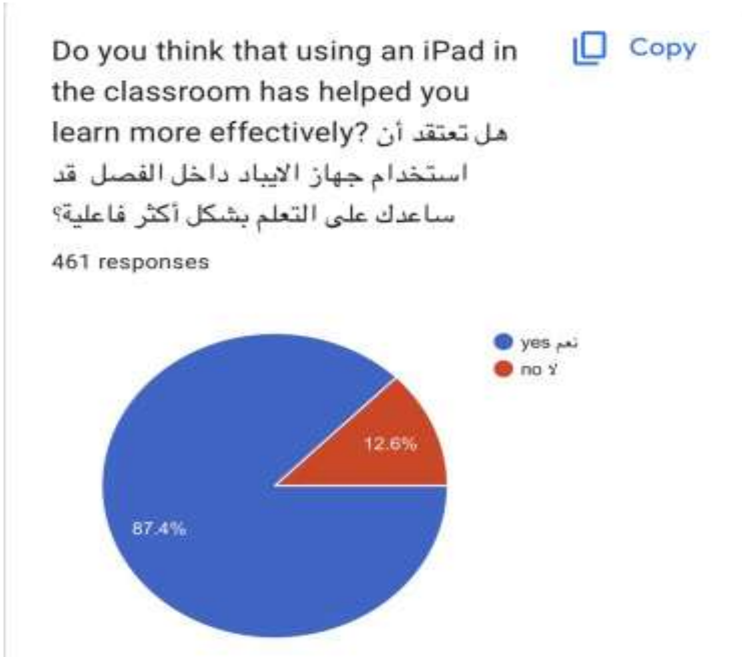

Fig.5 I pads in Educational Setting

The brunt of the study was to probe students' perceptions of the I pads in educational setting. For the question "Do you think that using an iPad in the classroom has helped you learn more effectively?" the majority 87.4% responded positively. Only 12.6% of the responses denied the role of the I pads in their learning more effectively.(Fig.5)

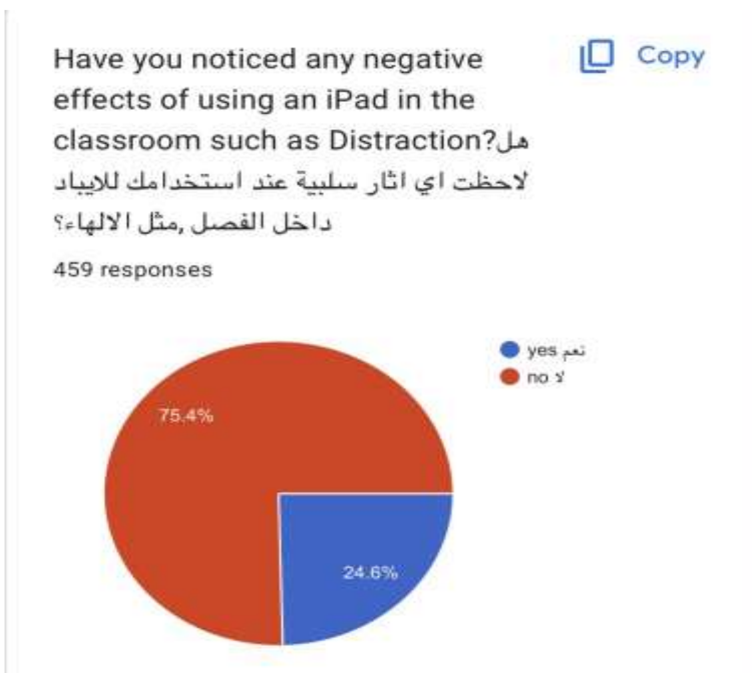

Fig.6 Negative Effects of using an I pad

Fig.6 illustrates that 75.4% that the use of the i pad inside the classroom doesn't affect negatively. Only 24.6% of them responses acknowledged that there are some negative affects such as distraction.

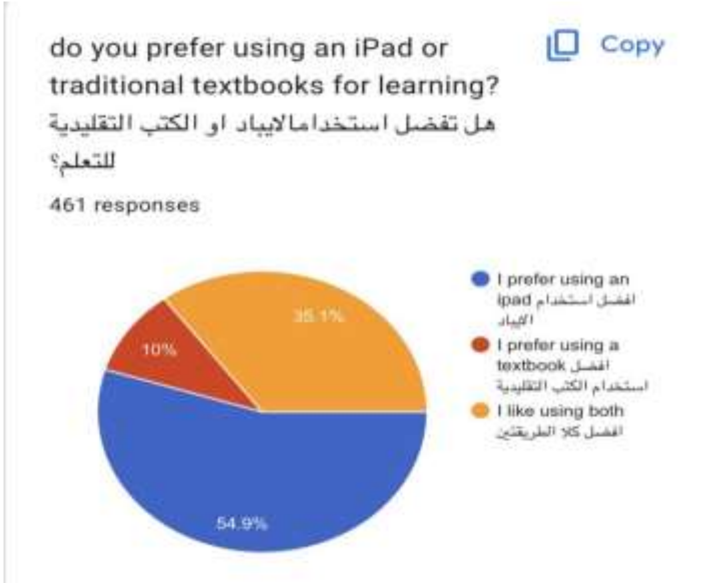

Fig.7 Is the Preference to Tech-book or Textbook?

As shown by Fig. 7 the preference to I pad is higher than the preference to textbooks. Only 10% of the students opted for textbooks and about 35% clamoured for both.

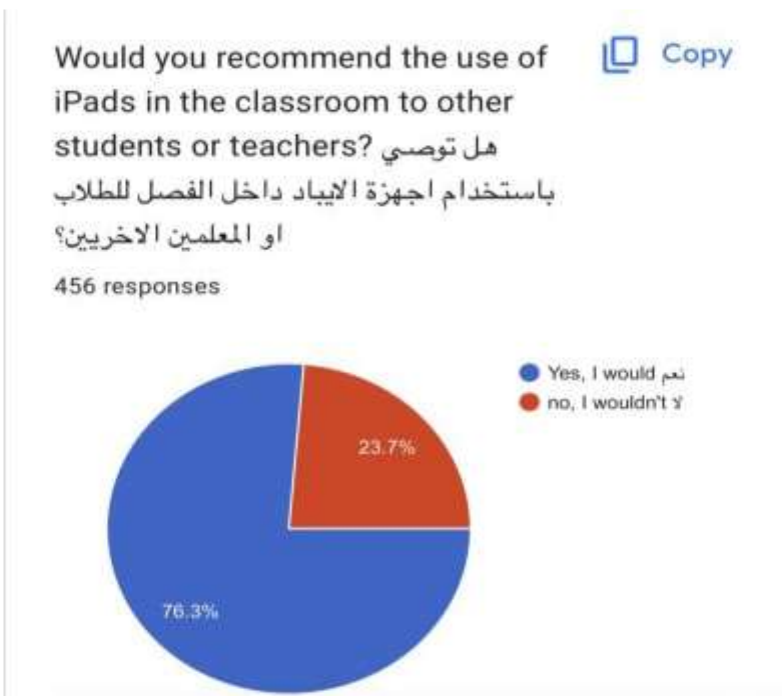

Fig.8 Recommendation For I Pads in the classrooms

Fig.8 indicates the students perception of the future classroom. 76.3% of the learners recommended the use of I pads in the classroom. Only 23.7 opted for not recommending it for the students and teachers.

Overview of Results

		Positive	Negative	Neuter	Total
1	Possession of I Pads	89.4%	10.6%	-	462
2	Purpose of using	80%	8.8%	11.2%	457
3	Effect of I Pads in educational setting	86.4%	13.6%	-	461
4	Negative Effects of using an I pad	75.4%	24.6%	-	459
5	The Preference to Tech-book	54.9%	10%	35.1%	461
6	Recommendation For I Pads in the classrooms	76.3%	23.7%	-	456

Table.1. Students' Perceptions on I Pads

Table 1 lists the overview of the students' perceptions about the usage of I pads.

Discussions

Only 12.6% of the respondents didn't agree that i pads have a hand in their progress. 23.7% of learners didn't agree with the use of an I pad inside the classrooms.
However, Boon, Boon and Bartle's (2020) findings found that using i Pads in certain school learning areas such as mathematics, English, and science did not consistently improve academic achievement.
Some of the publications that were studied also revealed that teachers were not always making the best use of technology.So there lies ahead the gargantuan task of varied investigations and training the resource people.This present study reinstates Shet and Christy's proposal (2022) and Dawadi (2022) preparing teachers to use available as well as online tools is necessary in order to update them. They also proved in her investigation that some countries, like KSA, have already made preparations in this regard. As prestigious universities are also established by vibrant, dynamic, and eager teaching faculty, it happened astonishingly quickly in KSA. Shet and Christy (2022) hope the developing nations that are currently under-performing will allocate a sizable budget to developing their educational technologies.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is not surprising that the finding reveals that students overall had positive perceptions of using i Pads, since people today demand quick ways to access information, students like using i Pads in the classroom due to the fact that they are handier and can discover information more rapidly, they can take their i Pads with them wherever they go, they can complete their homework on them, and they can be more productive.This investigation revealed that 89.4%% of the respondents use iPad and 80.1%% use it for studying. 87.4% of students say they believe using an iPad has improved their learning, In contrast, 24.6% of the students concur that using an iPad in class is a distraction for them. 54.9 percent of students said they prefer using an iPad, compared to just 10 percent who prefer using a textbook. 35.1% of the remaining students favor the prevalence of both the textbooks and tech-books for studying. This paper will contribute to the ongoing dialogue on the use of technology in the classroom.

Recommendations

Future researchers should strive to address more about students' engagement with technology, as there is still much need for additional investigation in this domain. The instructional effectiveness and learning outcomes of the learning modality via i pads and e books can be evaluated and compared to other traditional learning modalities.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Responsibility Accounting and Corporate Sustainability Growth: Evidence from Listed Deposit Money Banks in Nigeria

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Abstract
This study examined the relationship between responsibility accounting and corporate sustainability growth using listed deposit money banks as a reference point. Responsibility accounting was measured using Operating Expenses (OE), Net Income (NI), Interest Expense (IE) and Return on Investment (ROI) while corporate sustainability growth was measured using corporate sustainability growth rate (CSGR). *Ex post facto* design was adopted and data for this study was collected from the annual accounts and reports of all listed deposit money banks on the Nigerian Exchange Group (NGX) for the period ended; 2016-2022. The analysis was carried out using panel least squares regression model and the results of the study show a significant and positive association between operating expenses, net income, interest expense, return on investment and sustainability growth of banks in Nigeria at 1% to 5% level of significance. The study therefore comes to the conclusion that responsibility accounting ensures sustainability growth in the banking sector. The study recommends that managers should increase their asset base, as it has been observed that banks with large asset base control their operating and interest expense which significantly ensures banks sustainability. In addition, the managers of listed deposit money banks should use return on investment and net income as a metric to evaluate and assess the sustainability of their stewardship.

Keyword: Responsibility Accounting; Corporate Sustainability Growth; Operating Expense; Net Income; Interest Expense; Return on Investment

Introduction

Over the years, banks in Nigeria have collapsed without any indication. As a result, institutional and corporate investors suffered enormous financial losses. Akintoye (2019) in his study reported financial scandals among Nigerian banks as follows; Afribank (2006) N6.9 billion, Bank PHB (2011) N25.7 billion, Oceanic Bank (2010) N150 billion, Access Bank (2011) $19 million or N6. N84 billion, Skye Bank (2018) N126 billion and Intercontinental Bank (2012) N400 billion. Yisa, Ishola and Folajimi (2020) also noted that the federal government through the intervention of the Central Bank of Nigeria saved depositors' funds through the conversion of Skye Bank Plc to Polaris Bank Plc on September 24, 2018. The death of Mainstream Bank Plc, Oceanic Bank Plc, Intercontinental Banks Plc, Bank PHB Plc, Enterprise Bank and Savannah Bank Plc is still fresh in investors' minds. In 2019, Diamond Bank Plc and Access Bank Plc merged as one entity while the public were informed about the move to be a merger decision. Thus, investors conceded it to be an acquisition decision by Access Bank Plc management. This challenge stems from the fact that banks do not divide their organizational structures into responsibility centers but instead centralize authority at their headquarters and ultimately fail to take the advantage of divisionalization. Hence, the need to determine if responsibility accounting induces banks sustainability.

Also, literature reveals that responsibility accounting is an important measurement tool for assessing bank's business activities with regard to their planned goals. However, bank branch managers do not have full authority to create their own budget based on business reality. Thus, branch managers are therefore not authorized to reconcile the costs and income of their branches (Al-Hanini, 2013), Fowzia, 2011; Maimako, Kwatlan & Ishaya, 2020). In this context, responsibility accounting measurements means comparing actual performance of every section in the bank with what was planned for. This according to available literature is not in practice in the banking sector in Nigeria. Hence the need to buttress on the relevance of responsibility in the banking sector and its effect on banks sustainability in Nigeria.

Banks also offer products and services to various customers across the board. This includes business services, other deposits and mobilization of savings which requires reasonable and effective management actions that support the business sustainability within the environment in which the business is located. In recent years, the banking industry in Nigeria faced a lot of economic challenges that borders on management's performance (Adegbie, Urewa & Owolabi, 2020). Likewise, economic growth has not been inclusive, and Nigeria's economy faced key challenges of lower productivity and the weak expansion of sectors with high employment elasticity as a result of challenges in the banking industry (Wilson, 2023). Addressing these challenges requires that responsibility accounting should be established within the banking industry.

Centralization centers on decision making at the top management level, without recourse to low level management. Centralized system amplifies and transmits the impact of decisions within the system in which they are practiced. This implies that whenever wrong decision is inevitably taking in the banking sector, it affects the whole system. Thus makes central-planning error-prone as it makes managers ineffective which affects organizational performance. Also, if bank managers' performance is not evaluated, it will be difficult to determine the shareholder expectations of wealth maximization and sustainable growth of the bank. There is also a tendency for biased judgments and wrong judgment when evaluating an organization's performance without recourse to the specific responsibility of the individual managers. Therefore, it becomes imperative to investigate if responsibility accounting ensures corporate sustainability.

