

## Informational Role for Managing an Increasing Diversity of a Salesforce

Joseph I. Uduji

Department of Marketing, Faculty of Business Administration, University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus  
e-mail: [joseph.uduji@gmail.com](mailto:joseph.uduji@gmail.com)

### Abstract

The Increasing diversity of the environment which, in turn, increases the diversity of a firm's salesforce, increases the challenges sales managers face in effectively managing diversity. salesforce diversity is dissimilarities-differences-among salespeople due to age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, and capabilities/disabilities that have raised important ethical issues and social responsibility issues as well for Sales management. It has become a critical issue for salesforce Management, one that if not handled well can bring a salesforce morale and performance to its knees, especially in this increasingly global environment. These are some of the reasons why salesforce diversity in multinational firms is such a pressing concern and issue both in the popular press and for Sales managers and organizations. The Salespeople in the selected multinational firms in Nigeria formed the population of the study. A sample size of 350 salespeople and their managers was determined using a mean. The study was guided by the theory of limited differences, which suggests that slight differences in treatment can cumulate to result in major disparities overtime. For hypothesis testing, the Friedman's chi-square test statistics was used to judge the significance of the 225.632 result obtained. This value is greater than the critical Chi-Square value of 5.991. The result shows significance as P-Value of  $0.00 < 0.05$ . Hence the null hypothesis of the study is rejected, indicating that information about diversity policies and initiatives and the intolerance of discrimination have significant effect in the effective management of a salesforce. It is therefore suggested that Sales managers should constantly evaluate the extent to which diverse Salespeople are being treated fairly; inform salespeople about diversity policies and initiatives and the intolerance of discrimination; and support diversity initiatives in the wider Community and speak to diverse groups to interest them in career opportunities in the organization.

**Key Words:** Diversity of salesforce, Informational Role, Multinational Firms, Diversity Awareness, Theory of Limited Differences, Friedman's Chi-Square Test Statistics.

### Introduction

According to Jones and George (2003), one of the most important sales management issues to emerge over the last 30 years has been the increasing diversity of the salesforce. Diversity of the salesforce is the dissimilarities – difference – among salespeople due to age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, and capabilities/disabilities. Diversity raises important ethical issues and social responsibility issues as well. It is also a critical issue for firms, one that if not handled well can bring a firm to its knees, especially in this increasingly global environment.

There are several reasons why diversity of the Salesforce is such pressing concern and issue both in the popular press and for sales managers and firms. There is a strong ethical imperative in many societies that diverse Salespeople receive equal opportunities and be treated fairly and justly. Unfair treatment is also illegal. Secondly, effective managing diversity of a salesforce can improve a firm's effectiveness. When sales managers effectively manage diversity, they do not only encourage other sales managers to treat diverse marketing team of a firm fairly and justly but also realize that diversity is an important resource that can help a firm gain a competitive advantage. Also, there is substantial evidence that diverse Salespeople continue to experience unfair treatment in the Sales team as a result of biases, Stereotypes, and overt discrimination. Previous studies suggests that both women and men tend to believe that women will accept lower pay than men; this can be a potential explanation for some gaps in pay between men and women in few organization (Uduji, 2013).

The aging of the population could suggest that sales managers need to be vigilant that salespeople are not discriminated against because of age. Employment opportunity laws are demanding that policies and procedures in firms treat all employees fairly, regardless of their ages, gender, race, ethnicity and religion. However, inaccurate schemas and perceptual biases can lead well-meaning sales managers and selling team members to unintentionally discriminate against others due to their inaccurate perceptions. On the other hand, overt discrimination, or knowingly and willingly denying diverse salespeople access to opportunities and outcomes in a firm, can be intentional and deliberate. Overt discrimination is not only unethical but also illegal in managing a diverse Salesforce. Overt discrimination can be a clear violation of the principles of distributive and procedural justice in the in the management of a Salesforce. Increasingly, firms are held responsible for the legality of their recruiting and selection policies. Although, certain aspects of he selection process may be performed by the

human resources department, the final hiring decisions are most often made by the sales manager. Sales managers must therefore understand the complex laws which govern sales force selection policies. These laws and related regulatory guidelines could be emphasizing the two concepts in Sales people employment: non discrimination an affirmative action. Nondiscrimination requires elimination of all existing discriminatory conditions, whether intentional or inadvertent, and affirmative action requires the sales management to do more than ensure neutrality in regard to race, sex, and national origin (Uduji, 2013). It requires the Sales manager to make additional efforts to recruit, select, train and promote qualified salespeople of groups formerly excluded. These efforts be made even if that exclusion cannot be traced to discriminatory actions of the sales management. Therefore, this study is undertaken to examine the managerial roles for the effective management of diversity of a salesforce. The study concentrated on the informational role (Monitor, disseminator, and spokesperson) of the Sales managers in the multinational firms.

### Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the theory of limited differences (Cole and Singer, 1991), which suggests that slight differences in treatment can cumulate to result in major disparities over time. Even small differences- such as a very slight favourable bias for men receiving promotions- can lead to major differences in the number of male and female mangers over time. Thus, while women and other minorities are sometimes advised not to make “a mountain out of a Molehill” when they perceive they have been unfairly treated, the theory of limited differences suggests that molehills (ie slight differences in treatment based on irrelevant distinctions such as race, gender, or ethnicity) can turn into mountains over time (ie major disparities in important outcomes such as promotions) if they are ignored. The theory further suggest that managers play a crucial role in ensuring that neither large nor small disparities in treatment and outcome due to irrelevant distinctions such as race, ethnicity occur in organizations. The theory added that managers have the obligation, both from an ethical and business perspective to ensure that such disparities do not occur and are not tolerated in organizations (Cole and Singer, 1991, Martel, Lane and Emrich, 1996, Carnevale and stone, 1994).

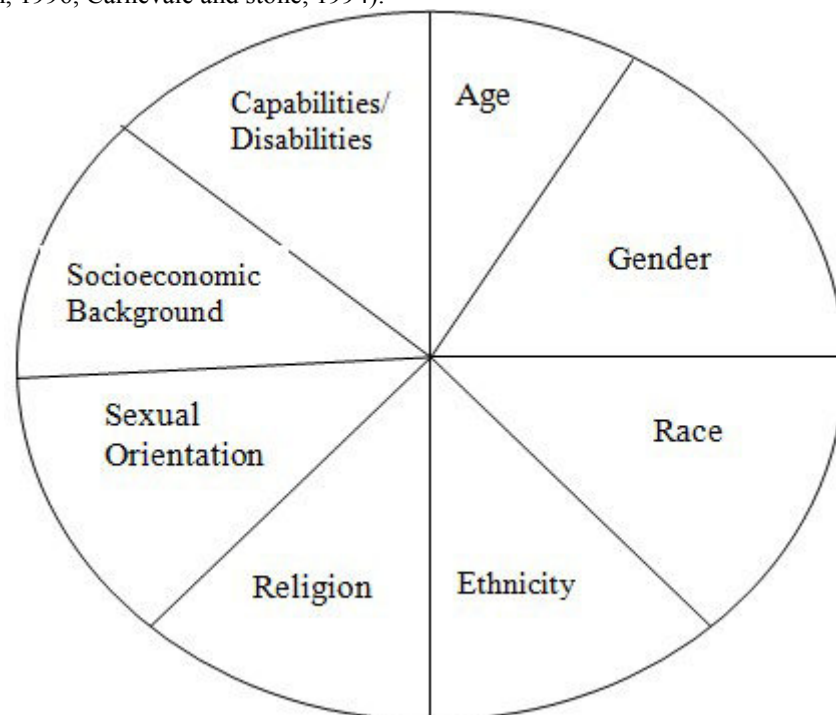


Figure 1: Sources of Diversity in the Workforce

Source: Jones, G.R. and George, J.M. (2003) *Contemporary Management*, New York: McGrew-Hill.

Today, diversity refers to far more than skin and gender. It is a broad term used to refer to all kinds of differences, summarized in figure 1. These differences include religious affiliation, age, disability status, military experience, sexual orientation, economic class, educational level and lifestyle, in addition to gender, race, ethnicity and nationality. Although members of different groups (man, women, Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba) share within their groups many common values, attitudes, and perceptions, there is also much diversity within each of these categories. Every group is made up to individuals who are unique in personality, education, and life experiences, (Uduji, 2013). And since all these groups may not share the same personal or professional goals and

