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The effect of workforce diversity management on organizational performance in the case of higher educational institutions in Ethiopia: Does leadership style play a moderating role?

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Abstract: This study is aimed at exploring the degree of association between workforce diversity dimensions and the academic performance of four universities in Ethiopia. The diversity management attributes were diversity, climate, values, and organizational justice; identity, schemas, and communication adapted to the contexts of higher education institutions. The universities were selected purposively, and stratified and systematic sampling techniques were further used to identify respondents. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected to achieve the purpose of the study. Correlation and regression analyses were used to analyze the data. Results from correlation analysis revealed that there are statistically significant positive relations between the dimensions of workforce diversity and academic performance. This implies that the organizational performance of higher education institutions can be significantly influenced by existing diversity. The freedom to express one's own identity in the university workforce landscape was also observed to be limited in the universities studied, and this has to be improved. A democratic work environment is critical for the productivity of the staff, and an effort has to be geared towards the goal of creating such an environment. The regression analysis indicated that diversity, climate, organizational justice, identity, schema, and communication have statistically significant effects on the academic performance of higher educational institutions in Ethiopia. Finally, academic leaders are advised to apply the transformational leadership style, as it moderates the relationship between diversity management and academic performance.

Keywords: Ethiopia; diversity management; workforce diversity; organizational performance

1. Introduction

Workforce diversity is one of the most important aspects organizations. In a contemporary organization, people from diverse backgrounds are joining the work force of organizations, increasing the diversity of the workforce.

Different viewpoints are used inside an organization to express diversity. Diversity in the workforce is characterized in both strict and general terms. According to Lee and Gilbert (2014), it can be narrowly defined as the extent of employee heterogeneity that is confined to specific demographic characteristics like age, gender, and ethnicity. Workforce diversity is more broadly defined as the recognition, comprehension, acceptance, value, and celebration of individual variations among employees, including those related to age, gender, ethnicity, physical and mental abilities, and spiritual traditions (Foma, 2014). According to the Corporate Leadership Council (2012), workforce diversity is defined as “the collective mixture of differences and similarities that includes individual and organizational characteristics

and associated values, beliefs, experiences, backgrounds, preferences, and behavior.” Kreitz (2008) also opined that workforce diversity, in addition to being specific to each individual, is also contextual, as it is defined through societal constructs, justifying the need for research on diversity issues in changing organizational settings.

Workforce diversity refers to the range of demographic traits, notably in terms of age, gender, color, origin, ethnicity, and culture, among others, that make up an organization’s workforce. Different people come with different viewpoints and provide a wide range of options to challenge obstacles. Therefore, it can be argued that having a diverse workforce and its proper management is an important factor in improving organizational performance (Dessler, 2011). Workforce diversity is being considered in organizations as a core strategic value in response to the pursuit of equity and fairness (Li et al., 2020).

Regarding workforce diversity and how it affects an organization’s success, there are conflicting theories. Diversity in the workforce thereby affects the organization’s performance in both positive and negative ways. The manner in which these diversities are handled matters. According to Swasto (2016), diversity can have a positive impact on several areas of a company because it encompasses a varied range of individuals within the organization. Carr (2013) provided additional support for the idea that diversity improves an organization’s performance. The researcher proposed that in order to prevent workplace discrimination, firms should develop a diversity plan, hire workers from a variety of backgrounds, and diversify their workforce. Additionally, Taylor (2011) found that a diverse workplace encourages creativity and innovation.

According to the positivist view of diversity, a diversified workforce creates synergy if such diversities are managed, as the knowledge, attitude, skills, experiences, and exposures of this diversified workforce come together and result in the success of the organization.

Conversely, some argue that diversity has a detrimental impact on the effectiveness of organizations. For example, Wang (2022) proposed that because diversity affects people’s affective states, it may make interpersonal conflict more likely. The researchers further say that a diverse workforce may lead to goal discrepancies among staff members, which may further exacerbate feelings of defensiveness, anxiety, and uncertainty, as well as a decrease in appreciation, assertiveness, and enthusiasm. Similar to this, Van Dijk (2022) also mentioned that having a diverse workforce in an organization leads to interpersonal friction because of arguments and the undervaluing of other people’s functional responsibilities.

Hence, what matters as far as the relationship between workforce diversity and organizational performance is concerned is its management. Managing workforce diversity effectively is a crucial strategy for organizations such as universities, where the level of worker diversity is relatively high. In support of this fact, Beytekin et al. (2010) stated that institutionalizing work force diversity management is vital to improving organizational performance and efficiency among the people recruited from a varied background. Pitts (2009) states that workforce diversity management is strongly linked to employee performance.

