

# EFFECT OF DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OF FEDERAL TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

The study examined the effect of diversity management on leadership development of federal tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria with specific emphasis on universities. The problems of this study was the discriminatory attitude of some workforce, individual identity, lack of cooperation amongst workers has been extended by workers in same diverse organization beyond limits, which dampens morale with negative performance index. The researcher developed three objectives such as to: Determine the effect of gender diversity on leadership development of federal tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria; Ascertain the effect of educational diversity on leadership development of federal tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria; Determine the effect of ethnic diversity on leadership development of federal tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria. This work is anchored on the Social Identity Theory (SIT). The study adopted survey method of research. Data were generated through primary sources. The method for data collection was questionnaire which was administered randomly among the staff of the federal universities in South East. The population of the study was 10676. The sample size of the study was three hundred and eighty-five (385). While three hundred and forty-seven (347) were retrieved. The hypotheses were tested using regression analysis method at 0.05% level of significance. The findings of the study revealed, Gender diversity has significant impact on leadership development of federal universities in southeast, Nigeria; Educational diversity has a significant impact on leadership development of federal universities in southeast, Nigeria; Ethnic diversity has a significant impact on leadership development of federal universities in southeast, Nigeria. The study concludes that effective diversity management is a critical driver of leadership development in federal tertiary institutions in South-East Nigeria. The study recommends that Management of federal tertiary institutions should deliberately promote gender inclusiveness in leadership selection and development processes. Institutional Support for Educational Diversity in Leadership Development Institutions should encourage leadership development programs that draw participants from diverse educational backgrounds, disciplines, and professional qualifications

**KEYWORDS:** Workforce Diversity, Organizational Performance, Age Diversity, Gender Diversity, Education Diversity.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The increasing complexity of the global business environment has made workplace diversity a central theme in organizational research and practice, as companies seek to harness the potential of diverse teams for enhanced creativity, adaptability, and performance (Guillaume et al., 2017; Ozeren, 2019). Diversity in the workplace includes not only visible characteristics like gender and ethnicity but also differences in education, experience, values, and perspectives (Mensah et al., 2023; Shore et al., 2018). Recent scholarship underscores that well-managed diversity can be a powerful driver of innovation, effective decision-making, and competitive advantage, especially in knowledge-driven and rapidly changing industries (Homan et al., 2020; Luring & Selmer, 2018).

Human diversity has existed throughout the world from the beginning of time, as every individual exhibit one form of uniqueness or the other (Holck & Muhr, 2022) as ethnic and racial differences could be found within groups of people across the continents before recorded history (Arredondo, 1996). But in today's complex business environment, organizations are becoming more diverse than they were in the earliest time due to

globalization (Henry et al., 2020; Kaimenyi, 2020). This results in the movement towards a boundary-less and free trade market, where national and geographical barriers to exchange of goods and services are broken down (Seliverstova, 2021; Holck & Muhr, 2022). Giving room for human capital to move freely across borders, thereby, making management of diversity of essence, as organization can have unquantifiable reward from it (Yadav & Lenka, 2020; Ganji, Rahimnia et al., 2023), because the strengths of diverse employees can be successfully leveraged for organizational growth, competitiveness and sustainability (Atkinson et al., 2022).

Since, globalization has led to many cross-border activities leading to a mobile workforce which has increased the intensity of diversity related issues in organizations (Holck & Muhr, 2022). The need to embrace diversity culture in the workplace, so that every employee will be adequately incorporated into the organization, without any fear of discrimination or intimidation. Work diversity is the totality of both similarities and differences in attributes of people in the workplace. For leaders to manage diversity effectively in organizations, there is need to understand individual backgrounds and how their behavior and belief can influence their decision-making, within a diverse environment. An organization that is committed to diversify workforce is one that aims at harnessing unique qualities of individuals and viewing their differences as a potential for growth rather than opportunities for division. Thereby nurturing and developing the potentials of each individual.

### 1.2 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to examine the effect of diversity management on leadership development of federal tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were as follow:

1. Determine the effect of gender diversity on leadership development of federal tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria.
2. Ascertain the effect of educational diversity on leadership development of federal tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria
3. Determine the effect of ethnic diversity on leadership development of federal tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Conceptual review

#### 2.1.1 Workplace Diversity

Workplace diversity encompasses the presence and effective management of differences among employees in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, education, culture, and other demographic and cognitive attributes (Guillaume et al., 2017; Ozeren, 2019). Modern organizations recognize diversity not only as a moral imperative but also as a critical driver of innovation, creativity, and performance (Nishii & Rich, 2014; Shore et al., 2018). In diverse workplaces, employees contribute a broad spectrum of perspectives, experiences, and problem-solving approaches, making diversity a valuable organizational asset (Sabharwal, 2014). Scholars have emphasized that, when managed properly, diversity can lead to improved team dynamics, more effective decision-making, and greater adaptability in responding to external challenges (Homan et al., 2020; Podsiadlowski et al., 2013).