values or behave alike, thus managing diversity may seen a contraction within itself (Aaron, 2001). This can mean being acutely aware of characteristics common to a group of salesforce, while also managing these Salespeople as individuals. Managing diversity can mean not just tolerating or accommodating all sorts of differences, but supporting, nurturing and utilizing these differences to the organization's advantage (Carley, 1995). Multinational firms in Nigeria does not have the choice of whether or not to have a diverse salesforce; because they want to survive, they are learning already how to manage a diverse salesforce (Igbo, Yoruba, Ijaw, Hausa, Idoma, Ibibio, Efik, etc tribes) better than their competitors (Uduji, 2013). According to Long (1990) the term diversity incorporates a wide spectrum of individual and group differences. On an individual level each person is diverse when compare with all other people. In a sense, people are combinations of traits; an individual may be aggressive or passive, extroverted or introverted, flexible or rigid, loyal or inconstant, and so on. Groups of individuals share characteristics that distinguish them from other groups. Some of these characteristics, such as race, age, and sex, cannot be controlled by the individuals involved, whereas others such as occupation, political party membership, and religion, may be change through conscious choice and deliberate effort. Gutner (2001) noted that, although the attitudes, life interests, expectations, and norms of behavior of groups may differ on average, the differences between groups are smaller than the differences within groups. Classifying people into such typologies as black or white, male or female, and gay or straight often leads to false stereotypes because it incorrectly assumes that group averages apply to all individuals on the group (Folger and Konovsky, 1989).

A firm can derive many benefits from a heterogeneous salesforce as long as it can avoid misunderstanding, ill feelings, devaluation of teamwork, and marginalization of those who do not fit into the dominant group. Some of the most important potential benefits of diversity are better market access, global competitiveness, greater creativity, improved team sales performance (Uduji, 2013). A diverse salesforce base can help a firm to tap into profitable markets. Utilizing salespeople who are attuned to these markets can give the firm a competitive edge. Many companies have successfully used Salesforce diversity to tap markets. Firms with salesforce diversity in the home office are likely to have acquired cultural sensitivity, understanding, and awareness that can help them succeed in the global arena. Salespeople from different backgrounds can bring a variety of experiences, skills, abilities, and information to bear on the sales tasks at hand. Allowing them to examine issues and problems from different angles. Research on group dynamics suggests that groups with members from a variety of backgrounds are likely to come up with more ideas and solutions than groups whose members are homogeneous (Sessa, Jackson and Rapini, 1995). Diversity can be important source of innovation that helps fuel creativity and improve a firm's competitive position in the market place. For example, diverse groups of employees conceptualized product development, manufacturing and the marketing strategies for firms, and helped these firms become highly successful in their innovation efforts (Cox and Blake, 1991). Groups that mix people with different personality types, attitudes, ethnicity, and gender can also make better solutions because of the divergent thinking process characteristics of a more diverse group of people (Fine, Johnson and Ryan, 1990). Diversity can minimize the phenomenon called group think, in which a homogeneous group agrees on a mistaken solution because member share a similar mindset. The presence of team members who view the problem differently may stimulate others in the team to discover novel approaches that they would not have considered, thereby leading to better decisions (Wheeler, 1996). Moreover, diverse group members may learn from, emulate, and internalize the different strengths of other team members. This can allow the team to conceptualize problems in a more comprehensive manner, avoiding simplistic solutions that may prove to be unsatisfactory. However, Wheeler (1998) noted that there can be drawbacks to employee diversity, including pressures toward homogenization, lower cohesiveness, interpersonal conflict and tension, and confusing employee diversity with affirmative action. Firms can effectively manage these potential problems in order to desire the benefits of salesforce diversity (Uduji, 2013)

### Research Methodology

The study involved 350 salespeople and managers in selected multinational firms in Nigeria. The Sample Size was determined using a mean formula of:

$$n = \frac{S^2 Z^2}{e^2}$$

Where n = the Sample Size

z = the level of confidence (indicated by the member of standard errors associated with it)

s= variability indicated by an estimated standard deviation

e = the amount of precision or allowance error in the sample estimate of the population.