It is also evident from the a priori expectations that not much have been done empirically in the banking sector using secondary data other than the use of questionnaires and just as in the case of studies in developing countries only accounting measures of firm performance have been used. For instance, the recent study of Van, Phat, Ngoc, Phuong and Van (2022) on responsibility accounting in Vietnam used primary data for assessing managers' responsibilities. Also Yisa, Ishola, and Folajimi (2020) used primary data for assessing managers' responsibilities in Nigeria while Adegbie and Olaoye (2018) used accounting based measure of return on assets for assessment of mangers' responsibilities. Market measures such as share price, net assets per share and Tobin Q measure are ignored and neglected. Neglecting market measures may not provide a comprehensive perspective on management performance and sustainability growth from the investors' perspective in the banking sector. Also, there is no known study that have used these variables for responsibility accounting in the bank of industry in Nigeria ranging from interest expense (IE), net income (NI), operating expense (OE) to return on assets (ROA) to the best of our knowledge,. Hence, it becomes imperative for the present study to examine the relationship which exists between responsibility accounting and corporate sustainability using deposit money banks in Nigeria as a reference point.

To achieve this purpose, the following hypotheses were formulated to achieve the objectives of this study.

H_{01}: Operating expense has no significant relationship with sustainability growth of listed deposit money banks in Nigeria.

H_{02}: Net income has no significant relationship with sustainability growth of listed deposit money banks in Nigeria.

H_{03}: Interest expense has no significant relationship with sustainability growth of listed deposit money banks in Nigeria.

H_{04}: Return on investment does not significantly relate to sustainability growth of listed deposit money banks in Nigeria.

This study contains several sections. Hence, the remainder of this study is organized as follows; Section 2 provides an overview of the current state of the relevant literature. This is followed by Section 3, which deals with the methodology and data for the analysis. Section 4 presents the data analysis and discussion of the results while Section 5 concludes with remarks and recommendation.

Literature Review

Responsibility Accounting

Responsibility accounting systems are widely used by organizations to evaluate and reward management performance. Using accounting information to measure performance and reward purposes requires a clear definition of responsibilities, as well as precise and well-defined expectations and goals. Without such policies, employees may lack loyalty and motivation to perform well (Adegbie & Olaoye, 2018). According to Adegbie, Urewa and Owolabi (2020), responsibility accounting is a system of account that collects, reports and summarizes accounting data related to managers responsibility. It provide information used to assess each of the manager's income and expenses which the manager has an authority and a control over. According to Van, Phat, Ngoc, Phuong and Van (2022), the target of responsibility accounting is to assess the connection between manager activities and their effects.

Tran (2017) sees responsibility accounting as a managerial accounting method that measures the performance of all the responsibility centers where the performance of the manager is assessed and evaluated. In general, there are various views on the responsibility accounting system, depending on the general objectives, researchers or administrators and professionals in different institutions.

For the purpose of this study, a model fit on responsibility accounting was developed using the following Index; Operating Expense (OE), Net Income (NI), Interest Expense (IE) and Return on Investment (ROI).

Determinants of Responsibility Accounting

Operational Expense

According to Akeju (2011), operating expense is broken down into direct costs and indirect costs. The study defines direct costs as cost which varies directly with the production level. This is to say that such cost could be traced back to the item produced. In addition, direct costs can be direct labor costs, which include wages paid to workers who work entirely and exclusively on the manufacturing enterprise's production line. Indirect costs on the other hand, are those costs that could not be simply traced to the units of production, e.g. such costs do not vary in proportion with production units. It's also known as overhead costs.

Net Income

In accounting and economics, net income (also net earnings, net profit, total comprehensive income, sales profit, or credit sales and bottom line) is a business's income less cost of sales, depreciation, expenses and amortization, taxes and interest in a particular period (Wikimedia Foundation, 2020). It is also known as net earnings. It reflects the revenue left over expenses in a particular period (Anurudikka, 2020). Hence, net income is often regarded as a measure of organizational bottom line. Net income is considered the best indicator of a company's performance over a given period of time. That is, the high or low performance of the firm is reflected in the large or small profits that firms can make over a period (Stice, Stice & Skousen, 2009).

Net income may be distributed to the common stockholders as a dividend or an appropriation to retained earnings. Profit and revenue are used interchangeably with income. Thus, net profit and net income are often used as synonyms for net income (Wikimedia Foundation, 2020). Quite often, the term "income" is replaced by "net income", but this is not preferred due to the potential for ambiguity. Net income is colloquially referred to as "bottom line" because it's usually the last line on a corporate's income statement which makes up the first line of the bank statement. It is an amount an individual or business makes after deducting costs, allowances and taxes (Adeh, 2023).

Interest Expenses

Interest expense is viewed as a non operating expense recognized in income statement. This is due on bonds, loans, lines of credit or convertible bonds. It is calculated by multiplying the firms' interest rate by the principal amount outstanding on the debt. According to the OECD (2015), interest expense is conceded as tax deductible expenses especially in the developed countries, though every country determines the expenses (interest) to be treated as deductible for the purposes of tax.

Interest expense is the cost of borrowed funds. It is recognized as a non-operating expense in the income statement and arises from credit agreements such as lines of credit, loans and bonds. Interest expense is typically a tax-deductible expense, making debt a more cost-effective form of financing than equity. However, excessive leverage also poses a risk of corporate failure if the borrower fails to meet its debt obligations. As a result, a prudent management team incurs little interest expense relative to a company's asset base and profitability (Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service, 2022).

Return on Investment

This is a performance measurement used to assess the efficiency of an investment and as well compare the efficiency of several investments. Return on investment (ROI) is a metric that examines the amount of additional profit generated by a specific investment. Businesses use this metric to compare different investment scenarios and find out which ones would bring the most profit and benefit to the business. However, this calculation can also be used to analyze the best case scenario for other types of investments (Dumitracu, 2014).

According to Zamfir, Manea and Ionescu (2016), return on investment is a performance concept for any type of investment. From the shareholders perspective, the company's goal is expressed in return on investment. Return on investment shows the extent a company generates profit through the use of capital. It exposits the amount invested in a particular portfolio over a period of time. Thus allows the evaluation of the efficiency of the amount invested. In other words, ROI allows the measurement of performance in relation to the source of the capital and the capital used in achieving it. The ROI is determined as the ratio of operating profit and the total investment amount.

Corporate Sustainability Growth

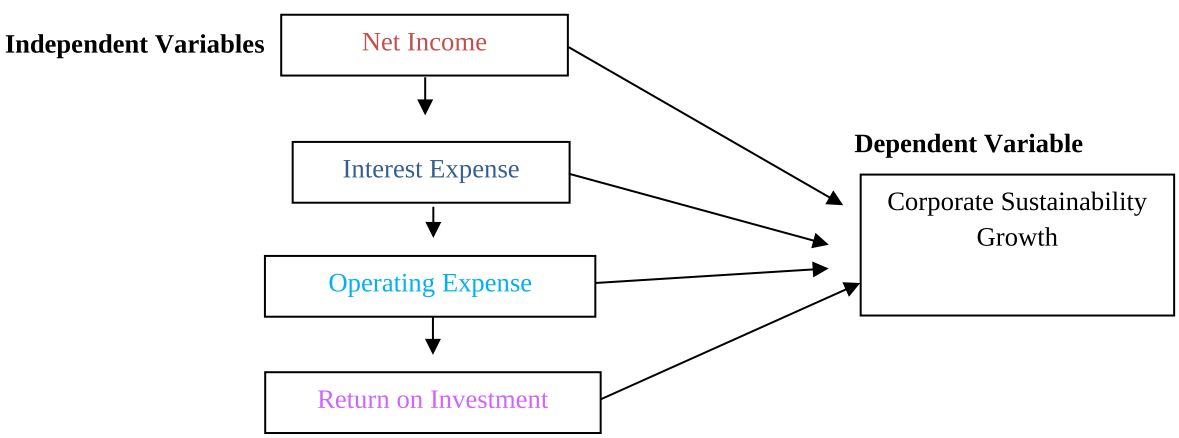
This is an approach aimed at creating long term stakeholder value through the implementation of a business strategy with emphasis on the social, environmental, ethical, economic and cultural dimensions of the business. It could also be defined as a strategy in which a company provides its services and goods to enable economic and sustainable growth. Furthermore, it effectively prioritizes long-term development through environmentally friendly methods over short-term financial gains (Omaliko and Okpala, 2022). According to Kanyarat (2023), corporate sustainability growth is an affordable growth that could be profitably maintained by corporate organizations for future benefit.

According to Omaliko and Onyeogubalu (2021), to be sustainable, organizations must concede the following:

i. Responsible for their social, environmental and economic impact.
ii. Being transparent in decisions and activities affecting its responsibilities.
iii. Respond to the interests of its stakeholders.
iv. Accept the fact that the rule of law is mandatory

A going concern firm will fall into the dilemma of unsustainable growth if deviated from sustainable growth (Buffa, Franch & Rizio, 2018). For the purpose of this study, corporate sustainability growth was measured as return on equity multiplied by retention ratio. This is expressed as ROE(1-DPR).

The Conceptual Model



Source: Researcher's Concept (2023)

Theoretical Framework

Agency Theory

The concept of agency theory was propounded by Jensen and Meckling in the year 1976. The theory argues that the control and ownership are becoming more separated as a result of dilution of the share capital of large firms. Jensen and Meckling (1976) suggested that this development provides an avenue for managers to pursue personal interests rather than those of shareholders'. The responsibility for the management and administration of the company rests with the directors the shareholders' behalf. In every business contract where the owner is not responsible for the day to day management and direction of the business, there is always a chance that conflicts will arise. This could arise in a variety of ways: conflicts of interest, dividend policy issues, disagreements over payment terms and more. Agency theory assumes a relationship between the principal's representative (company manager) and the principal. From this perspective, the enterprise is a web of contracts between resource owners. Panda and Leepsa (2017) reported that there is an agency relationship when one person(s) called agent is engaged by another person called principal to render some services. This study examines the relationship between responsibility accounting and sustainability growth of banks in Nigeria, considering the investors as the principal and the management as the agents.

Investors deliberately give the manager the authority over the management of their resources on their behalf. Therefore, this theory is relevant for the study because agency theory is very vital to the company's operations since managers are held accountable, responsible and been evaluated according to their responsibility centers performance. The managers are accountable to the shareholders based on the duties and resources of the centers under their control and the delegation of responsibilities (Diamond, 1984). Hence, the study was underpinned by the agency theory.

Empirical Review

Van, Phat, Ngoc, Phuong and Van (2022) examine the relationship between the performance of Vietnamese listed textile companies and the factors affecting the adoption of responsibility accounting. The results show that in addition to the measurement technique and the degree of competition, factors in the research model also had a certain impact ranging from skills of accounting staff, managers awareness at all levels, reward systems decentralization, and the forecasting of responsibility centers affect corporate performance.

Nguyen (2021) analyzed the impact of the responsibility accounting organizational performance of pharmaceutical companies and provides further empirical evidence of the impact. The study uses questionnaire distributed to pharmaceutical companies. The quantitative research was performed using SPSS 25 software. After excluding invalid copies of the questionnaire due to many empty fields, the author was able to use 306 questionnaires. The result of the study shows that seven elements of the Responsible Accounting model combined with the Balance Scorecard have a positive impact on the organizational performance of companies in the pharmaceutical industries.

Thinh (2021) examined the impact of profitability on responsibility accounting disclosures of banks in Vietnam. A time series data spanning from 2015 to 2019 was used; also OLS regression model was used. Profitability was proxy using 5 variables. The findings indicate that return on assets and return on equity have positive influence on responsibility accounting disclosures. Kubaje, Muda and Eklemet (2020) evaluated the effectiveness of responsibility accounting systems in determining segment performance of manufacturing firms in Ghana. The population of the study consists of heavy and light industrial enclaves and the study found that for effective segment performance of a manufacturing company in Ghana, responsibility accountability system plays an important role. The study therefore suggests that management should make reasonable efforts to address the difficulties faced by the effectiveness responsibility accountability systems.

Tran, Dinh and Nguyen (2020) reported that accounting is an important part of management accounting. The study identified the impact of organization size and manager education level on responsibility accounting in Vietnamese cements companies. Data collection was carried out through the use of questionnaire. The research results have shown that in the Vietnamese cement companies, there are significant correlations between the size of the organization, the level of training of the managers and the responsibility accounting. As noted in Oladapo's (2020) study, responsibility accounting has been recognized as a tool to measure the responsibility and operational area performance within the organization. Descriptive research method was used to assess the impact of responsibility accounting, the impact of manager involvement in goal setting, and also the importance of organizational structure for performance assessment in the banking sector. To achieve the objectives of the study, a total of 240 copies of questionnaire were administered to the selected banks in Southwest Geopolitical Zone in five states in Nigeria. Using t-test and Pearson's correlation, the results of the study showed that responsibility accounting has significant impact on performance.

Yisa, Ishola, and Folajimi (2020) carried out a survey research designs with a population of 54 listed manufacturing firms in Nigeria. Using a targeted sampling technique, 510 respondents were selected from a sample frame of 34 firms; the study found that responsibility accounting had significant impact on companies' investment decision. The study therefore concludes that responsibility accounting ensures corporate investment decision of listed manufacturing firms in Nigeria. Adegbie, Urewa and Owolabi (2020) on the same vein, examined the impact of responsibility accounting on the profitability of firms in Nigeria. The study adopts ex post facto design and population of the study covers all the companies listed on Nigerian Stock Exchange for the year December 31, 2016. Ten firms were randomized and the study found that the profitability of firms in Nigeria is determined by responsibility accounting.

Methodology

The study used an *ex post facto design* based on the fact that the data for the study were secondary and pre-existed which cannot be controlled. The population is consists of all 14 listed deposit money banks on Nigerian Exchange Group (NGX) for the year ended December 31, 2022 spanning from 2016-2022. Thus, the study used the entire population of the study. On this base, 14 banks made up our sample size with 98 observations. Data was collected from the annual accounts and reports of the sampled banks in Nigeria. The panel least squares regression model was used to determine the relationship between responsibility accounting and corporate sustainability growth.