However, the benefits of diversity are not automatic; they depend on inclusive leadership, organizational culture, and proactive diversity management practices (Mor Barak, 2016; Roberson, 2019). Workplace diversity is particularly pronounced due to the country's complex social, ethnic, and religious landscape (Uzoegwu & Ogbogu, 2022; Oyeniyi et al., 2015). Nigerian organizations, such as those in the oil and gas sector, have witnessed the growing importance of diversity in attracting and retaining talent, enhancing innovation, and achieving competitive advantage (Ogbo et al., 2020; Chukwumeka et al., 2019).

Recent studies highlight that effective diversity management in Nigeria requires an understanding of local cultural nuances and the implementation of policies that promote equity, inclusion, and mutual respect (Obisi et al., 2021; Olori & Iweka, 2019). Furthermore, embracing diversity has been linked to better organizational reputation, increased employee satisfaction, and enhanced overall performance (Ezeh et al., 2020; Adeosun et al., 2021). As organizations become more global in outlook, workplace diversity remains a central theme in organizational development discourse, demanding ongoing commitment to inclusive practices and continuous learning (Ng & Sears, 2022; D'Netto et al., 2014).

#### Gender Diversity

Gender diversity, as a critical dimension of workplace diversity, refers to the equitable representation and inclusion of individuals of different genders within organizational structures, decision-making processes, and leadership roles (Berdahl et al., 2018; Ali, 2021). The growing recognition of gender diversity in modern organizations is underpinned by increasing evidence that gender-balanced teams foster creativity, diverse

problem-solving approaches, and improved performance outcomes (Hoobler et al., 2018; Post & Byron, 2015). Research has established that organizations with greater gender diversity, particularly in management and leadership positions, are more likely to benefit from a broader range of perspectives, enhanced innovation, and stronger financial results (Hunt et al., 2018; Terjesen et al., 2016).

Moreover, gender-diverse environments tend to support more inclusive cultures, which are essential for attracting and retaining top talent in today's competitive labor markets (Noland et al., 2016; Ferrary & Pesqueux, 2022). Gender diversity remains a salient issue due to socio-cultural norms, historical gender imbalances, and persistent underrepresentation of women in key sectors (Aina, 2021; Oruh et al., 2021). Despite progress in gender equality policy and advocacy, studies reveal that challenges such as unconscious bias, discriminatory practices, and inadequate support structures continue to hinder women's advancement in Nigeria's workplaces (Oginni et al., 2018; Okafor & Akokuwebe, 2022).

Nevertheless, organizations that actively promote gender diversity and inclusion—through mentoring, leadership development programs, and equitable HR practices—have been shown to experience higher levels of employee engagement, organizational commitment, and reputation (Okeke et al., 2020; Ojo, 2022). Nigerian scholars emphasize that harnessing the full potential of gender diversity is not only a matter of social justice but also a strategic imperative for driving sustainable growth and innovation (Kalejaiye et al., 2021; Edet et al., 2021). As global and local evidence converge, it is increasingly clear that gender diversity enriches organizational culture and is essential for achieving long-term organizational success.

### **Educational Diversity**

Educational diversity, as a significant aspect of workplace diversity, refers to the variety of educational backgrounds, qualifications, and learning experiences employees bring to an organization (Horwitz & Horwitz, 2017; van Dijk et al., 2017). This dimension extends beyond formal degrees to encompass vocational training, professional certifications, and international study experiences, all of which contribute to a richer pool of knowledge, cognitive resources, and problem-solving capabilities within teams (Wang et al., 2020; Saleh & O'Connor, 2022). Research shows that educational diversity drives creativity, enhances adaptability, and supports innovation by enabling organizations to approach challenges from multiple perspectives (Li et al., 2019; Mensah et al., 2023).