Therefore, The formula determined the sample size simply by multiplying the squares o the variability (s) and the level of confidence (z) and divided the product by the square of the desired precision value (e) to arrive at;

$$n = 350$$

Since the study is concerned with specific predictions, narrations of facts and characteristics, a descriptive/diagnostic design was adapted. The research design ensured enough provision for protection against bias and maximized reliability, with due concern for the economical completion of the research study. Both secondary and primary sources were used to gather information for the study. Questionnaire was the principal source of the primary data; however, interview serves as Complementary. In designing the data-collection procedure, adequate safeguards against bias and unreliability was ensured. Questions were well examined against ambiguity; interviewers were instructed not to express their own opinion. They were trained so that they will uniformly record a given item of response. The data collection instruments were pre-tested before they were finally used for the study. To ensure that the data obtained were free from errors, the researcher closely supervised the research assistants as they collect and record information. Also, checks were set up to ensure that the data collecting assistants performed their duty honestly and without prejudice. A miniature trial survey of the study was carried out in Ilupeju Industrial estate and Agbara Industrial estate in Nigeria to test the validity, reliability and practicality of the research instruments and operations. Thirty sales people and twelve sales managers of four multinational firms in the Industrial estates were used for the test-run. The pre-test provided the researcher the good ground to train assistants for the main inquiry. It also provided the researcher with the opportunity to come out with the final version of the research instruments. The pilot survey enabled the investigator to estimate the cost component of the main study. The stratified sampling technique was used to ensure a fair representation of the selected multinational firms, using proportionality ratio formula:

$$Q = \frac{A}{N} \times \frac{n}{1}$$

Where: Q = the number of questionnaires to be allocated to each segment

A = the population of each segment

N = the total population of all the segments

n = the estimated sample size of the study.

The items were selected in the ratio of one sales manager to three salespeople from each of the selected firms. This offered a good representation of all the segments in the population of study. Each respondent from the stratum was selected in order of their years of experience in the sales job. Data from the study were analysed using descriptive tools. For hypothesis testing, the Freidman's Chi-Square test Statistics was use to judge the significance of the obtained result.

#### Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

Attempt is made here to present, analyze and interpret the data collected in accordance with the study Objectives, question and hypothesis.

Scale:

**Definitely Disagree (DD)** - 1

**Generally Disagree (GD)** - 2

**Somewhat Disagree (SA)** - 3

**Generally Agree (GA)** - 4

**Definitely Agree (DA)** - 5

**Table 1: Effect of Information about Diversity Policies and Initiatives and the Intolerance of Discrimination on the Management of a Salesforce (n = 350)**

Questions	DD (%)	GD (%)	SA (%)	GA (%)	DA (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
Communicating the extent to which diverse salesperson are being fairly treated reduces the challenges sales managers face in effectively managing diversity of a sales force	5 (1.4)	10 (2.9)	30 (8.6)	241 (68.9)	64 (18.3)	3.997	0.716
Informing salespeople about diversity policies and initiatives and the intolerance of discrimination enhances management of diversity of a sales force	10 (2.9)	8 (2.3)	39 (11.1)	222 (63.4)	71 (20.3)	3.960	0.814
Supporting diversity initiatives in the organisation and speaking to diverse groups to interest them in sales management career opportunities would encourage salesforce diversity effectively	3 (0.9)	4 (1.1)	8 (2.3)	191 (54.6)	144 (41.1)	4.340	0.665

Source: Field Data, 2013

The respondents' views on the effect of information about divert policies and initiatives and the intolerance of discrimination on the management of a salesforce are presented in table 1.

With 5 respondents (1.4%) definitely disagreeing, 10 respondents (2.9%) generally disagreeing, 30 respondents (8.6%) somewhat agreeing, 241 respondents (68.9%) generally agreeing and 64 respondents (18.3%) definitely agreeing as well as the mean response value of 3.997, the study respondents are of the view that communicating the extent to which diverse salesperson are being fairly treated reduces the challenges sales managers face in effectively managing diversity of a sales force.

As put by 10 respondents (2.9%) who definitely disagree, 8 respondents (2.3%) who generally disagree, 39 respondents (11.1%) who somewhat agree, 222 respondents (63.4%) who generally agree and 71 respondents (20.3%) who definitely agree, and represented by the mean response score of 3.960, it is the view of the respondents that informing salespeople about diversity policies and initiatives and the intolerance of discrimination enhances management of diversity of a sales force.

Having a mean response score of 4.340 and 3 respondents (0.9%) who definitely disagree, 4 respondents (1.1%) who generally disagree, 8 respondents (2.3%) who somewhat agree, 191 respondents (54.6%) who generally agree as well as 144 respondents (41.1%) who definitely agree, the respondents agree that supporting diversity initiatives in the organisation and speaking to diverse groups to interest them in sales management career opportunities would encourage salesforce diversity effectively.