Measurement and Operationalization of Variables

Table 1: Variable Measurements

Variable	Measurement
Dependent	
Corporate Sustainability Growth	ROE(1-DPR)
Independent	
Operating Expense	Log OE
Net Income	Log NI
Interest Expense	Log IE
Return on Investment	NPAT/Capital Employed

Source: Empirical Survey (2023)

Model Specification and Justification

The researcher designed a model to examine the relationship between responsibility accounting and corporate sustainability growth. The functional model for the study is shown below as thus:

CSG = F(OE, NI, 1E, ROI)

The explicit form of the regression designed for the study is shown below as thus:

Model: $\mathbf{CSG = \beta_0 + \beta_1 OE_t + \beta_2 NI_t + \beta_3 1E_t + \beta_4 ROI_{t.} + \varepsilon_t}$

Where;
CSG = Corporate Sustainability Growth
OE = Operating Expense
NI = Net Income
IE = Interest Expense
ROI = Return on Investment
ε = Stochastic Error Term

Decision Rule: accept H_1 if P-value < 5% level of significance otherwise reject H_1

Results and Discussions

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

	CSG	OE	NI	IE	ROI
Mean	4.24	5.09	3.47	2.98	1.89
Median	0.56	3.00	2.90	2.11	2.65
Maximum	76.2	4.50	4.10	3.50	3.10
Minimum	1.12	1.80	1.40	0.80	0.95
Std. Dev.	10.8	0.76	0.62	0.51	0.44
Skewness	4.33	0.47	0.56	0.23	0.11
Kurtosis	24.5	2.32	2.04	2.49	2.36
Jarque-Bera	2208	5.40	8.73	1.98	0.66
Probability	0.00	0.15	0.21	0.37	0.72
Sum	416	317	261	201	185
Sum Sq. Dev.	11317	45.3	43.4	32.7	19.06
Observations	**98**	**98**	**98**	**98**	**98**

Source: E-View 12 Computational Results (2023)

Table 2 above shows that the corporate sustainability growth (CSG) value for the sampled banks was 4.24. This implies that corporate sustainability is determined by responsibility accounting practices. The maximum and minimum points for the study were 76.2 and 1.12

respectively. The variation in the minimum and maximum CSG points for the sampled banks justify the study that corporate sustainability growth is a determinant of responsibility accounting practices. The distribution is leptokurtic because the kurtosis is greater than 3, which means the outliers are large. The Jarque-Bera probability of 0.00 is below 0.05, which means that the distribution of corporate sustainability growth deviates significantly from a normal distribution.

The average value of operating expense (OE) for the sample banks was 5.09. This means that banks with an OE value of 5.09 and above are sustainable at a risk level of 0.76%. The maximum and minimum points for the study were 4.50 and 1.80 respectively. The variation in minimum and maximum OE points for the sampled banks justify the study that banks with such variability demonstrate high sustainability growth. The distribution is platykurtic since the kurtosis is less than 3, which means there are few outliers. The Jarque-Bera probability of 0.15 is more than 0.05 which means that the distribution of operating expense does not deviate significantly from a normal distribution.

The average net income (NI) for the sampled banks was 3.47. This means that banks with NI value of 3.47 and above are sustainable. The maximum and minimum points for the study were 4.10 and 1.40 respectively. The variation in minimum and maximum NI points for the sampled banks justify the study that banks with such variability are more sustainable. The distribution is platykurtic since the kurtosis is less than 3, which means there are few outliers. The Jarque-Bera probability of 0.21 is greater than 0.05, which means that the distribution of net income comes from a normal distribution.

The mean value of interest expense (IE) for the sampled banks was 2.98. This means that banks with IE of 2.98 and above are sustainable with a risk level of 0.51%. The maximum and minimum points for the study were 3.50 and 0.80 respectively. The variation in the minimum and maximum IE values for the sampled banks justify the study that banks with such variability have sustained growth. The distribution is platykurtic since the kurtosis is less than 3 which means there are few outliers. The Jarque-Bera probability of 0.37 is greater than 0.05, which means that the distribution of interest expense does not deviate from a normal distribution.

The average return on investment (ROI) for the banks examined was 1.89. This means that banks with ROI of 1.89 and above are sustainable at a degree of risk of 0.44%. The maximum and minimum points for the study were 3.10 and 0.95 respectively. The variation in minimum and maximum ROI points for the sampled banks necessitates this study, as the study assumes that banks with such variability demonstrates sustainability growth. The distribution is platykurtic since the kurtosis is less than 3, which means there are few outliers. The Jarque-Bera probability of 0.72 is greater than 0.05, which means that the return on investment distribution is normal.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix

Variables	CSG	OE	NI	IE	ROI
CSG	1.00				
OE	0.05	1.00			
NI	0.01	0.52	1.00		
IE	0.20	0.05	0.50	1.00	
ROI	0.12	0.23	0.35	0.49	1.00

Source: Result Output from E-Views 12 (2023)

Table 3 above shows that all independent variables are positively related to the dependent variable (corporate sustainability growth) and to each other. When testing for multi-collinearity feature, we found no two exogenous variables to be perfectly correlated. Thus, implies non multi-collinearity existence.

Test of Hypothesis

Table 4: Panel Least Squares Result on the Relationship between Responsibility Accounting and Corporate Sustainability Growth

Dependent Variable: CSG
Method: Panel Least Squares
Date: 06/18/23 Time: 15:16
Sample: 2016 2022
Periods included: 7
Cross-sections included: 14
Total panel (balanced) observations: 98

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
OE	0.892475	0.129455	6.894094	0.0001
NI	2.341885	0.327482	7.151187	0.0000
IE	0.940390	0.249812	3.764391	0.0162
ROI	1.506147	0.478538	3.147393	0.0487
C	11.84957	2.647026	4.476559	0.0039

R-squared	0.453322	Mean dependent var	4.242551
Adjusted R-squared	0.427153	S.D. dependent var	10.80164
S.E. of regression	10.77855	Akaike info criterion	7.642665
Sum squared resid	10804.47	Schwarz criterion	7.774552
Log likelihood	369.4906	Hannan-Quinn criter.	7.696011
F-statistic	4.104015	Durbin-Watson stat	2.122531
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000		

Source: Result Output from E-Views 12 (2023)

The R-squared for the model as shown in Table 4 above, was 0.45%, indicates that the variables included in the model accounted for 45% of variation in dependent variable of corporate sustainability growth (CSG) while about 55% was not covered by the model. The F-statistic value of 4.104 and its P-value of 0.0000 indicates that the panel least-squares model is statistically significant at 1% significant level. This implies that the model is appropriate for the study.

Autocorrelation Test: The DW statistic is 2.122 which is approximately 2 agrees with Durbin Watson's rule of thumb. This means that the data is free from autocorrelation and is suitable for the interpretation of the result. The Schwarz Criterion and the Akike Info Criterion of 7.775 and 7.643 respectively further strengthens the reliability of our result as it confirms the validity of the model.

In addition, the specific results for each explanatory variable from the least squares panel model as shown in Table 4 are provided below as follows:

Discussion of Findings

Operating expense has no significant relationship with sustainability growth of listed deposit money banks in Nigeria. This was tested using panel least squares model as shown in Table 4 and the result shows that the relationship between operating expenses (OE) and corporate sustainability growth (CSG) is significant and positive with a P-value of 0.0001 for the model, which is below the assumed significance level of 1%. The result of the positive coefficient of 0.89 for the model also implies that an increase in operating expense increases the bank's sustainability growth by 89%. We therefore accepted the alternate hypothesis that operating costs are significantly related to the sustainability growth of banks in Nigeria. This finding is consistent with the findings of Nguyen (2021) and Van, Phat, Ngoc, Phuong, and Van (2022) who found that responsibility accountability ensures firm performance.

There is no significant relationship between net income and sustainability growth of listed deposit money banks in Nigeria. This was tested using panel least squares model as shown in Table 4 and the result shows that the relationship between net income (NI) and corporate sustainability growth (CSG) is significant and positive with a P-value of 0.0000 for the model which is less than 1% level of significance adopted. Additionally, the positive coefficient of 2.34 for the model suggests that net income ensures the banks sustainability growth by 2.34%. We therefore accepted the alternate hypothesis that the relationship between net income and sustainability growth of the banks in Nigeria is significant. This result is in consonance with the a priori expectations of Thinh (2021) and Nguyen (2021), who reported that responsibility accounting has a significant impact on firm performance.

H_{03}: Interest expense has no significant relationship with sustainability growth of listed deposit money banks in Nigeria. This was tested using panel least squares model, as shown in Table 4 and the result shows that the relationship between interest expense (IE) and the corporate sustainability growth is significant and positive with a P-value of 0.0162 for the model. This is below the assumed level of significance of 5% adopted in the study. In addition, the positive coefficient of 0.940 for the model shows that an increase in bank interest expense increases corporate sustainability by 94%. We therefore accepted the alternate hypothesis that interest expense is significantly related to the sustainability growth of the banks in Nigeria. The finding seems agreeable with the findings of Adegbie, Urewa, and Owolabi (2020), Yisa, Ishola, and Folajimi (2020), who reported that the accountability account determines firm performance.

H_{04}: Return on investment does not significantly relate to sustainability growth of listed deposit money banks in Nigeria. This was tested using panel least squares model presented in Table 4 and the result shows that the relationship between return on investment (ROI) and corporate sustainability growth is significant and positive with a P-value of 0.0487 for the model which is below the assumed 5% level of significance adopted. Furthermore, the positive coefficient of 1.506 for the model shows that an increase in return on investment ensures corporate sustainability growth by 1.506%. We therefore accepted the alternate hypothesis that the return on investment has a significant association with sustainability growth of the banks in Nigeria. The result is in tandem with the findings of Oladapo (2020), Tran, Dinh and Nguyen (2020), Kubaje, Muda and Eklemet (2020) who reported a positive and significant association between responsibility accounting and organizational performance.

Conclusion

The study concludes that responsibility accounting has significant effect on sustainability growth of listed deposit money banks in Nigeria. Thus, responsibility accounting ensures corporate sustainability.

Recommendation

1. The management of banks in Nigeria should increase their asset base as it has been observed that banks with large asset base control their operating expense which greatly ensures the banks sustainability.
2. Managers should also implement responsibility accounting with a focus on profit center for wealth maximization.
3. Also, interest expense was found to ensure banks sustainability. Hence, the study recommends that managers should match interest expense with interest income and ensure a positive match or correlation between the variables.
4. Management should use return on investment as a metric to evaluate sustainability of responsibility accountability.

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Data availability: Data used will be made available on request.

Authors contribution: Akwuobi and David made a significant contribution through problem identification. Every other aspect of this work was handled by Dr. Omaliko, E

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Qualitative Inquiry on the Factors Related to Students' Disengagement in Leadership Roles

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Abstract
Leadership is an important skill that students should develop. Campus organizations are some of the avenues for students to hone their leadership skills. However, some students are disengaging in leadership roles in campus organizations. Thus, this study sought to describe the factors behind students' disengagement in leadership roles in campus organizations using a qualitative-descriptive research approach. The duly-validated written interview questionnaire was administered among six (6) student leaders who were selected through purposeful sampling. Three (3) significant themes such as personal-related, interpersonal-related, and structural-related factors were revealed. From these data, five (5) meaningful categories emerged. As personal-related factors, students disengage in leadership roles in campus organizations as it is a (1) hindrance to their academics and it (2) compromises their health. Furthermore, interpersonal-related factors include having (3) divided time and (4) being in the public eye. Finally, the (5) authority factor is the structural-related factor. Thus, improving the working conditions of student leaders may eliminate the negative experiences that will force them to stop serving their fellow students.

Keywords: campus organizations; leadership role; disengagement; students

Introduction

Leadership is a skill developed through a process involving experience and a skill already observable among youth (Tanjung, Harfiani, & Hartanto, 2021). It is a "multifaceted concept" that encompasses a range of human traits, abilities, and characteristics (Caraig, Masangcay, Villanueva, & Manibo, 2020). The development of effective leadership skills has long been recognized as a critical and challenging objective for higher education institutions (King, 1997; Xu 2019). In a university setting, campus organizations are some avenues for students to showcase and hone their leadership skills (Dugan, 2008; Rosch & Collins, 2019). The knowledge about the importance of leadership among students and the factors affecting their motivation in engaging in leadership roles within university organizations has already been established (Renchler, 1992; Rosch, Collier, & Thompson, 2015; Curran & Fuselier, 2020). This existing knowledge is essential in building knowledge on exploring a new topic about students' disengagement in leadership roles in university organizations.

Several studies have suggested that some factors that motivate students to participate in leadership roles in school organizations include the increasing job opportunities in the future and the sense of purpose they gain (Cartier, 2018; Curran & Fuselier, 2020). On the other hand, holding a leadership position in campus organizations can cause stress to students as these two are considered to be "inseparably connected" (Caraig et al., 2020). It could also serve as a distraction to students that could harm their academic performance (Giancursio, 2021). Furthermore, some studies suggest that campus organizations are only focused on improving students' skills but compromise their self-efficacy and motivation (Dugan, 2011; Rosch & Collins, 2019). While these studies addressed the disadvantages of engaging in leadership roles in campus organizations among students, there have been limited studies that directly link these identified disadvantages to students' disinterest in taking leadership roles.

Thus, this study seeks to describe the different factors that influence student leaders' disengagement in leadership roles in different campus organizations. The findings of this study can directly link those identified disadvantages in engaging in leadership roles in students sought by previous studies to the disengagement of student leaders in taking leadership roles— if those were relevant in the local setting. The study results could help university policymakers create a more conducive campus organization environment and conditions for student leaders.

Methods

Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative-descriptive research design to describe the factors related to students' disengagement in taking leadership roles in campus organizations. This research design is appropriate for this study as it seeks to reveal the factors that affect individuals in a certain phenomenon (Florencio, Healee, Ratahi, Wiki, & McKenna, 2021). It is anchored on a constructionist epistemology which aims to investigate a complex reality utilizing a detailed description of the phenomenon involved (Pedroso, Siason, Tangco-Siason, 2021). The gathered data are grounded in the Theory of Experience by John Dewey which suggests three dimensions of human experience: (1) how a present experience is linked to past and future experiences; (2) the material and social context of an individual's situation; (3) and how an individual interacts within the learning environment.

Informants

The informants of this study are six (6) student leaders selected through purposeful sampling. The inclusion criteria in selecting the informants are: a) a bona fide student in a university within Region 6; b) 18-22 years old during the conduct of the study; c) a student leader who held a position in a campus organization for at least one academic year; d) a student leader who is no longer on a position in any campus organizations during the conduct of the study.