Diverse educational backgrounds also help organizations remain flexible in the face of rapid technological advancements and changing market demands (Kraus et al., 2022). However, realizing the benefits of educational diversity requires fostering an inclusive culture where different forms of expertise are recognized and valued, and where effective communication bridges potential divides (Jackson & Joshi, 2011; Olanrewaju & Okorie, 2021). In Nigeria, educational diversity is especially prominent due to the nation's multifaceted educational system, which produces graduates from universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, and international institutions (Akinwale et al., 2020; Oduwaiye et al., 2022). Nigerian organizations, particularly in sectors such as oil and gas, banking, and telecommunications, leverage educational diversity to enhance organizational learning and competitiveness (Okafor et al., 2023; Fapohunda, 2021).

Empirical evidence suggests that teams with varied educational qualifications tend to outperform more homogenous groups in dynamic and complex environments (Ojo et al., 2022; Osibanjo et al., 2018). Nevertheless, challenges such as credential bias, communication barriers, and unequal opportunities for professional growth can undermine the potential of educationally diverse teams if not properly managed (Adebayo & Olayemi, 2021; Ogundana et al., 2022). Nigerian scholars advocate for targeted HR policies that ensure equitable recognition of diverse educational achievements, opportunities for continuous learning, and the encouragement of cross-functional collaboration, thereby converting educational diversity into a tangible asset for organizational growth and innovation (Eze et al., 2020; Abubakar & Sani, 2021).

### **Ethnic Diversity**

Ethnic diversity, as a core dimension of workplace diversity, refers to the presence and integration of individuals from different ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds within organizations (Richard et al., 2020; Ogbuanu et al., 2022). Ethnic diversity brings a wide array of perspectives, values, languages, and problem-solving approaches that enrich group dynamics, stimulate innovation, and enhance decision-making processes (Shore et al., 2022; Choi & Rainey, 2014). The value of ethnic diversity is increasingly recognized in today's globalized economy, where organizations must navigate multicultural markets and serve diverse clientele (Lauring & Selmer, 2018). When effectively managed, ethnic diversity contributes to greater creativity, improved team performance, and strengthened organizational reputation (Stahl et al., 2017; McGuire et al., 2021).

However, realizing these benefits requires conscious efforts to mitigate potential challenges such as stereotyping, discrimination, and intergroup conflict, emphasizing the need for inclusive policies and culturally intelligent leadership (Podsiadlowski et al., 2013; Nkomo et al.,

2019). Ethnicity is a particularly salient facet of workplace diversity due to the country's rich tapestry of over 250 ethnic groups, each with distinct languages, traditions, and social structures (Ogbomo & Osa-Edoh, 2021; Olowu & Aderinto, 2023). Nigerian organizations, especially in sectors such as oil and gas, banking, and public administration, often mirror this ethnic heterogeneity, which can be both an asset and a source of workplace tension (Olowookere et al., 2018; Okoro & Washington, 2019). Recent studies indicate that ethnically diverse work environments in Nigeria are associated with increased organizational learning, broader market reach, and enhanced problem-solving capacity (Edewor et al., 2020; Adeyemi et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, challenges such as ethnic bias, favoritism, and lack of representation in leadership positions persist, sometimes undermining team cohesion and organizational effectiveness (Akinwale & George, 2020; Nwosu & Odesanya, 2022). Nigerian scholars emphasize the importance of equity-driven HR policies, intercultural training, and deliberate efforts to foster inclusion as critical strategies for harnessing the full benefits of ethnic diversity (Iwu et al., 2021; Okoye et al., 2022). Ultimately, prioritizing ethnic diversity is not only a matter of social justice but also a strategic imperative for sustainable growth and performance in Nigerian organizations.

## 2.2 Theoretical Review

### Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory (SIT), initially developed by Tajfel and Turner, explains how individuals derive their sense of self from their membership in social groups such as gender, ethnicity, and educational background (Haslam, 2014; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In the context of workplace diversity, SIT highlights how these social identities influence attitudes, behaviors, and performance within organizations. At Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG), where a diverse workforce is the norm, understanding these identity dynamics is crucial for managing intergroup relations, fostering inclusivity, and maximizing organizational performance (Nwosu, 2021; Adebayo et al., 2020; Edewor et al., 2014).

Applying SIT to NLNG emphasizes the importance of recognizing and valuing diverse social identities to create an inclusive work environment that enhances collaboration and reduces conflict (Omeje & Okoye, 2021; Ogbogu, 2019). Nigerian and international scholars agree that when diversity is managed with sensitivity to social identity, it can drive higher job satisfaction, commitment, and overall organizational effectiveness (Roberson, 2019; Opute et al., 2020). Therefore, SIT provides a valuable framework for NLNG to leverage the benefits of workplace diversity, aligning individual and organizational goals for improved performance.