### Test of Hypothesis

***Information about diversity policies and initiatives and the intolerance of discrimination do not have significant effect in the management of a salesforce***

To test this hypothesis, the respondents' responses to the three questions presented in table 1 were tested using the Friedman's Chi-Square Test statistics.

**Table 2: Non-Parametric Tests Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
q1	350	3.9971	.71616	1.00	5.00
q2	350	3.9600	.81434	1.00	5.00
Xq3	350	4.3400	.66544	1.00	5.00

Source: Field Data, 2013

**Table 3: Friedman's Test Ranks**

	Mean Rank
q1	1.85
q2	1.80
q3	2.35

Source: Field Data, 2013

**Table 4: Friedman's Chi-Square Test Statistics**

N	350
Chi-Square	225.632
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. Friedman Test

Table 3 in ranking the mean responses to the three questions presents responses to question 3 with the highest mean rank (2.35) followed by question 1 (with a mean rank of 1.85) and question 1 (with a mean rank of 1.80).

Upon testing this hypothesis, a calculated Chi-square result of 225.632 was obtained. This value is greater than the critical Chi-Square value of 5.991. This result is significant as p-value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore Information about diversity policies and initiatives and the intolerance of discrimination have significant effect in the management of a salesforce.

### Discussion of Research Result

Three issues stand out from the analysis of this study. These are as follows:

1. Communicating the extent to which diverse Salesperson are being fairly treated reduces the challenges sales managers face in effectively managing diversity of a salesforce.
2. Informing Salespeople about diversity policies and initiatives and the intolerance of discrimination enhances



management of diversity of a salesforce.

3. Supporting diversity initiatives in the organization and speaking to diverse groups to interest them in sales management career opportunities would encourage effective recruitment and management of salesforce diversity in an organization.

In each of these findings, sales managers can either promote the effective management of salesforce diversity or derial such efforts; thus they can be critical to these roles shown in this research result. The diversity of a salesforce member in a multinational firm can be a source of competitive advantage, by helping an organization provide customers with better goods and services. The variety of points of view and approaches to problems and opportunities that diverse salesforce provide can improve managerial decision making. Most Salespeople agreed in this study that the diverse salesforce is likely to come up with a wider range of creative ideas. Although this example is simplistic, it underscores one way in which salesforce diversity can lead a competitive advantage. Just as the salesforce in multinational firms are becoming increasingly diverse, so too are the customers who buy an organization's good or services. Diverse members of a salesforce are likely to be attuned to what goods and services diverse segments of the market want and do not want. Another way in which the effective management of salesforce diversity can positively affect profitability of an organization is through increasing retention of valued Salespeople by decreasing the costs of hiring replacements for those who quit as well as ensuring that all salespeople are highly motivated. In terms of retention, given the legal environment of business firms in countries, more and more multinational firms are attuned to the need to emphasize the importance of salesforce diversity in hiring. Once hired, if diverse salespeople think they are being unfairly treated, however, they will be likely to seek opportunities elsewhere. Thus, the recruiting of diverse salesforce has to be followed up by the ongoing effective salesforce management of diversity to retain these valued salesforce members. If salesforce diversity is not effectively managed so that turnover rates are higher for certain groups than others, profitability will suffer on several counts and most immediately and directly in the costs of hiring replacement Salespeople. Moreover, additional costs from failing to effectively manage salesforce diversity can stem from time lost due to the banners diverse members of a salesforce can perceive as thwarting their progress and advancement. Effectively managing a salesforce diversity can make good business sense for another reason. More and more, sales managers and organizations concerned about salesforce diversity are insisting also that other units of the organization support diversity at all levels. Now, from both a business and ethical perspective, the effective management of salesforce diversity is necessary for multinational firms to avoid costly lawsuits. The damage such lawsuits cause goes beyond the monetary awards to the injured parties and can tarnish a company's image (Uduji, 2013).

