# GROUP DYNAMICS AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE OF SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN KOGI STATE, NIGERIA

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**Abstract**
*In an academic setting, group dynamics play a crucial role in problem-solving by leveraging the diverse perspectives, skills, and knowledge of group members. This study investigates the effect of group dynamics on employee performance of selected universities in Kogi state. The total population of the study comprised of 1052 academic staff of two selected universities in Kogi state namely Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba and the Federal University of Lokoja . The sample size for the study is 290, this was attained   through the use of Taro Yamane technique. Survey research design was adopted through the use of questionnaire to elicit response from respondents. Data was analyzed using linear multiple regression. Through statistical analysis, It was discovered that employee performance is significantly improved by team cohesion. Additionally, the study discovered that inclusiveness and diversity significantly improve worker performance. The study came to the conclusion that employee performance is positively and significantly impacted by group dynamics. The study recommended investing in activities and strategies to enhance team cohesion, such as team-building exercises and promoting collaboration, is advised. It was also recommended that institutions should strengthen diversity and inclusion initiatives through measures like diversity training programs and inclusive policies can further contribute to improving overall performance.*
**Keywords:** Group dynamics, diversity and inclusion, team cohesion, employee performance, Universities

## INTRODUCTION

Group dynamics begin to emerge when individuals with diverse skills, backgrounds, and experiences come together to form a team or workgroup within an organization. This initial stage involves introductions, establishing goals, and clarifying roles and responsibilities. As the group members interact, they start to develop communication patterns and build relationships with one another. This stage is characterized by sharing information, exchanging ideas, and getting to know each other's strengths and preferences. The emergence of group dynamics within an organization is a natural and essential process that facilitates collaboration, problem-solving, and goal achievement among individuals working together toward common objectives. By understanding and effectively managing group dynamics, institutions can leverage the combined talents and resources of their teams to fuel success and foster innovation.

Group dynamics entails the examination of interactions, relationships, and behavioral patterns that arise when individuals convene in a group or team environment (Hackman & Johnson.,2013). It focuses on how individuals within the group affect each other's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, as well as the collective functioning and evolution of the group over time.

Group dynamics provides valuable insights into the functioning of groups and teams in various contexts, including organizations, communities, and social settings (Katzenbach & Smith.,2015). By understanding the dynamics of group behavior, organizations can promote effective teamwork, collaboration, and leadership, leading to improved outcomes and performance.

Managing group dynamics is essential for promoting effective teamwork, maximizing productivity, and achieving shared goals within organizations and other group contexts (Levi, 2017). By addressing interpersonal relationships, communication patterns, and leadership dynamics, individuals and organizations can create environments that support collaboration, innovation, and high-performance outcomes (Deutsch etal.,2006).

Team cohesion involves to the level of unity and solidarity existing within members of a team. Cohesive teams often perform better than those with internal conflicts or divisions. When team members have trust and mutual respect, they are more inclined to collaborate efficiently, exchange knowledge, and provide support to each other leading to improved overall performance.

Diversity and inclusion refer to the practices and policies aimed at creating environments that value, respect, and include individuals from diverse backgrounds. Embracing diversity and fostering an inclusive environment within a group can enhance creativity, innovation, and problem-solving capabilities (Kandola & Fullerton, 2017). When employees from diverse backgrounds feel valued and included, they are more inclined to offer their distinct viewpoints and ideas, leading to improved performance outcomes for the group as a whole.

Employee performance is a multifaceted construct that reflects the degree to which an employee proficiently fulfills the tasks and responsibilities delegated to them within an organization (Cascio & Boudreau, 2016). It encompasses both quantitative measures, such as output levels and sales figures, and qualitative aspects, including the quality of work, customer satisfaction, and adherence to organizational values and standards.