## 2.3 Empirical Review

Osisanya and Gbadamosi (2025) investigated the relationship between diversity management practices and organizational performance, with a focus on a beverage company in Lagos, Nigeria. The research aims to explore how effective diversity management contributes to performance metrics such as employee satisfaction, innovation, and overall productivity in multinational corporations operating in Nigeria. A mixed-method approach was employed, combining both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to employees at various levels of the beverage company in Lagos, Nigeria Plc, as well as through in-depth interviews with senior management personnel. Secondary data were sourced from academic journals, company reports, and relevant literature on diversity management and organizational performance. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS software to determine the strength of the correlation between diversity management practices and key organizational performance indicators. The results of the analysis indicate a strong positive correlation between diversity management and organizational performance at Guinness Nigeria Plc. Specifically, inclusive policies and practices were found to enhance employee morale, stimulate innovation, and improve problem-solving capabilities. However, the study also identifies potential areas for improvement in diversity management strategies to further enhance organizational outcomes.

Arogbu and Egbuchu, (2025) examined the relationship between workplace diversity and organizational performance at Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) Company, Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Adopting a correlational research design, the study examined how gender, educational, and ethnic diversity influence organizational outcomes using data collected from a sample of 273 employees. Findings reveal that educational diversity has a significant positive effect on organizational performance, while gender and ethnic diversity

demonstrate minimal impact. The results highlight the importance of leveraging educational diversity to foster innovation and adaptability, while also emphasizing the need for more intentional diversity and inclusion strategies to maximize the benefits of gender and ethnic diversity. The study concluded that effective diversity management is essential for sustaining competitiveness and recommended targeted policies to create a more inclusive and high-performing workplace at NLNG.

Alonge, (2025) embarked upon to unravel diversity in the Nigerian organisations, which is one of the sensitive but mostly neglected factor that can determine the success and sustenance of the organization. The study examined federal character principle which is one of the policies of Nigerian government on diversity management, the prospects of diversity management and identified the challenges and consequences of diversity mismanagement within the organization. Using secondary data, the study found that diversified workforce will improve talent acquisition and retention, creativity, employee development, customer service and satisfaction. The identified challenges are leadership failure, resistance to change, weak institutions, unenforced employment standards, and consequences of diversity mismanagement are poor mental health, intra organization conflict, attack on team spirit, damaged reputation and public image, It recommended that management should focus on the advancement of individuality within the organization, by hiring talents from diverse background, create open communication, give avenue for feedback, set and enforce objective standards, engage in diversity training for employees and managers, leaders should adopt and be committed to the diversity culture by recognizing that every person has unique contribution, that can make for the fulfillment of the unified organizational goal.

Onyekwere, (2025) examined workplace diversity and inclusion policies in complex organizations: impact on organizational performance and employee well-being in Nigeria. The study was guided by four research objectives and corresponding questions, focusing on the extent of policy implementation, its relationship with performance metrics, employee satisfaction, and the challenges and best practices in inclusive management. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, combining quantitative data from a structured questionnaire administered to 692 employees (with 679 valid responses retrieved) and qualitative insights from semi-structured interviews with organizational leaders. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) to test the hypotheses at .05 significance level, while qualitative data were thematically analyzed. The study findings account no significant difference among implementation of workplace diversity and inclusion policies in Nigerian complex organizations in both organizational performance and employee well-being. In conclusion, the study identified institutional resistance, tokenism, and cultural biases as persistent barriers, while leadership commitment and policy accountability emerged as best practices. The study highlighted the strategic importance of inclusive policies in enhancing productivity, employee morale, and promoting equitable workplace systems, recommending stronger policy enforcement and continuous evaluation mechanism