Table 1. Profile of Informants

Pseudonym	Age	Sex	Location	No. of Years Being in a Campus Organization	No. of Years Since Disengagement in Leadership Roles in Campus Organizations
Mary	20	Female	Igbaras, Iloilo	2 years	4 years
Tina	20	Female	Barotac Viejo, Iloilo	7 years	3 years
Carly	20	Female	Guimbal, Iloilo	5 years	2 years
Feliz	20	Female	Guimbal, Iloilo	6 years	3 years
Melissa	21	Female	Miagao, Iloilo	7 years	1 year
Miguel	22	Male	San Joaquin, Iloilo	5 years	2 years

Instrument

A written interview questionnaire was utilized to gather data from the informants. This instrument was a researcher-made written interview questionnaire, duly -validated by three (3) experts in qualitative research, and pilot-tested among non-participating students. The crafting of the questionnaire also adhered to Simon and White's Rubric for Expert Validation of Survey and Interview (2018). The English language was utilized as the medium for the written interview questions in which informants were required to answer the interview questionnaire using the same medium. The written interview questionnaire was administered online.

Data collection

An online platform was utilized in administering the data collection process for this study. It was conducted by following systematic and planned steps. First, researchers made use of social media to crowdsource student leaders who passed on the set inclusion criteria and who can be the informant for this study. Second, researchers sent a letter to the chosen students— an online or hard copy letter was sent depending on the location of the student. The said letter contains a short background of the study, the conditions, and a set of interview questions. Third, when the students gave their permission to be one of the informants of the study, a document containing interview questions that they used to type in their responses was sent to them. Lastly, researchers copied the informants' responses were compiled into one electronic file for analysis.

This study adheres to the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act 10173). As stated in Section 8, people who work for newspapers, magazines, or other types of media should always keep any personal information they come across private. Meanwhile, as stated in Section 20, personal information controllers must also implement reasonable and appropriate organizational, physical, and technical measures to protect personal information against any accidental or unlawful deterioration, modification, or disclosure, as well as any other unlawful processing. The level of security needed to protect personal information should depend on factors like the type of information, the risks involved, the size of the organization, and the cost of security measures (Philippine Government, 2012; Pedroso & Pacit, 2022). In this study, informants were informed about the study and were asked for their consent in writing. Furthermore, the researchers ensured to keep the informants' information private and anonymous throughout the study. Thus, a careful and thorough approach to collecting data was followed to ensure its validity and reliability.

Data analysis

As informants provide their responses electronically in MS Word format, the researchers also electronically copied the data and compiled it in a single file to ensure the researchers' easy access to those documents. The collected data then underwent analysis, comparison, and interpretation which utilized thematic analysis. This method of analyzing qualitative data enabled researchers to identify patterns and formulate relevant themes based on the responses given by the informants (Sutton, 2015; Caraig et al., 2020). First, the researchers evaluated interview transcripts as a whole to obtain an initial view of the informants and their experiences. Next, the researchers identified and selected key statements, organized those statements into clusters, and formulated and assigned themes for each cluster. Then, based on the formulated themes, codes were given to the statements of the informants and were assigned appropriate categories to ensure that the data collected is accurately analyzed and interpreted (Curran & Fuselier, 2020). In addition, relevant literature and studies were cited carefully to support their research findings (Pedroso & Pacit, 2022). To ensure that the analysis is valid and reliable, collected data were continuously compared to the data sources (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Curran & Fuselier, 2020).

Results

Three significant themes emerged in this study namely (1) personal-related factors, (2) interpersonal-related factors, and (3) structural-related factors. From these significant themes, five (5) important categories were developed. Students' disengagement in leadership roles in campus organizations is influenced the personal-related factors such as (1) hindrance to academics and (2) compromises health. Meanwhile, interpersonal-related factors include (3) divided time and (4) being in the public eye. Lastly, the structural-related factor is the (5) authority factor.

Personal-Related Factors

Students' disengagement in leadership roles is caused by their personal experiences, perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs about student leadership in their school environment. There were two examined categories that are relevant to the personal-related factors namely (1) hindrance to academics and (2) compromises health.

Hindrance to Academics

Taking a leadership role in a campus organization is a hindrance to academics for the students. As these leaders are also students, not holding any leadership role in these organizations is the solution for their compromised academic standings. This is divided into two subcategories namely (1) diverted priority and (2) leadership consequence.

***Diverted Priority*.** Assuming a leadership role while still being a student means having to divide one's priorities and this is an identified factor in students' disengagement in leadership roles in campus organizations.

- *Carly: "Oftentimes, I need to choose between doing my homework or going back to school on the weekend for some organizational work that I need to accomplish."*

- *Mary: "It made me sad to think that my academic performance is not good for sometimes I don't have any time for reviewing my lessons due to my busy schedule."*

Leadership Consequence. For the informants, being a leader for a campus organization while studying has consequences for them and those are some of the reasons why they built a disinterest in taking leadership roles in their succeeding academic years.

- *Feliz: "Multiple times, I had slept deeply during class hours due to exhaustion and lack of sleep, and I could not keep up with the lessons most of the time."*

- *Melissa: "I had a lot of outputs that I submitted late because I find it hard to balance my responsibilities in my organization and my academics."*

Compromises Health

Balancing academics and leadership roles posed health risks, mental and physical health, to the students. Thus, it became one of the factors for their disengagement in taking leadership roles in campus organizations. This is divided into two (2) subcategories namely (1) entangled with stress and (2) influence of physical health.

***Entangled with Stress*.** One of the common themes that was identified from the responses of the informants is the stress that their responsibility as student leaders gives them. Stress poses a threat to the mental and even physical health of students and it became one of the factors for their disengagement in leadership roles in campus organizations.

- *Miguel: "I experienced so much stress being a student leader and a student at the same time where there were times that I skip meals just to catch up with the demand of being a leader and a student."*

- *Mary: "I feel exhausted and these tiring days give me stress as well."*

Influence on Physical Health. Being a student leader in a campus organization brought a threat to the physical health of the students. It is one of the identified factors why they decide to not hold any leadership position on any campus organization in their succeeding academic years.

- *Tina: "I'd still be suffering from too much pressure and stress that I started collapsing at school, having random asthma attacks, and my mental health deteriorated. I started gaining weight because of stress eating and a sedentary lifestyle."*

- *Melissa: "There were weeks when I barely got any sleep due to heavy demand and I believe it was one of the reasons why I caught flu at that time because of my weak immune system due to lack of sleep."*

Interpersonal-Related Factors

Social interactions between students and their environment are contributing factors behind students' disengagement in leadership roles in campus organizations. There are two (2) examined categories that are related to the interpersonal-related factors namely (1) divided time and (2) sacrificing relationships.

Divided Time

Being a student already takes away time in the personal or social life of students and being a student leader for a campus organization adds to that burden. This is one of the examined factors behind students' disengagement in leadership roles. This is divided into two (2) subcategories namely (1) sacrificing relationships and (2) peer pressure.

Sacrificing Relationships. Time is an essential thing for the informants as they are not only student leaders but are surrounded by important people that they also want to spend time with but having a heavy responsibility as student leaders prohibits them to do so compromising their relationships.

- *Carly: "During my years as a student leader, it was hard as I need to balance my responsibilities as a student, being in an organization, a friend, and as a daughter."*
- *Miguel: "I had little time building my social life at that time because most of my time went to organizations, academics, and family."*
- *Feliz: "I almost lose my friends due to my responsibilities in the organization."*

Peer Pressure. The perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes of their peers toward them holding a position in a campus organization also influence their disengagement in leadership roles in campus organizations.

- *Melissa: "In my circle of friends, I was the only one who is a student leader, and it makes me feel bad that whenever we have meetings in school, I cannot join them, especially on special occasions. Some of them also advised me to slow down."*

In the Public Eye

Just like any public servant, student leaders are also placed in the public eye, and being in that position negatively impacts the informants. This is one of the identified reasons why students opt to stay away from leadership responsibilities on their campus. This is divided into two (2) subcategories namely (1) subject to scrutiny and (2) affects self-esteem.

Subject to Scrutiny. Being in a public position also means receiving comments and scrutiny from other people. For some student leaders, it creates a negative impact to them and it became one of the factors of their disengagement in taking leadership roles in campus organizations.

- *Miguel: "I felt like all my actions were being judged by others and it made me so conscious of my every move to the point where I felt that it wasn't healthy for me anymore."*

Affects Self-Esteem. As someone who placed themselves in a public position, they are subject to public scrutiny which affects their self-esteem, and this is one of the identified factors for their disengagement in leadership roles in campus organizations.

- *Tina: "I experienced bullying [for gaining weight due to stress eating] — my classmates would call me names and spread rumors tainting my reputation."*

Structural-Related Factors

The policies that were implemented in school organizations are some of the examined structural-related factors that influence students' disengagement in leadership roles in campus organizations. Since this factor is not common among students, there is only one (1) examined category under this theme namely (1) authority factor.

Authority Factor

People who are in higher authority in campus organizations are among the identified factors for students' disengagement in leadership roles in campus organizations. This is divided into two (2) subcategories namely (1) pressure from the organization's adviser and (2) internal changes.

Pressure from the Organization's Adviser. Student organizations are usually headed by an adviser and student leaders are oftentimes subject to so much pressure from them which adds to the overall pressure for them. This is one of the identified factors in their disinterest in student leadership.

- *Melissa: "The pressure coming from our adviser is something that adds to the overall pressure of being an officer. I felt that I had no freedom to serve my peers the way I wanted it."*

Internal Changes. Most campus organizations are not independent from the school institution itself so any internal changes in the school might also impact the organizations and its officers. This is one of the identified factors for students' disengagement in leadership roles in campus organizations.

- *Tina: "During my last year, there was a sudden change of school head teacher, there's a lot of adjustments and there's so much to fix and all of those are thrown and placed over my shoulders since I am the president.*

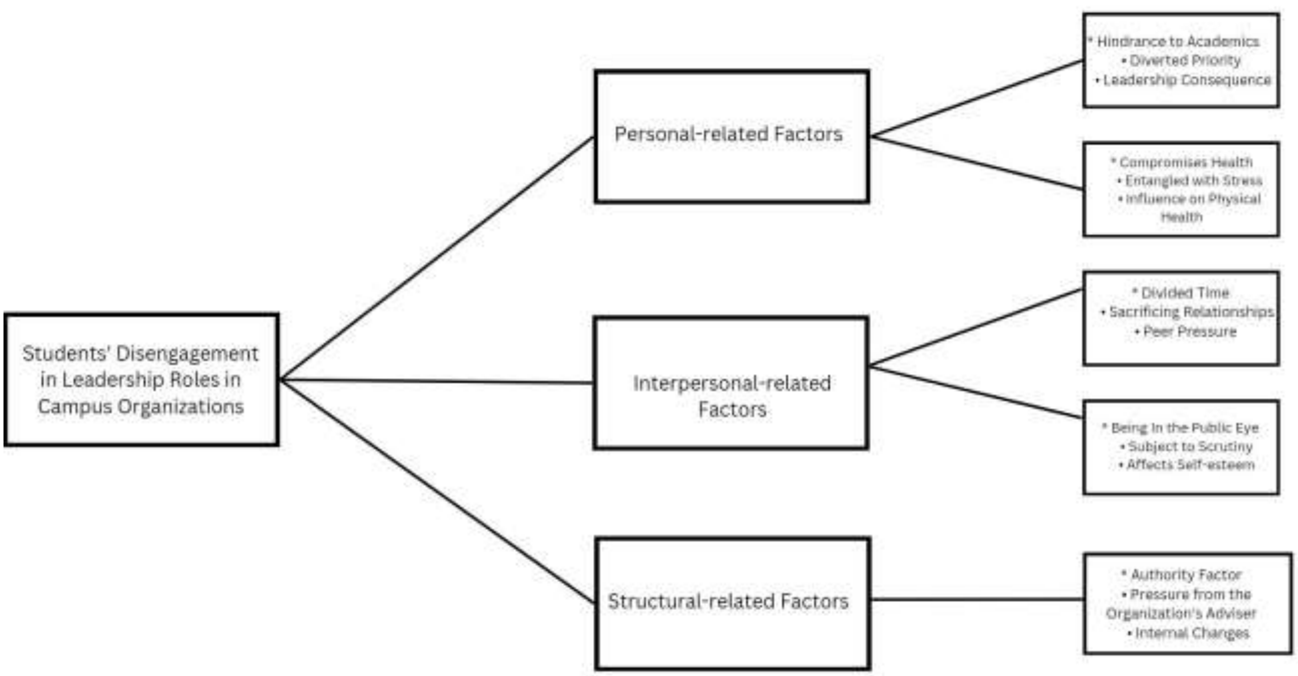

Figure 1. Demonstration of meaningful categories of the study

Discussion

Educational institutions are now emphasizing the importance of instilling the value of leadership among the youth (Sunderman, Hastings, and Sellon, 2022), and one of the many ways to hone that skill among students is through different campus organizations. Ebede (2015) supports this idea as campus organizations are ideal to provide students with learning experiences outside a traditional classroom setting. It broadens students' network of connections to other peers who have the same interest as them and even develop core competencies and soft skills. However, students who are engaging in leadership roles in campus organizations also have negative experiences in assuming leadership roles.

As leaders in the present times are up for the challenge of coping with the fast changes in society – changes that they were bound to give a sense of (Draft, 2015), students who are engaging in leadership roles are subject to this burden. On a study conducted by Harms, Crede, Tynan, Leon, and Jeung (2017), they argue that leadership roles can be linked to stress in which 88% of leaders posited that the nature of their work as leaders is the main cause of stress for them. This suggests that the great amount of stress that comes with leadership roles stems from the challenges they face as leaders, the pressure of maintaining their reputation, and the desire to obtain prestige.

As joining a campus organization is considered an extracurricular activity, engaging in more than three extracurricular activities is detrimental to students posing a huge possibility of academic decline (Tanner, 2017). Furthermore, if a student who holds a position in a campus organization solely identifies him/herself as a leader and not as a student or a student leader, it is when his/her academics start to decline (Beron & Piquero, 2016).

On the other hand, the findings of this study are opposite to the findings from a study conducted by Anderson and Lu (2017) wherein students who were appointed to a leadership role had an increase in test scores compared to their other peers. They argue that appointed student leaders tend to increase their study effort due to the feeling of people having higher expectations of them or with the hopes of achieving higher leadership appointments in the future.

Several studies suggest that the level of engagement displayed by students in leadership activities during higher education can improve academic performance, personal growth, and a heightened learning experience (Kashan, Shah, & Rehman, (2019); Astin, 1999). Furthermore, students' utilization of their leadership skills can help them achieve academic goals as the study reveals that leadership skills and academic success are correlational (Kashan et al., 2019).