The analysis of this study indicate various kinds of barriers that can arise when trying to manage salesforce diversity effectively in an organization. Some barriers have their origins in the person doing the perceiving; some of the information and schemes that have built up over time concerning the person being perceived. To overcome these barriers and effectively manage a salesforce diversity, sales managers must possess or develop certain attitudes and values and the informational skills needed to change salespeople's attitudes and values. Sales managers can take a number of steps to change attitudes and values, and promote the effective management of salesforce diversity. For example, top management's commitment to salesforce diversity is crucial for the success of any diversity-related initiatives in the firm. Top managers need to develop the correct ethical values, and performance or business oriented attitudes that allow them to make appropriate use of their human resources. One aspect of developing the appropriate values and attitudes is to take steps to increase the accuracy of their perceptions. Sales managers should consciously attempt to be open to other point of view and perspectives, seek them out, and encourage their salespeople to do the same. salesforce members who are open to other perspectives put their own beliefs and knowledge to an important reality test and will be more inclined to modify or change them when necessary. Sales managers should not be afraid to change their views about a person, issue or event; moreover, they should encourage their Salespeople to be open to changing their views in the light of disconfirming evidence.

It is natural for sales managers and other members of salesforce to view other Salespeople from their own perspectives, because their own feelings, thoughts, attitudes, and experiences guide their perceptions and interactions. The ability to appreciate salesforce diversity, however, requires salespeople to become aware of other perspectives and the various attitudes and experiences of others. Many diversity awareness programs in organizations strive to increase Sales managers' and salespeople's awareness of their own attitudes, biases, and stereotypes, and the differing perspectives of diverse sales managers, salespeople and customers. Diversity awareness programs often have these goals:

- i. Providing the salespeople with the accurate information about the salesforce diversity.
- ii. Uncovering personal biases and stereotypes of the Salespeople.
- iii. Assessing personal beliefs, attitudes, and values and learning about other points of view of the salespeople.
- iv. Overturning inaccurate stereotypes and beliefs about groups of the salesforce.

- v. Developing an atmosphere in which salespeople feel free to share perspectives and points of view.
- vi. Improving understanding of others who are different from oneself in the salesforce.

Efforts to increase salesforce diversity skills should focus on improving the way Sales managers and their salespeople can interact with each other and on improving the ability to work with different kinds of people in the salesforce. The study suggests that an important issue here is being able to communicate with diverse Salespeople. Diverse salesforce members may have different style of communication, may differ in their language fluency, may use words differently, may differ in the nonverbal signals they send through facial expression and body language, and may differ in the way they perceive and interpret information. Sales managers and their Salespeople must learn to communicate effectively with one another if a salesforce is to take advantage of the skill and abilities of its diversity. Educating a salesforce about differences in ways of communicating is often a good starting point. Salespeople should also feel comfortable enough to “clear the air” and solve communication difficulties and misunderstandings as they occur rather than letting problems grow and fester without acknowledgement. Diversity education can help Sales managers and Salespeople gain better understanding of how Salespeople may interpret certain kinds of comments. Diversity education can also help Salespeople learn how to resolve misunderstanding. Sales managers and their Salespeople must learn how to be open to different approaches and ways of doing things. This does not mean that the salesforce members have to suppress their personal styles. Rather, it means that they must be open to, and feel threaten by, different approaches and perspectives, and they must have the patience and flexibility needed to understand and appreciate diverse perspectives. To the extent it is feasible, Sales managers should also be flexible enough to incorporate their differing needs of diverse Salespeople. Whenever flexible, it is desirable to rely on objective performance indicators as these are less subject to bias. When objective indicators are not available or are inappropriate, Sales managers should ensure that adequate time and attention are focused on the evaluation of salespeople’s performance and evaluators are held accountable for their evaluations. Moreover, vague performance standard should be avoided. Looking at the members of Salespeople of different minority groups and women in various sales positions, at various levels in the hierarchy, in locations that differ in their disability and in any other relevant categorizations in a salesforce can provide Sales managers with important information about potential problems and ways to rectify them. Sales managers should strive to create a salesforce culture that has zero tolerance for discrimination. As part of such a culture, salespeople feel empowered to challenge discriminatory behavior whether the behavior is directed at them or the witness discriminatory behaviour being directed at another salesperson. If the effective management of salesforce diversity is a valued organizational objective, then Salespeople should be rewarded for their contributions to this objective. For example, companies can tie Sales managers pay to their achievement of diversity goals in multinationals firms.