Afolayan, et al. (2025) examined the effect of diversity management on the sustainable competitive advantage of Zenith Bank in Nigeria, with emphasis on workplace diversity, gender diversity, and religious diversity. The research adopted a descriptive survey design, with a population of 7,704 employees drawn from Zenith Bank Plc (Zenith Bank Annual Report, 2022). A sample size of 380 was determined using Yamane's formula (1967), and a stratified random sampling technique was employed. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, tested for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha (threshold of 0.70) and validated through expert review. Out of 380 questionnaires distributed, 301 were returned, giving a 79% response rate. Data were analyzed using regression analysis with SPSS version 26. The findings reveal that all three dimensions of diversity significantly and positively affect sustainable competitive advantage: workplace diversity ( $\beta = 2.489$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ,  $R^2 = 0.539$ ), gender diversity ( $\beta = 0.821$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $R^2 = 0.481$ ), and religious diversity ( $\beta = 0.437$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $R^2 = 0.567$ ). This demonstrates that inclusive diversity management enhances innovation, improves decision-making, boosts employee morale, and strengthens organizational resilience. The study concludes that diversity management is not merely an ethical or compliance function but a strategic resource that fosters long-term competitive advantage in line with the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory. The study recommends that Zenith Bank should strengthen workplace diversity through inclusive recruitment, training, and collaboration programs; the study also recommended to enhance gender diversity by ensuring equitable representation in leadership and promoting mentorship and flexible policies.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Design

In this study, descriptive survey research design was adopted since the unit of analysis was based on more than one Firm, which were federal universities in southeast. Saunders Lewis and Thornhill (2009) described a research design as the plan on how to answer research questions.

**3.2: Sources of Data**

**Primary Data:** These consist of all the data and information obtained personally from respondents through interviews and the use of questionnaire. They are primary in nature because they have not been published elsewhere.

**3.3. Population of the Study**

The population for the study was comprised of the staff of Alex-Ekwueme University Abakaliki 2200 staff, University of Nigeria Nigeria. 2900 staff, Nnamdi Azikiwe 3100 staff, Federal University of science and technology University 1376, Michael Okapla University of Agriculture 1100. This will give us the total of 10676

University	Staff Capacity
AEUA	2200
UNN	2900
UNIZIK	3100
FUTO	1376
MOUA	1100
TOTAL	10676

SOURCES: Human Resources Department of the Institutions

**3.4 Determination of Sample Size**

According to Kerlinger (1973) simple random sampling is the method of drawing a portion of population or universe so that each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected. The population size of the study was ten thousand six hundred and seventy-six (10676) staff of the selected federal Universities. For the fact that it is practically impossible to conveniently handle all the respondents of the selected federal Universities in South East, the researcher applied the statistical formula devised by Taro Yamane (1964), which states:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(0.05)^2}$$

Where

n = desired sample size

N = size of the population

e = Limit of error tolerance which was assured to be 5% (0.05); confidence limit.

Computing with the above formula, number of questionnaires to be administered was obtained

$$N = 10676$$

$$e = 0.05 \text{ or } 5\%$$

$$n = \frac{10676}{1+10676(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{10676}{1+10676 (0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{10676}{27.69}$$

$$385.554$$

$$n=385$$

**Sampling Technique**

The researcher adopted stratified sampling, because stratified random sampling will permit each of the different respondents in all the different states to be selected without bias.

**3.5 Method of Data Collection**

The Primary data in this study was gathered using the questionnaire method where form of a semi structured questionnaire was applied. The questionnaire in this study was self-administered and hand delivery to the respondents and was picked by the researcher for data analysis.

**3.6: Method of Data Analysis.**

In this study, the descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, with simple percentage was used to analyse bio – data of the respondents and the five research questions. At the inferential level of analysis, linear regression will be used to test hypotheses 1, 2, and 3, to determine the extent of correlation between x and y variables (Independent and Dependent). All analyses was done through the application of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 20 windows)

**4. DATA PRESENTATION**

**4.1 Multiple Regression Analysis**

Multiple regression result was employed to test the effect of independent or explanatory variables on the dependent variables. The result of the multiple regression analysis is presented in the tables below.

**Table 4.1.1 Summary of the Regression Result**

The result of the multiple regressions formulated in chapter three is presented in the tables below.

**Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.201 <sup>a</sup>	.740	.735	1.45233	.040	7.825	2	371	.000	1.661

a. Predictors: (Constant), ETD, GDD, EDD

b. Dependent Variable: LDD

Table 3 shows that R<sup>2</sup> which measures the strength of the effect of independent variable on the dependent variable have the value of 74%. This implies that 26% of the variation in diversity management is explained by variations in gender diversity, educational diversity and Ethnic diversity. This was supported by adjusted R<sup>2</sup> of 74%. In order to check for autocorrelation in the model, Durbin-Watson statistics was employed. Durbin-Watson statistics of 1.661 in table 3 shows that the variables in the model are not auto correlated and that the model is reliable for predications.