As revealed in the study, peer pressure is one of the factors behind students' disengagement in leadership roles in campus organizations. This finding is supported by Zhu, Lu, and Chang (2020) who suggest that peer pressure is more influential on adolescents, the stage when most of the informants decide to quit from holding any leadership roles. They explained that it is the "adjusting" period for people, which is why peer influence is stronger. However, they stated that major life changes made due to peer pressure during the adolescent stage are part of a person's development.

Meanwhile, Moran (2015) links self-esteem with the leadership role. The growth of a leader and their leadership conduct is influenced by the individual's capacity to gain a thorough understanding of themselves throughout their journey of personal development. Moran (2015) suggests student affairs professionals should look after student leaders as self-esteem has a great influence on one's behavior and development.

Fortune and Olubunkunmi (2022) listed the different challenges faced by student leaders and one of which is the lack of respect from other peers. They suggest that because the student leaders and the other students are peers, it is a challenge for them to establish boundaries between them. Furthermore, the lack of support and cooperation from the students is also cited as one of the challenges faced by student leaders.

This current research has limitations that should be noted and addressed by future studies. First, this is a qualitative-descriptive study which implies that there is little to no quantitative data that will strengthen the findings. An accompanied quantitative data about students' disengagement in leadership roles in campus organizations can address this limitation. Second, this current study utilized an online written interview, hence, there is a potential for distortion due to the influence of self-report bias. Finally, the informants are only within a small part of the country and do not fully represent a broad population of students which can be an issue for generalization of the findings. Nonetheless, despite mentioned limitations, the study conducted was able to generate adequate data on the factors influencing students' disengagement in taking leadership roles in campus organizations.

Conclusion

The factors behind students' disengagement in leadership roles in campus organizations are a reflection of the condition of student leaders in the present times. Facing the challenges of being a student, these student leaders also have struggles in concern to the position they put themselves into. They are committed to serving their fellow students, but when that service already compromised their well-being, especially in academics as they are all students before becoming student leaders, they chose to set aside extracurricular activity which is the involvement in campus organizations. Unlike other public servants, student leaders have no monetary compensation for what they do for their school, so it is important that school heads look after the welfare of these student leaders and should ensure that the working environment for them will still allow them to balance academics and leadership responsibilities and promote growth among students.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Practices of equality in racial diversity at manufacturing industries: Exploring influence on employees' job performance at the workplace

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Abstract

This research study explores the employees' perception of equality in racial diversity at manufacturing organizations. The total number of sample size is 10, including five number of participants and five different manufacturing firms situated at Kailali district of Nepal with "purposeful sampling technique" and information was gained from interview guide. The key findings showed that organizational change in terms of fair staff recruitment and practice of equal opportunity to all employees assist to meet career goals. Furthermore, positive influence on job performance is possible through increased work commitment, job satisfaction and motivation at work (Susanto et al., 2022). Findings have brought forward the negative influence of job performance from the lack of equality in racially diverse firms in regards to lack of team work and work commitment (HBR, 2020). The implication of effective cross-cultural communication at work would be productive for task execution, ensuring employee engagement and motivation. Along with the practice of equal opportunity for all employees, it is recommended to implement extrinsic and intrinsic motivation pathways to enhance job performance in the long term.

Keywords: Career development; job performance; organizational environment; motivation

Introduction

The concept of racial diversity can be comprehended as diversity in terms of race, color, caste, gender, religion, culture, and origin (Denson & Chang, 2009). Organizations have progressively perceived the benefit of having a diverse workforce, as these employees have an essential part in the organization's capacity to support an upper hand in a competitive age, whereas inequality in such racial variety has ended up creating complexities in job performance and organizational productivity as a whole (King & Spruell, 2001). Therefore, it has become increasingly explicit to organizational decision-makers that employment discrimination in terms of racial diversity is a serious problem that needs to be addressed.

Statement of problem

In a series of studies done by Sommers & Ellsworth (2000), found that race is unlikely to influence decision making. In contrast, racial diversity helps in decision-making through information exchange and problem solving (Sommers, 2006). Organization with racially diverse workforce are more productive, innovative, and have a lower employee turnover rate (Armstrong et al., 2010). The research and studies in terms of equality in racial diversity in the manufacturing sectors in Nepal seem to be ambiguous, with a permeating gap in terms of impact on employee job performance. Thus, a research gap is filled in this study.

Purpose

In this context, the purpose of this study is to explore the perspectives of employees at workplaces in order to understand practices of equality in racial diversity through individual experience. The research is aimed at comprehending the perceptions of five employees from five different manufacturing industries and finding the practice of equality along with how equality in racial diversity influences employees job performance.

Research questions

Research is hoped to provide answers to the following questions:

- What are the practices of equality in manufacturing firms in Kailali, Nepal?
- How does the practice of equality in racial diversity influence an employee's job performance?

Research Significance

Since every organization performs its task with the help of human resources belonging to varied backgrounds in terms of different sex, age, socio-religious groups, and different educational or literacy standards, racial diversity is the inclusion of people's age, caste, sex, and national or ethnic origin. However, it becomes significant to comprehend practices of equality among all the subordinates at the organization in the context of racial diversity at the workplace, which imbibes diversity in terms of gender, skin color, race, or ethnic origin (Laird et al., 2005). Furthermore, there has been little research done in the Nepalese context to date concerning how employee's performance is influenced by practices of equality and racial diversity at the workplace. Hence, the researcher has fulfilled the research gap through meaningful findings.

Scope and Delimitations

The study will explore the theme of equality in racial diversity at the workplace. The place for the study is five different manufacturing industries located in Kailali, Nepal. It would explore whether there is a practice of equality among employees belonging to specific castes, ethnicities, and races. The research would further bring constructive results in terms of impact on employees' job performance. The research has used semi-structured interviews as a tool for qualitative research, which would fulfill research objectives effectively.

The researcher has forbidden deductive reasoning as it affirms subjectivism and further excludes other research paradigms such as pragmatism, critical realism, and positivism.

Limitations

While undertaking the study, the researcher experienced a few constraints. Most remarkably, the modest number of participants implied a limited generalization from the findings. The utilization of semi-structured interviews was extremely helpful in acquiring insights; however, the approach is a time-consuming phenomenon. The geographic location of the study is definite, so the results are based on only one district of Nepal.

Literature review

An employee's performance at work is influenced by five major factors, namely diversity at the workplace, organizational culture, the manager's attitude, job content, and financial rewards (Ali et al., 2012). The connection between HRM-diversity practices, employee performance, and well-being demonstrates that diversity in an organization has a positive impact on several spectrums of employee job performance by creating a delightful workplace (Devonish, 2013). Nonetheless, a few studies demonstrate that the HR practice of creating a diversified workplace might raise more significant levels of pressure, burnout, and exhaustion, which are components that adversely influence the job performance of employees (Alfes et al., 2012).

External and internal advantages happen whenever there are practices of equal opportunity in racial diversity (Ballor, 2013), which eventually affect job execution positively. External advantages incorporate 'decreased costs, improved resourcing of skilled workers, and enhanced corporate image. In addition, internal advantage involves employee trust, improved decision-making, and better task execution by employees (Ferndale et al., 2015). Furthermore, practices of equal opportunity for all employees were linked to improved organizational productivity, especially with the participation of employees of varied races (Dobusch, 2016).

The practice of equality in racial diversity prompts recruiting and retaining a great workforce, increased job satisfaction and commitment within the firm, and better customer relationships (Tatli and Ozbilgin, 2011). There are four major aspects through which equality in racial diversity can be managed: performance appraisal, socio-cultural issues, organizational capabilities, and an affirmative approach (Sadri & Tran, 2002).

Equal treatment between genders in the organization in terms of rights, benefits, obligations, accountabilities, and opportunities helps to enhance their job performance in a positive way (Lambert, 2000). Gender-based variety is one of the biggest components of racial diversity that influences employee job performance both positively and negatively (Blake and Kazin, 2011). Manufacturing organizations generally like to recruit and hold male employees and laborers when compared with female workers in order to have higher output and efficiency (Bhadury et al., 2000). Various researchers have seen that gender-based diversity makes for more productive individual execution inside the workplace (Hite, 2008). Similarly, gender diversity practices have a positive impact on the service industry, whereas they have a negative impact on manufacturing firms in terms of efficiency (Nemetz and Christensen, 1996).

Ethnic diversity is characterized by similarities in each other's language, ancestry, caste, history, society, culture, nation, or social treatment based on where they reside (Ozbilgin, 2014). The Asian Development Bank (2010) has investigated the status of workplace diversity and equality in private firms in Nepal. It was observed that these organizations represent 54.2 percent Brahmans and Chhetris, trailed by 23.7 percent Newars, 18.3 percent Janajatis, and 3.8 percent Dalits. It infers that there is an overrepresentation of Brahman and Chhetris as opposed to other ethnicities. This signifies that Nepalese organizations are led by ethnic groups of Brahmins and Chhetris.

In general, racial diversity harbors both opportunities and threats (Harrison & Klein, 2007). Beginning with opportunities, ethnic diversity helps to manifest diverse teams with large talents (Joshua and Taylor, 2014). Then again, threats have additionally been accounted for in terms of team conflicts and internal groupism, resulting in poor team performance. Because of these blended findings, ethnic variety is frequently referred to as a 'double-edged sword' (Jackson et al., 2003). Along these lines, racial diversity is referred to as a way to evoke creativity and innovation, leading to higher job performance in an ethnically diverse team (Berry, 2005).

Methodology

The method of qualitative research is particularly valuable in finding the subjective views of participants and immersing them in information (Yazan, 2015). Consequently, the researcher believed the subjective way to be more pertinent to attempt this research as it permitted a more prominent ability to acquire profound meaning from an individual's experience on research questions as opposed to the quantitative approach, which is more structured and relies on numeric data. The present paper is about the perception of employees towards equality and diversity; hence, qualitative research would provide meaningful results as it digs into the perception and experience of the participants.

The “purposeful sampling” method is done, and five participants were selected purposefully. The participants were regular employees. In manufacturing industries, it ramps up the possibility of getting employees from several backgrounds, cultures, genders, and so on. The participants selected for the interview are working in manufacturing sites in order to gain real insight and justify the research statements viably.

Table 1: Research design

Participants	Sex	Age	Organization	Location (province no.7)
1	Male	35	Company 1	Kailali
2	Female	40	Company 2	Kailali
3	Male	55	Company 3	Kailali
4	Male	29	Company 4	Kailali
5	Female	30	Company 5	Kailali

Case study research

The research involves collecting in-depth data about the individual or group through the use of several collection methods (Baxter and Jack, 2015). Observation and interviews are two of the most common methods of collecting data. Thus, researchers have applied case study research to gain an in-depth understanding of problems by investigating multiple people through interviews.

Data collection method

A semi-structured interview approach was used to carry on conversations that elicited rich data that could be used in qualitative analysis, and all the interviews were conducted in-person. Semi-structured interviews would give participants more room to answer in terms of what is important to them and to control the introduction and flow of the topics.

Inductive approach

This research is aligned with inductive reasoning, forming general conclusions from individual instances and observations. The data were gathered and analyzed to form a new theory backed by real-life experiences of people, which might be intriguing to readers, whereas a deductive approach lacks the ability to feel human thoughts and emotions. Since it explores a new theory, it does not limit creativity, unlike deductive reasoning, in which existing information is analyzed to accept or reject a hypothesis for research purposes (Gratton, 2009).

Data analysis and interpretation

A thematic analysis approach was used to enhance familiarization with the topic. This is perhaps the most widely recognized approach to breaking down subjective information from interviews and analyzing data (Bhatia, 2021). The path of data analysis in this research transcends transcription, translation, coding, thematizing, and analysis. Finally, the researcher presented the discussions to analyze the data, which is backed by relevant theories and other research in the area of human resource management.

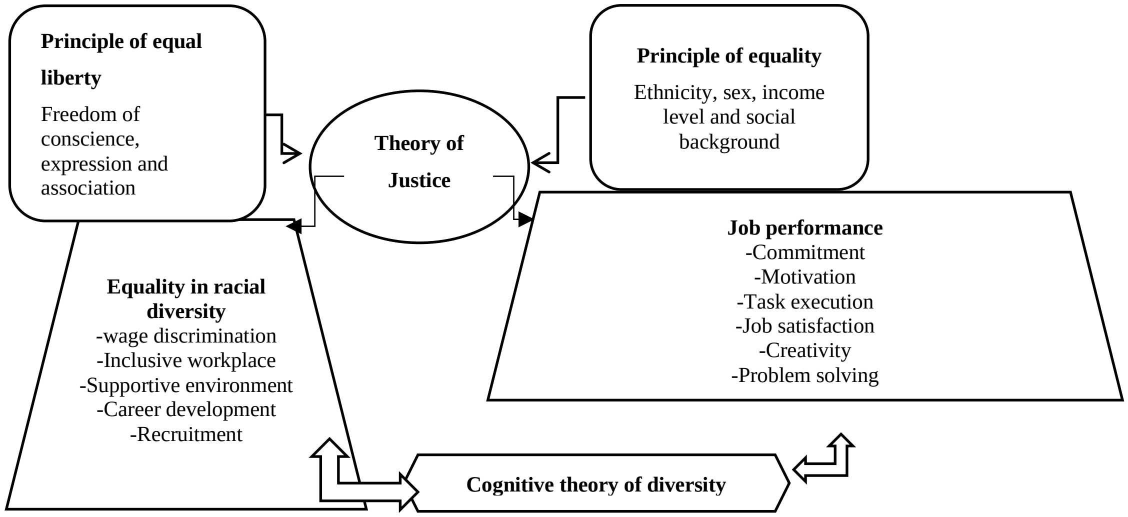

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

The research is guided by a given theoretical framework, which depicts cognitive diversity theory and the theory of justice in two paradigms: the principle of equal liberty and the principle of equality. John Rawls developed the Theory of Justice based on the social contract theory, in which researchers proposed two principles, i.e., the principle of equal liberty and the principle of equality (Schokkaert, 2015).

The research has found out about the practice of equality in racial diversity in various terms, such as wage discrimination, effective recruitment, career development, a supportive environment, the participation of employees, and opportunities. As per the theory of Justice, strong positive impacts on sustainable development, task execution, and commitment at work are bound to be applicable through equality that enhances job performance (CFI, 2021). In this regard, researchers have discovered that practices of equality in racial diversity matter in job performance through employees' commitment at work, motivation, problem solving, task execution, job satisfaction, creativity, and synergy at work.