More findings of this study indicate that sometimes simply providing a forum for Salespeople to learn about and discuss their differing attitudes, values, and experiences can be a powerful means for increasing awareness. Also useful are role-plays that exact problems resulting from lack of awareness and indicate the increased understanding that comes from appreciating others’ viewpoints. Accurate information and training experiences can debunk stereotypes in a salesforce. Group exercises, role-plays, and diversity-related experiences can help Salespeople develop the skills they need to work effectively with a variety of Salespeople. Sales managers sometimes should hire outside consultants to provide diversity training for the salesforce. Whenever the informational roles are relatively ineffective, sales managers are likely to make bad decisions and take inappropriate actions, which can hurt salesforce effectiveness. Bad decision concerning diversity for reasons of age, ethnicity, or sexual orientation can range from not hiring qualified salespeople, failing to promote top-performing subordinate, who subsequently decides to take their skills to competing organizations, and promoting Salespeople because they have the same “diversity profile” as the manager or managers making the decision.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

Salesforce diversity can be considered as dissimilarities – differences – among salespeople due to age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, and capabilities/disabilities. salesforce diversity has raised important ethical issues and social responsibility issues as well. It is also a critical issue for salesforce management of organizations, one that if not handled well can bring a salesforce of an organization to its knees, especially in the multinational firms. There are several reasons why salesforce diversity is such a pressing concern issue both in popular press and for Sales managers and organizations:

1. There is a strong ethical imperative in many multinational firms that diverse people receive equal opportunities and be treated fairly and justly. Unfair treatment is also illegal.
2. Effectively management of a salesforce diversity can improve organizational effectiveness. When Sales managers effectively manage a salesforce diversity, they are not encouraging only other managers to treat other diverse members of other organization fairly and justly, but also realize that diversity is an important organizational resource that can help an organization gain a competitive advantage.

3. There is substantial evidence that diverse Salespeople in multinational firms continue to experience unfair treatment in the salesforce as a result of biases, stereotypes, and overt discrimination.

These findings suggest that it is natural for sales managers and salespeople of an organization to view other people from their own perspectives, because their own feelings, thoughts, attitudes, and experiences guide their perceptions and interactions. The ability to appreciate diverse, however, requires salespeople to become aware of other perspectives and others. Many diversity awareness programs are important in organizations to increase the sales managers and salespeople's awareness of own attitudes, biases, and stereotypes and, the differing perceptiveness of diverse sales managers, salespeople and customers. These informational roles would provide Salespeople with accurate information about salesforce diversity and also uncover personal biases and stereotypes. However, various kinds of barriers can arise when attempting to manage salesforce diversity effectively in an organization. Some barriers have their origin in the person doing the perceiving; some in the information and schemes that have built up over time concerning the person being perceived. To overcome these barriers and effectively manage a salesforce diversity, Sales managers must possess or develop certain attitudes and values, and informational skills needed to change salespeople's attitude and values. Sales managers can take a number of informational steps to change attitudes and values and promote the effective management of a salesforce diversity. These include: securing top management commitment; increase the accuracy of perceptions; increase diversity awareness; increase diversity skills; encourage flexibility; pay close attention to how Salespeople are evaluated; consider the members of diverse; empower the salespeople to challenge discriminatory behaviours, actions, and remarks; reward sales managers for effectively managing salesforce diversity; provide salesforce training utilizing a multipronged, ongoing approach; and encourage mentoring of diverse Salespeople in the salesforce of the organization.