**Statement of Problem**

Group dynamic indicate that groups surpass individuals due to interaction-based process gains, resulting in enhanced performance and individual learning opportunities. Group dynamics wield significant influence in contemporary workplaces, various challenges persist in understanding and optimizing their functioning. Addressing issues such as team cohesion and diversity and inclusion is imperative for organizations seeking to maximize their performance and foster a culture of collaboration and innovation. When group dynamics falter, the collective efficacy of the group diminishes. Challenges may arise from inadequate leadership, excessive reliance on authority, groupthink, and instances of free riding, among other factors. Recognizing and managing in group dynamics within teams is critical, as it profoundly influences team effectiveness and perceived efficacy. Only by tackling these challenges head-on can institutions unleash the full potential of their teams and attain enduring success in today's fiercely competitive business environment.

**Research Questions**

i. What is the outcome of team cohesion on employee performance of academic staff of selected universities in Kogi state?

ii. To what extent does diversity and inclusion enhance employee performance of academic staff of selected universities in Kogi state?

## Objective of the Study

i. Ascertain the relationship between team cohesion and employee performance of academic staff of selected universities in Kogi state.

ii. Assess the relationship between Diversity and inclusion on employee performance of academic staff of selected universities in Kogi state.

Research Hypotheses

i. **$H0_1$:** Team cohesion have no significant influence on employee performance of academic staff of selected universities.

ii. **$H0_2$:** Diversity inclusion have no significant influence on employee performance of academic staff of selected universities.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Concept of Group Dynamics

The interactions, procedures, and behavioral patterns that take place in groups and affect how members connect to one another and cooperate to accomplish shared objectives are referred to as group dynamics. Forsyth (2018) defined group dynamics as the scientific study of the nature and development of groups, including processes such as group formation, structure, communication, leadership, decision-making, and conflict resolution.

Overall, group dynamics explores the dynamics of groups and teams, their interactions, and the methods to shape or influence these dynamics. Jonathan and Matusitz (2020) observed that Group dynamics is the study of how individuals interact and behave psychologically within a group. It sheds light on the mechanisms that give rise to social group norms, roles, relationships, goals, and ideologies. Three main components are investigated, one as a science and one as an art: individuals, their interactions, and the changes that result from those interactions. Brown (2015) defined group dynamics as the forces that arise from the interplay of individual and group behaviors, influencing the structure and functioning of a group.

McGrath (1984) describes group dynamics as the processes and interactions that emerge within groups, affecting their performance, cohesion, and adaptation to changing circumstances. Group dynamics includes the interactions between members of a group including their communication patterns, roles, norms, and power structures (Levi, 2017).

Group dynamics shows how individuals within a group affects one another's emotions, ideas, and actions, and how these exchanges shape the group's norms, roles, and decision-making processes. The evolving patterns of interaction, communication, and influence among members of a group, contributing to the development of shared norms, goals, and identities.

### Team Cohesion

Team cohesion refers to the level of motivation among team members to remain united as a cohesive entity (Shaw, 1976). Moreover, it correlates with other team-related factors such as satisfaction, productivity, and interpersonal dynamics (Buttenhausen, 1991). When teams exhibit strong cohesion, individuals feel valued, supported, and aligned with the team's objectives, thereby enhancing overall team performance and efficiency (Beal et al., 2020). Organizations can foster

cohesion through various strategies. Team-building activities allow members to bond and develop relationships, building trust and communication skills (Salas et al., 2015). Encouraging open communication and collaboration is crucial, promoting a climate of cooperation (Salas et al., 2015). Shared decision-making enhances cohesion by giving members a sense of ownership and valuing everyone's input (Beal et al., 2020).

## Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity and inclusion involve the recognition, understanding, and acceptance of the differences among individuals and the active promotion of an environment where these differences are leveraged to foster creativity, innovation, and organizational success (Mor Barak, 2014). Kandola and Fullerton (2017) describe diversity and inclusion to encompass the creation of a culture that values and celebrates differences, fosters equitable opportunities for all individuals, and actively seeks to remove barriers to full participation and engagement in all aspects of organizational life. Diversity and inclusion are the ongoing commitment to acknowledging, appreciating and honoring the many experiences, backgrounds, and viewpoints that each member of a community has to offer or organization, and proactive measures taken to ensure equitable access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making processes (Catalyst, 2020). Diversity and inclusion involve "the deliberate and systematic effort to create an environment where all individuals are welcomed, valued, and supported, regardless of their differences, and where these differences are recognized as essential to the organization's success (Global Diversity Practice, 2018). Diversity and inclusion refer to the collective mixture of differences and similarities among individuals, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability, religion, socioeconomic status, and cultural background, and the intentional effort to create environments where everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered to contribute their perspectives and talents" (Cox & Blake, 1991; Thomas, 1990).