Cognitive diversity theory alludes to distinctions between team members in characteristics like expertise, experiences, and perspectives, which suggest that diversity across a wide spectrum results in creativity, problem solving, and innovation (Miller et al., 1998). In cognitive diversity theory, multiple perspectives resulting from cultural differences among groups or organizational members lead to innovative problem-solving.Therefore, this study showed that these factors would lead to positive organizational outcomes through better job performance by employees. In addition, there is a linkage to cognitive diversity theory in my research since racial diversity incorporates people from different cultural backgrounds with varied perspectives. The findings have further proposed that diversity of ethnicity matters in job performance in terms of idea sharing, creativity, problem solving, and so on.

Credibility and Trustworthiness

While leading this study, the researcher guaranteed informed consent from all participants. They were likewise encouraged that they had no commitment to respond to questions that they did not feel comfortable with. Prior to the beginning of each interview, the members were recounted the timeframe associated with the meeting, and adequate time was permitted to pose any inquiries connecting with the research theme. Participants' and organizations' identities are also kept anonymous.

Results

Equality and organizational change

On being questioned about the significance of equality in racial diversity, the responses were mostly focused on the idea of a change in working culture that leads to an enhanced workplace. Participant 1 stressed the reduction of discrimination at the workplace through the practice of equality and further added that the right staff recruitment was possible.

*Equality in racial diversity also contributes greatly to staff recruitment as I presume that anyone could be hardly interested in working in an organization where there is racial discrimination (Interview: Participant 1).*Another participant had given a view on the flow of opportunities for every employee that makes a unique workplace. The response from participant 4 showed that there could be less probability of conflicts, and both the organization and employees would reap the benefit.

Equality enables love for uniqueness, creates harmony between different community, and great opportunity to learn as one employee could learn another culture and shared skills which becomes great learning opportunity (Interview: Participant 4).

Issues of equality

The first challenge was found to be a lack of communication, where people from similar cultural backgrounds were bound not to openly communicate with colleagues beyond their racial boundaries.

The biggest challenge for a racially diverse organization is to maintain effective communication since there is a higher probability of communication gaps (Interview: Participant 3).

In that regard, one participant clarified the unwillingness of employees to communicate with people of other racial backgrounds.

Most often the projects are leveraged by the same employee having better connection and experience (Interview: Participant 5).

One of the participants acknowledged the bias of authority and further argued that these kinds of instances caused unwillingness to execute the tasks. Inequality of wage emerged from one participant, who argued variances in wage between male and female workers.

We are paid less than men's workers as they are considered to be resilient and produce greater output in less time when it comes to strenuous tasks at work (Interview: Participant 2).

Racial diversity as a challenge

Participant 1 had identified the communication gap as a challenge for employees working in a racially diverse environment. He also mentioned that unity is greater among employees of the same caste and culture. This saturated unity might sometimes create unethical activities that could hinder discipline at work.

I have seen the circumstance where Tharu people (origin of Terai) have one unity whereas the hill races (Brahmin and Chhetri) have their own unity at their work, but there have not been any such unethical issues that would hinder the discipline of the workplace (Interview: Participant 1).

Similarly, another participant shared his thoughts on the challenges of racial diversity and the lack of interpersonal communication due to the huge age gap; as a result, idea sharing is bound not to occur. His response depicted that younger employees are not keen to share their ideas and maintain communication at the workplace. They enjoy their work when accompanied by their millennia.

Some of employees working under finance department are in their late 40's whereas some of them are in their 20's. This creates huge barriers in terms of sharing of ideas because there is less likely to have interpersonal connection (Interview: Participant 4).

All the participants addressed the challenge as a way to create conflicts due to the language barrier. Employees showered opinions as difficulties in comprehending each other's values and individual beliefs since communication suffers when employees from multiple backgrounds are working under the same roof. Furthermore, psychological impact could be the case if he or she had to encounter preferential treatment, and that would be a loss for both organizations as well as for employees.

Equal opportunity as a practice of equality

Participants bestowed thoughts on equality as equal facilities and services for all employees and further described their own instances of not being deprived of equal opportunities. When asked what they thought about equality, some participants articulated providing equal opportunities in employee benefits such as bonus and insurance.

If everyone working in the organization is getting equal facilities, opportunities and services, then it can be said that there is equality. In my case, I'm working as a service advisor. It's been 2 years and so far, I have not felt such issues related to inequality in ethnic diversity (Interview: Participant 3)

Participants added that employees are given proper guidance related to their job role and task execution. Participant three assured that the organization has been practicing equality in equal treatment, enhanced cooperation, and shown strong disfavor in regards to racial discrimination. Furthermore, participant four had shown keen focus on providing equal opportunities for all employees who wanted to get enrolled in the organization. He shared that they have been following assessment method in promotions for all their staff.

In staff recruitment, we include all castes and have specific quotas for marginalized community to make an inclusive workplace and maintain assessment method inst promotion to different job levels so that no one should have to face nepotism, which is good for both employer and employee (Interview: Participant 4)

Equality as a strength for job performance

In addition to mentioning equality in racial diversity, participants also discussed various ways equality benefits the job performance of employees. The response from participant one helped to develop a theme in regards to strengths from various parts, such as teamwork, wage discrimination, and dedication at work. He stated that equality in racial diversity benefits the creation of a positive working culture that leads to the embrace of equal wage pay and the commitment of employees.

Equality in racial diversity creates a positive work environment where good teamwork is possible with no wage discrimination, which makes employees more committed to their work (Interview: Participant 1).

There was an advantage as a way for the creation of cheerful workplaces through enhanced belongingness among employees of varied races and easy task execution through better communication with upper-level managers. He added that the practice of equality helped to meet individuals career goals and enhanced their job satisfaction, which also greatly helped in building a sense of belongingness, which creates a happy workplace where all employees are charged up to push their limits. Employees perceived higher value in job performance in terms of equal opportunities to learn, positivity, and efficient task execution.

Equality broadly affects job performance. As I said before, if there is equality in racial diversity, it will have a positive effect on the ability to work. Equality in the workplace provides opportunities to learn for all and significantly contributes to positive change (Interview: Participant 1).

He further added that employees are bound to remain excited and motivated, resorting to enhanced performance. They are motivated and excited at every moment, and a feeling of equality in every spectrum led them to focus on career development. Therefore, equality helps to create effectiveness in performance. All of these factors make it easier to perform, and eventually they will indeed enjoy their task and position.

Equality at the workplace leads to inclusiveness of social standing, equal opportunity for different job levels, and a diverse range of ideas no matter what your background is (Interview: Participant 4).

Participant 4 articulated his thoughts in terms of growth in the performance level of staff, creativity, and innovative minds that foster productivity. Participants depicted the high commitment and loyalty of staff towards the organization as a major leverage for maintaining equality in racial diversity. They linked equality among racially diverse people with enhanced job performance and organizational productivity in general. Employees perceived equality in racial diversity as one of the major strengths of the organization since it encouraged staff loyalty and commitment to business ethics.

Inequality as a weakness for job performance

Participant 1 opined that an employee's job performance had to encounter several problems when there was not equality in racial diversity. He mentioned slower task execution and lower job goals as some reasons behind staff turnover and ineffective job performance.

Slow task execution means employees job goals are not met, which leads to an increase in staff turnover and lower job performance (Interview: participant 1).

In addition, participant 2 reasoned that employee's creativity and interest at work would be affected, which would hamper their job performance. He mentioned hindrances that occurred with the rise in inequality and employees lack of interest in the job they were carrying out. Employees had to lack motivation and job satisfaction at work when they were constantly treated in a biased way. He added that conflicts in an organization permeate and majorly invade idea sharing, communication, and teamwork.

Employees are bound not to show creativity at work because they lack interest in what they are doing if they are constantly victims of racism (Interview: Participant 2).

Most of the participants discussed how inequalities had significant consequences for work execution through the absence of belongingness, inventiveness, and the worker's productivity. Having mutual feeling of acceptance, inclusion, and identity for each other encourages sense of belonging as a jewel for day-to-day functioning in organization.

Another interviewee responded that employees lacked willingness to work and declined commitment to their task when equality was not practiced among people of divergent races.

Employees cannot outperform their best selves if they lack the same opportunities as others while working. This would undoubtedly lead to a lack of belongingness, which obstructs creativity and innovation (Interview: participant 4)

He argued that it was a way to bring complexity to organizational culture and the performance of employees. However, a lack of equality among racial and ethnic groups of people created chaos in the working environment of the organization through a decrease in employee motivation and productivity in general.

Managing discriminatory practices

Discrimination in terms of race is devastating for the performance of employees in any organization. All the interviewees had a common thought on handling discriminatory practices when they were found to be permeating the workplace, and most of them shared that organizations undertake actions as per the guideline policy.

We take appropriate action against discriminatory employees in accordance with the company's guidelines policy (Interview: Participant 1).

They concurred that in the case of such misappropriations, the organization has a legitimate policy to mitigate such issues.

The organization has more workers from similar ethnic backgrounds, like Chhetris. There have not been such issues of discrimination on the basis of caste or color. In such cases, the HR department immediately conducts an investigation into discrimination complaints and takes actions as per workplace policy (Interview: Participant 2).

Discussion

The approaches to maintain the equality at such organization was practiced in terms of fair staff recruitment, performance appraisal with employee assessment approach, equal employee benefits related to insurance and annual bonus. Organizations are setting the foundation of equality with unbiased hiring process and performance appraisal (Amani, 2022). Furthermore, bonuses and incentives incubates the sense of equality in employee benefits(Tsai, 2018).

Racial discrimination in the workplace divides employees, which negatively impacts certain groups based on their attributed ethnicity (Ashe & Nazroo, 2016). Findings from this study showed that inequality among individuals at work incubates distinctions between employees that create conflicts. The lack of cooperation was seen in the light of varied racial backgrounds was one of the themes that emerged in the study, which explicates that employees from similar culture appeared to have unity at work, which caused other employees to lacking motivation to undertake their prospective job role.

Discrimination in terms of the varied races of individuals leads to a lack of motivation at the workplace (Ragins et al., 2003). Goldman et al. (2006) further expressed that racial discrimination declines employees' potential to work to their best ability, resulting in a lack of motivation at work that adversely affects work execution, which declines efficiency. While exploring equality in racial diversity at manufacturing firms, a study found a variance in wages between male and female labor. The wage inequality between men and women working at the same job level impedes individual job performance. Women, who are often paid less than men in similar positions, generally are not promoted within an organization as quickly as men, hold less prestigious jobs, and are less likely to reap benefits from job transfers and work assignment changes (Ostroff & Atwater, 2003).

There is a lack of effective communication among colleagues due to practices of inequality; this leads to a communication gap, and employees find difficulties in efficient task execution. It is because the work execution of individuals endures in the absence of relational communication and idea sharing. In that regard, youthful employees are not quick to share their thoughts and keep up communication in the work environment (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010). They make the most of their work when they are joined by their millennia, which hampers profitability at work for all degrees of representation. Solidarity is stronger among workers of the same racial background and culture. This soaked solidarity may at some point lead to untrustworthy practices that could obstruct control at work.In addition, Wanous (2004) found out that inequality creates one-sidedness, which leads to a psychological impact that would be a misfortune for both organizations as well as for employees in terms of task performance. An employee's performance at work is influenced by five major factors, namely diversity at the workplace, organizational culture, the manager's attitude, job content, and financial rewards (Ali et al., 2012). In that regard, the study found that a lack of equality in racially diverse organizations decreases individual job performance through slower task execution, lower commitment, lower job satisfaction, a lack of belongingness, creativity, and teamwork.

The job performance of employees is improved through better practices of equality for all employees in the organization. Equality in diversity leads to greater individual performance within the workplace (Hite, 2008). Fair treatment in every spectrum of the workplace makes individuals more productive, which helps enhance job performance. Addressing equality in organizations creates high-performance working practices (HPWP), which have a positive relationship with job performance (Ketchen et al., 2006). Employees acquire advantages and opportunities through the practices of equality among the entire race at the organization. Opportunity for employees in terms of engagement in decision-making is associated with enhanced work willingness, which leads to better job performance (Demovesk, 2008, as cited in Shmailan, 2016). In this regard, "when employees are allowed equal opportunity in organizational practices and by employee involvement, organizations prosper and performance at work is maximized" (Hodson & Roscigno, 2004).

Equality is an essentially collective value in enhancing workers efficiency and creating a peaceful working environment that certainly fosters creativity, which helps enhance individual job performance. A positive working environment enhances higher levels of creativity and performance (Ekmeceliolu & Gunsel, 2011).

They further showed that it also brings with it a better flow of teamwork and dedication, which are crucial to elevating the job and organizational performance as a whole. Fair practice of equality brings the right employee to the right job role, and when a new employee is a good fit for the void that the organization needs to fill, it improves performance in that job (Muchinsky and Monahan, 1987, as cited in Shmailan, 2016). Thus, a lack of the right fit for employees at work does not yield better job performance. In that regard, SMEs tend to achieve lower production by employees if there is not a good employee fit for the job (J.R., 1996).

Equality in racial diversity assures greater employee accountability, commitment, motivation, and satisfaction, which benefits job performance in general (Li and Hung, 2010). Furthermore, with equality, individual career goals are easier to meet, which enhances job satisfaction, commitment, and motivation among employees to work at their optimum level. Motivation at work promotes employees' zeal towards their task and position, which greatly matters for the performance of individuals and helps businesses achieve better productivity and organizational goals (Sharma et al., 2010). The performance of employees helps to increase the organization's goals.

The theory of justice by John Rawls viewed equality in racial diversity and the job performance of employees through two principles, i.e., the principle of equal liberty and the principle of equality. The study has produced the practice of equality, which is possible through fair wage allocation, opportunities for all employees in career development, a supportive working environment, and a requirement process. The principle of equal liberty suggests freedom of conscience, expression, and association. In addition, the principle of equality assures the fair practice of equal treatment for all races, genders, income levels, and social backgrounds. The study has found that equality in racial diversity directly enhances the job performance of employees through several factors such as employee commitment, creativity, teamwork, job satisfaction, motivation, effective task execution, and idea sharing (Schokkaert, 2015). Task execution and commitment at work are bound to be applicable through equality that enhances job performance (CFI, 2021).