#### References

- Aaron K. (2001) "Women Laments Lack of Diversity on Boards of Major Companies" *The Times Union*, May 16.
- Carley, W.M (1995) "Salesman's Treatment Raises Bias Questions at Schering – Plough" *Wall Street Journal*, May 31:A1, A8.
- Carnevale, A.P and Stone, S.C. (1994) "Diversity: Beyond the Golden Rule" *Training and Development*: 22– 39
- Cole, J. and Singer, B. (1991) "A Theory of Limited Differences: Explaining the Productivity Puzzle in Science" in H. Zuckerman; J.R. Cole, and J.T. Bruer (eds.), *The Outer Circle : Women in the Scientific Community*, New York: W.W. Norton.
- Fine, M.C; Johnson P.L. and Ryan S.M. (1990) "Cultural Diversity in the Workplace" *Public Personnel Management*, 19(3): 305 – 319.
- Folger R. and Konovsky, M.A. (1989) "Effect of Procedural and Distributive Justice on Reactions to Pay Raise Decisions" *Academy of Management Journal*, 32: 115 -130.
- Gutner, T. (2001) "Wanted: More Diverse Director" *Business Week*, April 30: 134
- Jones, G.R. and George, J.M (2003) *Contemporary Management*, New York: McGraw- Hill
- Long J.S. (1990) "The Origin of Sex Differences in Science" *Social Forces*, 68: 1297 – 1315.
- Martel, R.F, Lane D.M and Emrich , C. (1996n ) "Male Female Differences: A Computer Simulation" *American Physiologist* 51: 157 – 158.
- Sessa, V.I; Jackson, S.E and Rapini, D.T (1995) "Workforce Diversity: the Good, and Bad, and the Reality" In G. Ferris, S.D. Rosen, and D.T. Barnum (eds.), *Handbook of Human Resources Management*, Cambridge, MA; Blackwell; 263-282.
- Wheeler, M.L. (1996) : "Diversity: Making the Business Case" *Business Week*, December 9, Special Advertising Section.
- Wheeler, M.L. (1998) "Capitalizing on Diversity" *Business Week*, December 14, Special Advertising Section.
- Uduji J. I. (2013) "Job Enrichment: A Panacea to the Problem of the Demotivated Marketing Executives in the Banking Industry in Nigeria" *European Journal of Business and Movement*, 5(13): 99-106.
- Uduji J. I. (2013) "Non-Financial Rewards for Exceptional Performance of the Marketing Executives in the Banking Industry in Nigeria" *Research Journal of Finance and Accounting*, 4(6) :72 -79.
- Uduji J. I. (2013) "Public Relations for improving public Perception of the Marketing Executives in the Banking Industry in Nigeria" *Journal of Economics and Sustainable development*, 4(8) : 76 – 83.
- Uduji J. I. (2013) "Apathetic Attitude of the Drug Reps. A Hindrance to Sales Training in the Health Care Industry in Nigeria" *European Journal of Business and Management*, 5 (8) : 27 – 34.
- Uduji J. I. (2013) "Inadequate Finding: An Impediment to Sales Training Among the Big Pharmas in Nigeria" *Research Journal of Finance and Accounting*, 4(5) : 117 -125.
- Uduji J. I. (2013) The Reluctance of Top Management: A Major Obstacle to Sales Training in the Biotech Companies in Nigeria" *Information and Knowledge Management*, 3 (4) : 80 -88.



---

#### **About the Author**

Dr. Joseph Ikechukwu Uduji is also a Visiting Professor to the Catholic University of Cameroun Bamenda. He holds Ph.D (Marketing), Ph.D (Public Administration), M.Sc (Marketing), M.Sc (Public Relations), MBA (Management), MPA (Public Administration) from the University of Nigeria. He is a full member of National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria (NIMN); Nigeria Institute of Management (NIM); Nigeria Institute of Public Relations (NIPR). He lectures Sales Management, Public Relations Management, Marketing Management, Advertising Management, and Marketing Communications in the University of Nigeria. He has Published many books and journal articles in the field of Marketing, Management and Public Relations. He is a regular Preferred Conference Speaker for Professional bodies in Nigeria and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Dr. Joseph Ikechukwu Uduji has worked as Regional Manager with Multinational Companies such as Wiggins Teepe PLC, Johnson Wax, Afro Commerce. He is also a full ordained Zonal Pastor in the Redeemed Christian Church of God, and the Regional Coordinator (South East of Nigeria) of the Redeemed Christian Bible College. He is a Board Member of Trustee of the BIBLICA – Africa. He is happily married with four children and lives in Enugu State.

This academic article was published by The International Institute for Science, Technology and Education (IISTE). The IISTE is a pioneer in the Open Access Publishing service based in the U.S. and Europe. The aim of the institute is Accelerating Global Knowledge Sharing.

More information about the publisher can be found in the IISTE's homepage:

<http://www.iiste.org>

## CALL FOR PAPERS

The IISTE is currently hosting more than 30 peer-reviewed academic journals and collaborating with academic institutions around the world. There's no deadline for submission. **Prospective authors of IISTE journals can find the submission instruction on the following page:** <http://www.iiste.org/Journals/>

The IISTE editorial team promises to review and publish all the qualified submissions in a **fast** manner. All the journals articles are available online to the readers all over the world without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. Printed version of the journals is also available upon request of readers and authors.

### IISTE Knowledge Sharing Partners

EBSCO, Index Copernicus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, JournalTOCS, PKP Open Archives Harvester, Bielefeld Academic Search Engine, Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB, Open J-Gate, OCLC WorldCat, Universe Digital Library, NewJour, Google Scholar