## Employee Performance

The degree to which a person carries out their duties, meets goals, and makes a positive contribution to the overall objectives and success of their company is referred to as employee performance. It includes a number of factors, including as output, caliber of work, meeting deadlines, ability to meet targets, and demonstration of competencies and skills relevant to the job role. Employee performance is often evaluated through formal assessments, feedback mechanisms, and performance appraisals conducted by managers or supervisors. Additionally, employee performance can be impacted by a number of variables, such as personal traits, drive, job design, workplace atmosphere, leadership, and organizational culture (Luthans, 2011).

Managers play a crucial role in managing and enhancing employee performance by providing clear expectations, regular feedback, coaching, and developmental opportunities (Buckingham & Goodall, 2019). Effective Performance management systems assist in identifying areas for development or improvement, rewarding strong performers, and coordinating individual goals with organizational objectives. Furthermore, creating a welcoming and inclusive workplace where staff members feel appreciated, included, and empowered can greatly improve worker performance as a whole (Robbins & Judge, 2019).

## 2.2 Theoretical Framework

## Social Exchange Theory

This study was anchored on the social exchange theory, which was established by sociologist Peter Blau in the 1960s after being first put forth by sociologist George Homans in the 1950s, provides insights into human interactions and relationships by highlighting the concepts of costs and rewards. This idea holds that people are logical actors who interact with others in order to maximize rewards. They evaluate the outcomes of their interactions in comparison to alternative options, engaging in a reciprocal give-and-take dynamic. One strength of Social Exchange Theory lies in its systematic framework, which provides valuable understanding of why individuals initiate and maintain relationships, as well as how they assess relationship outcomes. However, critics argue that it oversimplifies social interactions by focusing solely on rewards and costs, neglecting other important factors such as emotions and social norms.

Despite criticisms, social exchange theory remains relevant, particularly in understanding group dynamics and their impact on employee performance. The theory suggests that group factors like trust, leadership, communication, cohesion, and spirit influence employee behavior and performance by shaping the exchange of rewards within the team. Employees who perceive valuable rewards from their team are likely to be motivated and perform better, while those who perceive imbalance may experience reduced motivation and performance. By considering this theory, studies can explore how group dynamics contribute to the exchange of resources and support, and identify areas for improvement to enhance employee performance.

## 2.3 Empirical Review

Eromafuru et al. (2022) investigated the relationship between managing group dynamics (GPD) and the productivity of academic and non-academic workers in Nigerian institutions. A sample of 253 staff members was selected from a pool of 2050, and a self-structured questionnaire was developed for data collection. Reliability analysis confirmed the validity of both the individual constructs of GPD and staff effectiveness (SE), and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was employed to validate the instruments. Descriptive statistics including frequency and percentage tables, means, and standard deviations were utilized for data analysis. To investigate theories and correlations, regressions that were both linear and multiple were used, along with the variance inflation factor. The findings showed a strong statistical relationship between a number of GPD dimensions and staff effectiveness metrics, with the exception of the GPD dimension (SI), which generally showed a low predictive contribution. According to the report, administrations at federal institutions ought to place a higher priority on encouraging staff integration through the use of group dynamics-based tactics that improve the productivity of both academic and non-academic staff members. Furthermore, particular attention should be given to supporting and motivating staff members who demonstrate innate creative abilities and a knack for innovation, thus enabling them to fully realize their potential within the university environment.