The cognitive diversity theory recommends that racial diversity in organizations results in creativity, problem solving, and innovation (Miller et al., 1998). This theory further showed that these factors would lead to positive organizational outcomes through better job performance of employees; hence, organizational outcomes rely on the job performance of employees. In regards to study, racial diversity incorporates people from different cultural backgrounds with varied perspectives, and this diversity of ethnicity matters in job performance in terms of idea sharing, creativity, and problem solving.

Conclusion

The research explored the perception of employees on how equality affects the job performance of individuals at manufacturing firms, and practices of equality in racial diversity were observed. The research questions were analyzed through a subjective methodology as semi-structured interviews that considered profound comprehension of individuals, which led to meaningful interpretation and theme generation of findings. At last, findings were thoroughly analyzed and backed up with relevant theories and research.

The management could focus on making effective communication cross-cultural, as it hampers effective task execution. In addition, ensuring employee engagement and teamwork for better job performance by all employees. An implication could have been significant in regards to equal pay among males and females to enhance commitment at work. The management can further put the right employee in the right place for effective job execution.

Job satisfaction and motivation are major factors in enhancing the job performance of employees, so organizations would get maximum commitment and better task execution from employees if they implemented several approaches to increasing job satisfaction and motivation at work. Thus, another implication for organizations is that, within a cultural context, both extrinsic rewards (recognition) and intrinsic rewards (accomplishment) need to be incorporated into the organization's reward systems to increase employee motivation and employee job satisfaction, which would enhance job performance in general.

Although the influence of equality and racial diversity on employee performance has been studied and various indicators have been explored, researcher rigor is still deficient in the area of equality and job performance. It is because the job performance of employees is affected by a wide spectrum in which job satisfaction and motivation are larger and deeper aspects that research contributes to this concerted effort by providing scope for future research.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Challenges and Prospect of Women Business Start Up in North Western Nigeria

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore the personality and environmental challenges and prospects faced by women in business start-ups in North Western Nigeria. A total of 273 female entrepreneurs were surveyed using a structured questionnaire. The data collected were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The study found that lack of access to funding sources, legal and regulatory barriers, societal and cultural biases, lack of access to relevant information and technology and limited access to professional networks and mentors were the major environmental challenges faced by women in business start-ups. The study further revealed that women possess the confidence to take risks and pursue opportunities, handle stress and uncertainty, possess the ability to adapt to changing circumstances, communicate and negotiate with stakeholders, and possess the persistence and resilience necessary to overcome challenges in their business start-ups. The study recommends that the government, private organizations, and other stakeholders should work together to address the environmental challenges faced by women in business start-ups in North Western Nigeria by providing access to funding sources, mentorship, networking opportunities, and creating an enabling business environment.
Keywords: Business start-ups, challenges, environment, prospects, women.

Introduction

A business start-up is a new organization that is in its initial stages of development and is focused on bringing a new product or service to the market (Chen & Teng, 2013). It involves identifying a market opportunity, developing a product or service to meet that need, and creating a business model that is viable and sustainable (Blank, 2013). Start-ups are relevant for they are a significant source of job creation (Autio et al., 2014), known for driving innovation (Chen & Teng, 2013; Blank, 2013), important for economic growth (Gompers, 2010; Autio et al., 2014), and they inspire and encourage entrepreneurship (Chen & Teng, 2013).

Start-ups typically require significant investment in terms of time, money, and resources and often face a high degree of uncertainty and risk (Gompers, 2010). It can therefore be both exciting and challenging, especially for women entrepreneurs in North Western Nigeria. This requires careful planning and preparation that ranges from identifying the needs of the community, accessing funding, building a support network, addressing cultural and social barriers, and taking advantage of government support programs that increase the chances of overcoming challenges and create successful businesses in North Western Nigeria (Okoli et al, 2021; Osabohien et al, 2021; Ibrahim & Yusuf, 2018).

The challenges and prospects for women in business start-up can be determined through a combination of personality and environmental factors. Women require personal traits such as self-confidence, resilience, and risk-taking abilities, among others to overcome the challenges they may face in business start-up (Hundera et al, 2019). They need to develop these traits through participating in entrepreneurship training programs, seeking out mentors and role models, and building a strong support network of family and friends.

Similarly, the women need to address environmental and the systemic barriers and biases that exist in the business world. This can be done through advocating for policies that support women-owned businesses, seeking out funding opportunities specifically designed for women entrepreneurs, and creating a supportive and inclusive work culture (Ladge et al, 2019).
It is in view of this that this study aims to examine the personality and environmental challenges faced by women in business start-up as well as exploring the individual personality and environmental prospects that women have in business start-ups.

Research problem

Several studies were conducted on women entrepreneurial personality traits (Brush et al, 2009; Gupta et al, 2009; Verheul et al, 2005; Bollingtoft & Ulhøi, 2005; Thébaud, 2010), women entrepreneurial factors (Ahmed et al, 2018; Fatima, & Ahmed, 2019; Marlow & Patton, (2005; Zawadzka & Zawadzki, 2015; Lerner et al, 1997) women entrepreneurial challenges (Brush et al, 2009; Datta & Gailey, 2012; Coleman & Robb, 2009; Fagenson, 1993; Verheul et al, 2015) and women entrepreneurial prospects (Batista et al, 2017; GEM Global Entrepreneurship Research Association, 2016; Altarawneh et al, 2019; Thakur & Srivastava, 2018; Bolarinwa & Adeoye, 2021).
While there are studies that examine the personality and environmental challenges and prospects for women entrepreneurs in Nigeria, there is a need for more research on the specific challenges and prospects that women in North Western Nigeria face. More so, there is a limited understanding of the women personality challenges and prospects in business start-ups in the region. This study can provide a more nuanced understanding of the cultural, social, and systemic barriers that hinder women's success in business start-ups and provide insights into the specific traits and characteristics that enable women to overcome the barriers and succeed in business start-ups in North Western Nigeria.

Literature review

This section reviews the concepts related to the study, the theoretical framework that underpinned the study and the empirical studies.

Women personality challenges

Starting a business can be a challenging and rewarding experience for anyone, regardless of their gender. However, there are some unique challenges that women may face when starting a business, especially in certain regions of the world (American Express, 2021; OECD, 2017). One challenge that women may face is the lack of access to capital and financial resources (American Express, 2021). Studies have shown that women-owned businesses often have a harder time obtaining loans and other forms of financing compared to their male counterparts (OECD, 2017). This can make it more difficult for women to get their businesses off the ground and can limit their growth potential (World Bank Group, 2016).
Similarly, women may face discrimination and bias challenges (OECD, 2017). They are often underrepresented in the business world and may face challenges related to being taken seriously or being treated equally by investors, customers, and business partners (Carranza et al, 2018). In some parts of the world, such as West Africa including Nigeria, cultural and social norms may also present challenges for women who are trying to start a business (World Bank Group, 2016). For example, women may face societal pressure to prioritize their families over their businesses or may face challenges related to being a woman in a male-dominated industry.
To sum it up, starting a business can be a difficult task for anyone, and women may have some special hurdles as a result of a range of variables (American Express, 2021; OECD, 2017; World Bank Group, 2016). It is critical for women to be aware of these obstacles and to look for support and resources to help them get over them and succeed in the professional sector.

Women environmental challenges

Starting a business is challenging especially to women. Women face some unique environmental challenges when starting a business, particularly in certain regions of the world (American Express, 2021; OECD, 2017). One environmental challenge that women may face is the lack of access to resources and infrastructure (World Bank Group, 2016). In some parts of the world, women may have limited access to resources such as electricity, internet, and transportation, which can make it more difficult for them to start and run a business (OECD, 2017).

In the same vein, women may face the impact of natural disasters and climate change (World Bank Group, 2016). This is to say women-owned businesses are more vulnerable to the effects of natural disasters and may have a harder time recovering from them compared to their male counterparts (OECD, 2017). In addition, the impacts of climate change, such as droughts, floods, and extreme weather events, can also disproportionately affect women-owned businesses (American Express, 2021). In some parts of the world, such as West Africa, cultural and social norms may also present environmental challenges for women who are trying to start a business (World Bank Group, 2016). For example, women may face challenges related to traditional gender roles and responsibilities, which can make it difficult for them to allocate time and resources to starting and running a business.

In general, starting a business may be a difficult task for anyone, and women may encounter some particular environmental hurdles as a result of a range of reasons (American Express, 2021; OECD, 2017; World Bank Group, 2016). It is critical that women are aware of these obstacles and look for resources and support to help them get over them and succeed in the professional sector.

Women personality prospects

Despite facing many challenges, women also have many prospects and opportunities in the world of business and entrepreneurship. Here are a few examples of the prospects that women may have in starting a business:

Increased economic empowerment and independence: Starting a business can allow women to have more control over their financial situation and to become more economically independent (OECD, 2017).

The ability to create positive social and environmental impact: Women-owned businesses may be more likely to prioritize social and environmental responsibility, and can use their businesses as a platform to make a positive impact on their communities and the world (American Express, 2021).

The potential for innovation and growth: Women-owned businesses may bring a unique perspective and approach to problem-solving, and can potentially drive innovation and growth in their industries (World Bank Group, 2016).

Access to networks and support systems: There are many organizations and initiatives that support and promote women entrepreneurs, and joining these networks can provide women with access to valuable resources and support (American Express, 2021).

Ultimately, while establishing a business can be tough, it can also be a fulfilling and empowering experience for women and can offer them numerous opportunities for both personal and professional advancement.

Women environmental prospects

Women have a lot of chances and opportunities in the commercial and entrepreneurial sector when it comes to having a beneficial impact on the environment, despite the fact that they face many environmental issues. The following are few illustrations of the opportunities that women may have for beginning a business:

The ability to drive sustainability and eco-friendliness: Women-owned businesses may be more likely to prioritize sustainability and eco-friendliness in their operations and products, and can use their businesses as a platform to promote these values (American Express, 2021).

The potential for innovation and the development of green technologies: Women-owned businesses may bring a unique perspective and approach to problem-solving, and can potentially drive innovation and the development of green technologies in their industries (OECD, 2017).

Access to funding and resources for environmental projects: There are many organizations and initiatives that support and promote women entrepreneurs working on environmental projects, and joining these networks can provide women with access to funding and other resources (World Bank Group, 2016).

In due course, while establishing a business can be tough, it can also be an empowering and fulfilling experience for women, and it can offer them a variety of opportunities to have a beneficial impact on the environment.

Theoretical Framework

This section explores the theories that explain the relationship between the variables of the study which is entrepreneur identity theory.

Entrepreneur Identity Theory

The Entrepreneur Identity Theory was proposed by Jeffery A. Robinson, Michael D. Kickul, and Dean A. Shepherd in 2001. They developed this theory to explain the process through which individuals develop and maintain their entrepreneurial identity. This theory proposes that entrepreneurial identity is a dynamic and multifaceted construct that is shaped by personal and environmental factors (International Finance Corporation (IFC), 2014). The theory suggests that individuals develop a sense of "entrepreneurial identity" over time as they engage in entrepreneurial activities and reflect on their experiences (Eisenbeiss, 2008). the entrepreneur identity theory could be useful for understanding the challenges and prospects of women business start-ups. For instance, research using this theory could examine how women's entrepreneurial identities evolve as they start and grow their businesses, and how this process is shaped by various personal and environmental factors (Abdulrahim et al, 2022). This could include examining how women's experiences, goals, values, and social networks impact their entrepreneurial identities.

There has been a growing body of research on entrepreneurial identity in recent years, with several scholars investigating the role of this construct in the context of women's entrepreneurship (e.g., DeTienne et al, 2017; O'Connor et al, 2016; DeTienne et al. 2017) conducted a study of women entrepreneurs in the United States and found that those with a strong entrepreneurial identity were more likely to experience success in their businesses. This suggests that entrepreneurial identity may be an important factor to consider when studying the challenges and prospects of women business start-ups.

Empirical review

There are some few studies found examining the relationship between personality and environmental challenges and prospects and women business start-ups in Nigeria. Some of which include:

Al-Sabbahy et al, (2015) conducted a study on challenges faced by women entrepreneurs. The study seeks to compare and analyse the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in the United States and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The study employed a comparative research design, collecting data from women entrepreneurs in both countries through surveys and interviews. The study found several common challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in both the United States and the UAE, including accessing financial resources, balancing work and family responsibilities, gender biases and stereotypes, and limited access to networks and mentoring. However, there were also notable differences in the challenges faced, such as cultural norms and expectations, legal and regulatory environments, and market conditions. The study emphasized the importance of understanding the context-specific challenges to develop targeted support mechanisms for women entrepreneurs.

Marlow and McAdam, (2013) in their study provide an overview of research and theories related to women entrepreneurs. The study adopted a literature review approach and conducted an extensive review of academic articles, books, and reports to gather information on the prospects and challenges of women entrepreneurs. The study found that women entrepreneurs have significant prospects and opportunities in various domains. They highlighted the potential for women entrepreneurs to drive economic growth, create employment opportunities, and contribute to innovation and social change. The study also discussed the importance of access to resources, networks, mentorship, and supportive ecosystems in enhancing the prospects of women entrepreneurs. Additionally, it identified challenges such as gender biases, limited access to finance, work-life balance, and societal expectations that can impact the prospects of women entrepreneurs.

Okafor and Mordi (2010) conducted a study titled "Environmental Factors and Women Entrepreneurship Development in Nigeria" to examine the impact of environmental factors on women entrepreneurship development in Lagos State. The study utilized a combination of primary and secondary sources for data collection. Through an analysis of the collected data, the study found that government policies had a negative correlation with women entrepreneurship development, suggesting that existing policies have an adverse effect on women's ability to engage in entrepreneurial activities and hinder their overall development. The study concluded that fostering an enabling environment for women entrepreneurs is crucial for their success and economic growth, and emphasizes the need for policy changes that support women's access to resources and financial support.

Braun (2010) conducted a study to explore whether women entrepreneurs exhibit stronger engagement with green issues compared to their male counterparts. The study employed a mixed-method exploratory approach, combining quantitative datasets from two regional studies on environmental attitudes and behavior with qualitative data generated through an Australian green entrepreneurship training program. The fund that that women participating in the green entrepreneurship program exhibited stronger environmental attitudes and commitment compared to their male counterparts. Understanding gendered behaviors and attitudes in the context of green entrepreneurship can inform policy initiatives aimed at promoting sustainability within the small business sector. The findings underscore the importance of recognizing and harnessing the unique perspectives and contributions of women in fostering sustainable practices within the entrepreneurial domain.