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	33.011	2	16.505	7.825	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	782.540	371	2.109		
	Total	815.551	373			

a. Dependent Variable: LDD

b. Predictors: (Constant), ETD, GDD, EDD

The f-statistics value of 7.825 in table 4.2.2 with f-statistics probability of 0.000 shows that the independent variables has significant effect on dependent variables that is, age, gender, , can collectively explain the variations in diversity management and leadership development .

**Table 4.2 Coefficients of the Model**

T-statistics and probability value from the regression result are the effect of individual independent or explanatory variables on the dependent variables. The summary of the result is presented in the table below.

**T-Statistics and Probability Value from the Regression Result**

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	2.129	.168		12.684	.000	1.799	2.459
	GDD	.256	.067	.195	3.827	.000	.125	.388
	ETD	.468	.040	.065	2.309	.002	-.826	.341
	EDD	.368	.067	.065	2.279	.009	-.126	.190

a. Dependent Variable: LDD

Table 4.3 shows the coefficient of the individual variables and their probability values. Gender diversity variables have regression t-value of 3.827 with a probability value of .000. This implies that Gender diversity have a positive but significant effect on leadership development. Educational diversity has a regression t-test of

2.309 with a probability value of 0.000 implying that educational diversity has a positive and significant effect on leadership development. Ethnic diversity has a regression t-test of 2.279 with a probability value of 0.009 implying that Ethnic diversity has a positive and significant effect on leadership development.

### 4.3 Test of Hypotheses

#### Test of Hypothesis One

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** Gender diversity has no significant impact on leadership development of federal universities in southeast, Nigeria

Gender diversity has a t-statistics of 3.827 and a probability value of 0.000 which is statistically significant. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypotheses which state that Gender diversity has significant impact on leadership development of federal universities in southeast, Nigeria

#### Test of Hypothesis Two

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** Educational diversity has no significant impact on leadership development of federal universities in southeast, Nigeria

In testing this hypothesis, the t-statistics and probability value in table above is used. Educational diversity has a t-statistics of 2.309 and a probability value of 0.002 which is statistically significant. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypotheses which state that Educational diversity has a significant impact on leadership development of federal universities in southeast, Nigeria

#### Test of Hypothesis Three

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** Ethnic diversity has no significant impact on leadership development of federal universities in southeast, Nigeria

In testing this hypothesis, the t-statistics and probability value in table above is used. Ethnic diversity has a t-statistics of 2.279 and a probability value of 0.009 which is statistically significant. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypotheses which state that Ethnic diversity has a significant impact on leadership development of federal universities in southeast, Nigeria

### 5.1 Conclusion

This study examined the effect of diversity management on leadership development in federal tertiary institutions in South-East Nigeria, with specific emphasis on gender diversity, educational diversity, and ethnic diversity. The empirical findings revealed that all the dimensions of diversity management investigated exert positive and statistically significant effects on leadership development within the institutions studied. The positive influence of gender diversity indicates that inclusive representation of both male and female staff enhances leadership capacity by promoting balanced decision-making, innovative thinking, and equitable leadership opportunities. This finding suggests that when gender inclusiveness is effectively managed, it contributes meaningfully to the development of competent and transformational leaders in tertiary institutions. Similarly, educational diversity was found to have a significant positive effect on leadership development. The presence of staff with varied academic qualifications, professional backgrounds, and areas of specialization enriches institutional leadership by fostering knowledge sharing, critical thinking, and adaptive leadership skills. This implies that leadership development in federal tertiary institutions benefits from a workforce with diverse educational experiences and intellectual perspectives. Furthermore, the study established that ethnic diversity significantly enhances leadership development. Effective management of ethnic differences encourages mutual respect, collaboration, and cultural understanding, which are essential qualities for leadership effectiveness in a multi-ethnic society like Nigeria. Leaders who emerge from such inclusive environments are better equipped to manage conflicts, build consensus, and promote institutional harmony. Overall, the study concludes that effective diversity management is a critical driver of leadership development in federal tertiary institutions in South-East Nigeria. By consciously embracing and managing gender, educational, and ethnic diversity, these institutions can strengthen their leadership pipeline, improve organizational effectiveness, and foster sustainable institutional development.

### 5.2 Recommendations

- I. Management of federal tertiary institutions should deliberately promote gender inclusiveness in leadership selection and development processes.
- II. Institutional Support for Educational Diversity in Leadership Development Institutions should encourage leadership development programs that draw participants from diverse educational backgrounds, disciplines, and professional qualifications.
- III. Federal tertiary institutions should implement diversity management strategies that promote ethnic inclusiveness and cultural tolerance.

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