Irina etal. (2021) explored the intricacies of implementing a group-based teaching methodology. Collaboration promotes social, personal, and collective growth facilitating self-realization and reinforcing value orientations towards a humanistic worldview, which ultimately contributes to society's sustainable development. Key competencies cultivated through teamwork include the ability to tackle interdisciplinary challenges, and their formation and refinement occur within the framework of collaborative efforts. Within the dynamics of group interactions, students not only pursue individual objectives but also share accountability for achieving team goals. The student team serves as an environment where each member experiences professional growth and personal

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development along their unique path to accomplishment. The benefits of group work are highlighted by practical educational trials and theoretical analyses of group formation. Students can exercise creativity and develop a positive atmosphere and sense of teamwork inside the group through group dynamics.

Mousa and Mark (2021) looked on how employee performance in Bahraini telecommunications businesses was affected by effective teamwork, which includes elements like effective communication, interpersonal skills, trust, team cohesion, and accountability. The study uses a quantitative methodology and is classified as a descriptive study. A questionnaire was the main tool utilized to collect data. The sample comprised 200 workers who were employed by Bahraini telecommunications companies. With the aid of mean scores, regression analysis, descriptive statistics, and Pearson correlation analysis, the gathered data was examined using the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 22. The study found that employee performance and teamwork are highly beneficial in Bahraini telecommunications enterprises. Additionally, the study showed that employee performance in these telecommunication organizations was significantly impacted by variables related to collaboration, such as effective communication, trust, interpersonal skills, and team cohesion. The study concluded that improving employee performance in Bahraini telecommunications enterprises can be achieved through cultivating effective cooperation.

Hadi (2018) investigated the variables affecting worker performance and team efficacy in Nepal's service industry. The research involved distributing 150 questionnaires to selected employees, out of which 100 were used for analysis. Convenience sampling was employed as the sampling technique. The study revealed that each of the six aspects of a successful team, in Nepalese service sector businesses, namely the supportive environment, team reward, team skill, role clarity, leadership, and team cohesiveness, have a good association with employee performance. The most important elements influencing worker performance were found to be team skill and role clarity, while supportive environments and cohesive teams also had an effect. It was shown that team rewards and leadership had a moderate effect. The study recommends the need for organizations to recognize and support teams, acting as a mediator between the team and the larger organization.

## METHODOLOGY

The study used a quantitative technique in a descriptive research design on the influence of group dynamics on employee performance. The total population  omprised of 638 academic staff members of Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba and 414 academic staff members of federal university Lokoja .  There are 1052 population in the study overall. The information was gotten from the registry unit of the universities in (2023). The study's sample size is 290, this was attained   through the use of the Taro Yamane technique. This formula is given as show below;

. Taro Yamane method was used to determine the sample size.  $n = \dfrac{N}{1 + N(e)2}$

Where: n = The Sample size

N = Total population size     e = error margin/limit      1 = Constant.

$n = \dfrac{1052}{1 + 1052(0.05)2}$        $n = \dfrac{1052}{3.63}$              n = 290 approximately:- Sample size (n) = 290

The stratified sampling technique was utilized to purposively select a sample size of two hundred and ninety (290) academic staff. Questionnaire was distributed across four faculties within two institutions: Management Sciences, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, and Arts and Humanities.

The collected data underwent analysis through using the statistical program for social sciences (SPSS) version 26 to do multiple linear regression.

**Model Specification**

The study's model sought to assess the lasting effects of group dynamics by estimating their coefficients on the dependent variable, employee performance (EP). The independent variable, group dynamics (GD), was examined through two proxies: team cohesion (TC) and diversity and inclusion (DI). The model is formulated in econometric terms as follows:

$EP = f(GD)$

$EP = \beta_o + \beta_1 TC + \beta_2 DI + \mu_i$ ---------------------- (i)

Where: GD = an indicator representing group dynamics (Independent Variable);

EP: = Employee Performance, the dependent variable

A constant denoted as βo and the coefficients of independent variables as β1-2

TC is a predictor that represents team cohesion;

DI is a predictor that represents diversity and inclusion;

μ is the stochastic error term;

i is for cross-sectional;

$f$ is for functional relationship.

A-priori expectation: TC, DI > 0

**DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

Two hundred and ninety (290) questionnaire was distributed among the academic staff of the two chosen universities. Of these, two hundred and eighty-three (283) were completed accurately and returned, resulting in a response rate of 97%. Consequently, the conclusions drawn are derived from the analysis of these two hundred and eighty-three (283) completed questionnaires.