Dewri and Ananna (2016) conducted a study to examine the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Bangladesh. The study examined the financial capabilities of Bangladeshi women entrepreneurs in initiating their businesses and the availability of collateral facilities to access credit. It also identified and understood the social constraints faced by women entrepreneurs, such as gender discrimination, economic undermining, legal constraints, and biased views by financial institutions regarding women's ability to manage businesses. The findings of the study indicate that women entrepreneurs face significant financial limitations when starting their businesses such as limited access to financial resources, gender discrimination, societal perceptions, legal constraints, and biased views by financial institutions regarding women's ability to manage businesses. The study recommends several measures to improve the working environment for women entrepreneurs, such as increased financial support and access to credit facilities tailored specifically to women entrepreneurs, addressing gender discrimination and promoting gender equality in the entrepreneurial sector, revising legal frameworks, and adopting a more comprehensive and unbiased view of women's capabilities in managing businesses.

Guven (2019) conducted a qualitative study to explore the perspectives and opinions of women entrepreneurs in a specific province regarding environmental factors, entrepreneurship, and gender. The study aims to reveal the general thoughts of entrepreneurship among women and investigate the degree of influence and relationship of environmental factors and gender-related issues on male entrepreneurs. The findings of the study shed light on the perspectives of women entrepreneurs regarding the environmental factors that impact their businesses, as well as their thoughts on entrepreneurship and the gender-related issues they encounter. It is recommended that policymakers, government agencies, and relevant stakeholders develop targeted programs and interventions to support and empower women entrepreneurs, addressing the specific environmental factors and gender-related issues identified in the study.

Adeoye et al, (2018) conducted a study to investigate the survival prospects of female entrepreneurs in their entrepreneurial pursuits. The study focused on the influence of gender disparity, poor family support, and socio-cultural dictates on the business survival of female entrepreneurs. The researchers employed a purposive sampling technique and administered questionnaires to 100 female entrepreneurs in the Remo community. The study founds that gender disparity, poor family support, and socio-cultural dictates significantly affect the survival of female entrepreneurs' businesses. To address these issues, the study recommends providing female entrepreneurs with an enabling environment and adequate support to enhance their business prospects and overall success.

Fapohunda (2013) conducted a study titled "Gender Differences in Human Capital and Personality Traits as Drivers of Gender Gap in Entrepreneurship: Empirical Evidence from Nigeria". The study adopted a survey design and was conducted at the Department of Industrial Relations and Public Administration, Lagos State University, Nigeria, between July and September 2012. The findings of the study indicated that the rate of women's entrepreneurship is lower than that of men. The analysis of the data revealed significant gender differences in control orientation, competitiveness, risk propensity, human capital, and social capital. However, no significant difference was found between males and females in terms of achievement motivation.

Abasilim (2019) conducted a study to investigate the impact of personality traits on the performance of women entrepreneurs in the agro-allied sector. The study collected data from 499 women entrepreneurs from three states in Southwestern Nigeria and used descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the data and test the research hypothesis. The findings revealed that women entrepreneurs with the personality traits of Neuroticism, Openness, Extraversion, and Conscientiousness had a probability of over 50% to perform well in agro-allied micro scale enterprises in the region. However, women entrepreneurs with the trait of Agreeableness had below-average performance probability. The findings suggest that personality traits play a significant role in shaping the business performance of women entrepreneurs in this sector. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of understanding individual differences and tailoring entrepreneurial support programs to address specific personality traits and their influence on business

Ukwueze (2022) conducted a study to explore the impact of social inclusion on female-owned businesses in Nigeria. The study examined various variables such as the number of female account holders, financial institutional accounts in rural areas, grants or loans for startup businesses, and rural and household size to assess their influence on women-owned businesses in Nigeria. The author sourced data from the World Bank's Global Findex database (2017) and used a logistic regression model for analysis. The findings of the study indicate that the number of female account holders, financial institutional accounts in rural areas, grants or loans for startup businesses, and rural and household size positively and significantly influence women-owned businesses in Nigeria. The study recommends that the Nigerian government should establish more viable grant and loan schemes specifically targeting female entrepreneurs, both in rural and urban areas, to encourage and empower more women to start and grow their businesses.

Tijjani et al, (2020) conducted a study to examine the impact of finance on the utilization of different funding sources by female entrepreneurs and investigate the startup and growth of female-owned businesses in Nigeria. The study focused on a sample of 130 women entrepreneurs engaged in business activities in Kano state and the sample was selected using the purposively to identify women entrepreneurs who participated in the study. The findings of the study indicate that women entrepreneurs tend to start businesses during the mid-period of their working lives and often start their businesses as new ventures, particularly after marriage. The authors highlight the importance of policy interventions tailored specifically towards female entrepreneurs to enhance their chances of business success and overcome financial obstacles during the startup phase. The study's recommendations call for targeted policies to support female entrepreneurs and enhance their access to finance, ultimately promoting their business success and contributing to economic growth and empowerment.

Methodology

The methodology for the study on the challenges and prospects of women business start-up in North West Nigeria involves using a quantitative and descriptive survey design. The population covers all women business start-up in the North western Nigeria. As there are nowhere to get this number, based on the nature of the population, the population is considered as infinite. using Cochran 1977 formula. The sample size of (384 determined plus 10% for non-response bias) 423 was found to be appropriate for the study at 1.96 confidence level and 0.05 level of error. The study used research assistants to collect data purposively from the respondents and the data were analysed using table, percentage and frequency, mean and standard deiation..

Results

Questionnaires designed to examine the personality and environmental challenges and prospects faced by women in business start-up in North Western Nigeria were distributed. Four hundred and twenty-three questionnaires were distributed; however, 273 viable questionnaires were analysed. The questionnaire was formulated using a Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1).

Table 1: Characteristics of respondents

Characteristics	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Qualification		
Degree/HND	41	20.0%
NCE/OND	60	12.9%
SSCE/Primary	121	48.4%
Informal/No qualification	53	83.3%
Marital Status		
Single	131	64.6%
Married	142	32.4%
Age		
18-30	94	12.9%
31-40	107	29.0%
40 above	72	54.8%

The table above shows the characteristics of women business start-up owners in North western Nigeria. The business owners were interviewed in North-western Nigerian states comprising Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara. Data were collected from 273 women business owners. The business owners' qualifications reflected 20% with Degree/HND, 12.9% with NCE/OND, 48.4% with SSCE/Primary and 83.3% with informal/No qualification. The results also showed that majority 64.4% of the respondents were single. Though the respondents include the divorced and the widows. Other respondents 32.4% were married. The respondents age revealed 12.9% with 18-30, 29.0% with 31-40 and 54.8% with 40 and above age ranges.

Table 2: Women personality challenges

SN	Variable	Mean	STD Deviation
1	Do you feel confident in your ability to lead and manage a business start-up?	3.33	0.47
2	Do you experience self-doubt or imposter syndrome when it comes to your business start-up?	2.77	0.46
3	Are you comfortable with taking calculated risks in your business start-up?	3.19	0.46
4	Do you feel supported by your personal and professional network in your business start-up?	2.69	0.48
5	Do you feel overwhelmed or stressed by the challenges and responsibilities of running a business start-up?	3.54	0.51

The respondents were asked to rank their level of agreement to statements on the personality challenges women face in business start-up. Results from analysis of their responses showed positive means ranging from 2.69 to 3.54 with a standard deviation between 0.51 to and 0.46. The statement " Do you feel overwhelmed or stressed by the challenges and responsibilities of running a business start-up" had the highest mean (3.54) followed by " Do you feel confident in your ability to lead and manage a business start-up" (3.33) followed by the statement " Are you comfortable with taking calculated risks in your business start-up (3.19)" and the statement " Do you experience self-doubt or imposter syndrome when it comes to your business start-up" (2.77). The statement "Do you feel supported by your personal and professional network in your business start-up "had the least mean (2.69).

Table 3: Women environmental challenges

SN	Variable	Mean	STD Deviation
1	Lack of access to funding sources is a major environmental challenge faced by women in business start-up?	3.63	0.44
2	Legal and regulatory barriers create environmental challenges for women in business start-up?	3.52	0.47
3	Societal and cultural biases pose significant environmental challenges for women in business start-up?	3.34	0.46
4	Lack of access to relevant information and technology presents environmental challenges for women in business start-up?	3.74	0.50
5	Limited access to professional networks and mentors is a major environmental challenge faced by women in business start-up?	2.96	0.48

The respondents were asked to rank their level of agreement to statements on the environmental challenges women face in business start-up in the study area. Results from analysis of their responses showed positive means ranging from 3.74 to 2.96 with a standard deviation between 0.50 and 0.44. The statement " Lack of access to relevant information and technology presents environmental challenges for women in business start-up " had the highest mean (3.74) followed by "Lack of access to funding sources is a major environmental challenge faced by women in business start-up" (3.63). The statement "Limited access to professional networks and mentors is a major environmental challenge faced by women in business start-up" had the least mean (2.96).

Table 4: Women personality prospect

SN	Variable	Mean	STD Deviation
1	Do you possess the confidence to take risks and pursue opportunities in your business start-up?	3.31	0.46
2	Do you handle stress and uncertainty in your business start-up?	3.08	0.45
3	Do you possess the ability to adapt to changing circumstances in your business start-up?	3.09	0.46
4	Do you communicate and negotiate with stakeholders in your business start-up?	3.00	0.46
5	Do you possess the persistence and resilience necessary to overcome challenges in your business start-up?	3.00	0.45

The respondents were asked to rank their level of agreement to statements on women personality prospect in business start-up in North western Nigeria. Results from analysis of their responses showed positive means ranging from 3.31 to 3.00 with a standard deviation between 0.46 and 0.45. The statement "Do you possess the confidence to take risks and pursue opportunities in your business start-up" had the highest mean (3.31) followed by "Do you possess the ability to adapt to changing circumstances in your business start-up" (3.09). The statement "Do you communicate and negotiate with stakeholders in your business start-up" and "Do you possess the persistence and resilience necessary to overcome challenges in your business start-up" had the least mean (3.00).

Table 4: Women environmental prospect

SN	Variable	Mean	STD Deviation
1	The government policies and regulations are supportive of women in business start-up.	3.36	0.45
2	There are sufficient funding and investment opportunities for women-owned businesses.	2.97	0.43
3	The business environment is favourable for women in terms of access to resources such as land, equipment, and technology.	3.14	0.43
4	There are mentorship and networking opportunities available for women in business.	2.88	045
5	The society and culture are supportive of women in business start-up.	2.85	0.43

The respondents were asked to rank their level of agreement to statements on women environmental prospect men in the study area. Results from analysis of their responses showed means ranging from 3.36 to 2.85 with a standard deviation between 0.45 and 0.43. The statements "The government policies and regulations are supportive of women in business start-up" had the highest mean (3.36), followed by the statement "The business environment is favourable for women in terms of access to resources such as land, equipment, and technology" (3.14). The statement "The society and culture are supportive of women in business start-up" had the least means (2.85).

Discussion

The result shows a significant number of women in business start-up In North-western Nigeria lack formal education, often single, divorced, or widowed, aged 31 to 40 or 40 and above. Their limited educational background and potential lack of familial support might hinder funding and regulatory navigation, yet their life experience could help them tackle challenges and seize opportunities in business. The result also highlighted that the respondents are confident comfortable with taking calculated risks yet struggle with self-doubt and feel overwhelmed by the challenges and responsibilities of running a business start-up. This highlights the importance of support for women business start-up in managing challenges and boosting resilience during business start-ups.

Moreover, the study reveals that women in business start-ups encounter pivotal hurdles such as funding constraints and regulatory obstacles, sociocultural biases, restricted information access, technology limitations, restricted access to networks and mentors. Addressing these issues through policies to create supportive environment for women in business start-up is crucial. Furthermore, while the respondents display risk-taking confidence and adaptability, however, enhancing communication, negotiation, persistence, and resilience support can further empower women in start-ups. Lastly, the respondents find government policies favourable to women in start-ups but call for increased funding, improved business conditions, and enhanced access to resources. This shows the demand for expanded mentorship and networking opportunities for women entrepreneurs is also evident.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study found that women in business start-up face both personality and environmental challenges. Personality challenges include self-doubt, lack of confidence, and stress, while environmental challenges include limited access to funding sources, legal and regulatory barriers, and societal and cultural biases. However, the study also identified some personality prospects, such as the ability to adapt to changing circumstances and communicate and negotiate with stakeholders, as well as environmental prospects, such as supportive government policies and regulations and sufficient funding and investment opportunities.

The study also confirms the need for policies and programs that address the specific challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, such as increasing access to funding sources and providing mentorship and networking opportunities.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made: Government and other relevant institutions should create more accessible and affordable funding opportunities for women-owned businesses, legal and regulatory policies should be put in place to remove gender biases and provide equal opportunities for women in business start-up, there should be a deliberate effort through awareness campaigns, education, and training to eliminate societal and cultural biases that limit women's participation in business start-up, relevant stakeholders should work towards making information and technology more accessible and affordable for women-owned businesses, programs and initiatives should be developed to create more opportunities for women to connect with mentors and build professional networks, government and other relevant institutions should create policies that foster a supportive business environment for women, and finally, women should be provided with more training and development opportunities to build their entrepreneurial skills and abilities.

Limitations of the study

There are some limitations to this study that should be taken into account when interpreting the results:

The study was conducted in a specific geographical location (Nigeria) and the results may not be generalizable to other countries or regions with different socio-economic and cultural contexts, the sample size of 273 participants may not be representative of the entire population of women entrepreneurs in Nigeria, as there may be other factors that affect the experiences and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs that were not captured in this study, the data collected in this study were based on self-reported measures, which may be subject to social desirability bias, leading to an over or under-reporting of certain aspects of the participants' experiences and finally, the study focused solely on the challenges and prospects faced by women in business start-ups, and did not explore the experiences of women entrepreneurs who have already established successful businesses or the challenges and prospects faced by men in business start-ups.

Declaration

We declare that this manuscript is an original work and has not been submitted for publication elsewhere. All authors have reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript. This research has been conducted in compliance with ethical guidelines and research standards.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest related to this research.

Authors contribution

Abubakar Abdulkadir conducted data collection and analysis. Habiba Ahmed Gwadabe contributed to the study ideation, design and manuscript writing.

Data availability

The data collected for this study can be made available upon request to the corresponding authors and researchers.

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