The following hypotheses were tested in this section.

**H0₁:** Team cohesion have no significant influence on employee performance of academic staff of selected universities.

**H0₂:** Diversity inclusion have no significant influence on employee performance of academic staff of selected universities.

**Model Summary**

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | .940ᵃ | .884 | .883 | .429 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), DI, TC

With a R Square value of 0.884, the statistical model in question exhibits good predictive power, meaning that the independent variables account for around 88.4% of the variability in the dependent variable. Reliability in the model's explanatory capacity is indicated by the Adjusted R Square, which takes the number of predictors into consideration. This value is extremely near to the R Square value. Furthermore, the very precise predictions of the model are indicated by the low value of the standard error of the estimate (0.429). The model's predictors comprise a constant term as well as the variables diversity, inclusion, and team cohesion.

**ANOVAᵃ**

| Model | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

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| 1 | Regression | 392.697 | 2 | 196.349 | 1067.517 | .000[b] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Residual | 51.500 | 280 | .184 | | |
| | Total | 444.198 | 282 | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: EP
b. Predictors: (Constant), DI, TC

The exceptionally low p-value (0.000) in the ANOVA table suggests that the regression model is highly significant (p < 0.001). This shows that the dependent variable, employee performance, is significantly impacted by the predictors (constant, diversity and inclusion, team cohesion). This is further supported by the huge F-value (1067.517), which shows that the model's explanation of the variance is much higher than the unexplained variance. The model's ability to predict the dependent variable is strong, as indicated by the high F-value. The residual mean square (0.184) indicates that the variance not explained by the model is relatively small compared to the explained variance. Overall, the model appears to be a good fit for predicting the dependent variable.

**Coefficients[a]**

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients B | Std. Error | Standardized Coefficients Beta | T | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | (Constant) | -.122 | .085 | | -1.430 | .154 |
| | TC | .682 | .093 | .673 | 7.305 | .000 |
| | DI | .280 | .095 | .272 | 2.946 | .003 |

a. Dependent Variable: EP

The link between the dependent variable, employee performance (EP), and the independent variables, team cohesiveness, diversity, and inclusion (TC and DI), is revealed by the coefficients table.

The coefficient for team cohesion is 0.682, meaning that employee performance, the dependent variable, should rise by 0.682 units for every unit increase in team cohesion. With a t-value of 7.305, this impact is statistically significant (p < 0.001). This finding suggests that academic staff performance at particular universities is significantly impacted by team cohesion. The result is in consonant with the findings of (Mousa & Mark ,2021; Hadi , 2018).

The coefficient for diversity and inclusion is 0.280, suggesting that for each unit increase in diversity and inclusion, the dependent variable employee performance is expected to increase by 0.280 units. This effect is also statistically significant (p = 0.003), with a moderate t-value (2.946). This result indicates that Diversity and inclusion has significant effect on employee performance of academic staff of selected universities. This result is in tandem with the views of (Catalyst, 2020 ; Mor Barak, 2014).

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**
The analysis reveals that both team cohesion (TC), diversity and inclusion (DI) have statistically significant positive effects on employee performance (EP). These results suggest that fostering a cohesive team environment and promoting diversity and inclusion initiatives can positively impact employee performance. Team cohesion is fundamental for enhancing overall performance and efficiency within the university environment. It fosters a sense of unity, support, and alignment with team objectives among members. Employing strategies such as team-building activities, open

communication, collaboration, and shared decision-making can effectively nurture and strengthen team cohesion, leading to improved satisfaction, productivity, and interpersonal dynamics. The study concluded that group dynamics positively impacts and significantly enhances employee performance.

According to the results, the study suggests the following recommendations:

   i.   Strategies that enhance team cohesion should be imbibed, this include team-building exercises, fostering open communication channels, promoting collaboration, and recognizing and rewarding teamwork.

   ii.  Organizations should prioritize and strengthen diversity and inclusion initiatives, this may involve implementing diversity training programs and creating leadership positions.

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