Moon and Christensen (2019) also reported that diversity management results in better organizational outcomes by reinforcing employee commitment. The authors further posited that diversity management reconfigures employees in accordance with

their expertise and specialization, which eventually leads to higher employee performance. Park and Liang (2019), on their part, indicated that workforce diversity management creates a favorable work environment as it provides employees with a merit-based job that in turn enables efficient utilization of skills to boost the performance of an organization.

It has also been suggested that diversity management creates an environment in the workplace where prejudice against specific individuals does not occur. Additionally, it was said by Madera et al. (2016) that diversity management fosters a good workplace, which is thought to improve worker and organizational performance. Studies by Munjuri and Maina (2013) and others have also shown that better employee and workgroup performance results from well-managed diversity. In order to establish organizational unity, Mampane (2019) also suggested that managers must empower a diverse range of organizational personnel to tolerate ethnic and cultural differences.

Van Knippenberg and Shippers (2007) argued that effective management of workforce diversity would enable organizational members' competitiveness, improved work performance, innovativeness, and creativity.

Leaders of higher educational institutions (HEIs) need to create an environment where people with diverse personalities work together to realize better organizational performance. To create such an environment, it is worth taking the time to conduct research and come up with scientific evidence to facilitate informed decision-making. This is the crux of workforce diversity management.

2. Statement of the problem

Because of the presence of a diverse workforce in terms of demographic and socio-cultural characteristics, diversity management in HEIs fascinates the attention of leaders and researchers (Ouellette et al., 2018). However, exploration of extant literature on issues of diversity management in Ethiopian HEIs revealed that a limited number of studies had been done (Adamu and Zellelew, 2007; Biru, 2019; Tariku and Latchanna, 2016). The works reported thus far have largely focused on the review of secondary information (Tariku and Latchana, 2016), private HEIs (Biru, 2019), non-governmental entities as per Alene (2018), and a limited number of diversity dimensions that focus specifically on students (Adamu, 2013). The scope of generalizability to the entire public and higher HEIs of works done thus far in Ethiopia is generally limited (Biru, 2019). Employees working in HEIs can vary in demographic variables such as age, gender, marital and educational status, and religion and ethnicity, among others (Yadav and Lenka, 2020). Hence, conducting research on the subject is timely and worth it.

3. Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to expose the effect of workforce diversity on academic performance of higher educational institutions in Ethiopia.

4. Literature review

To attain an inclusive workplace, the workforce must feel valued, listened to, and

respected (Wallace and Pillans, 2016). For this to occur and the planned organizational goal to be realized, it is essential that leaders have an inclusive and inspiring leadership style and are determined to challenge perceived workplace biases. Such leaders are expected to shoulder the responsibility of creating an inclusive organizational climate and also hold employees responsible for enhanced inclusion. Inclusion involves the continuous search for value and effective use of workforce diversity, which in turn empowers the existing workforce to tirelessly work towards enhanced organizational performance (GDP, 2017).

Contemporary HEIs operate in a competitive environment typified by diversity. By implication, their success thus depends on the effectiveness with which their leaders of higher educational institutions manage that diversity. The organizational culture and climate can affect the effectiveness with which leaders of higher educational institutions manage diversity. These determine the way in which the staff interacts with one another responds to and/or influences management decisions (Ashton, 2010; Watson, 2006).

According to Ashton (2010), the climate and culture of the institution, as well as the manner in which people working there behave, are significantly influenced by the values and beliefs held by the parties concerned, as well as by the nature and strength of the organization. Watson (2006) named this the organizational culture. According to O'Donnell and Boyle (2008), understanding cultural differences as well as organizational types and cultures is critical for the effective management of institutional diversity. Another critical factor, according to Schein (2004), is the flexibility of an organization, which reflects the extent to which it is aware of and willing to accommodate the cultural orientations of diverse groups of people who happen to be part of a single institution. The author further posited that the effectiveness of diversity management is reflected in the behavior of all those associated with the institution, regardless of the extent to which their values, beliefs, and/or cultural orientations differ.

A sound knowledge and understanding of the culture(s) of institutional populations is critical to the breaking down of stereotypes, the reduction of bias, and the enablement of institutions to fulfill their integration mandate (Scheepers, 2010). For this purpose, diversity management strategies should address staff inequities in ways that are unique to particular circumstances. Every staff member should, for example, feel and be empowered to perform their functions to their full potential (Thomas, 2010).

The overall performance of organizations, academic or otherwise, can partly be associated with the dimensions of diversity management. The performance of Ethiopian HEIs is the focus of this study, with the aim of understanding the performance exhibited by HEIs as directly affected by diversity management. Performance is fundamental to HEIs as donors; both governmental and non-governmental organizations support these institutions because they are interested in the outcomes of these institutions. Donors of HEIs have generally been using market-type assessment approaches to inspire these organizations to excel with regard to student and financial performances (Dill and Soo, 2004). Governments deploy financial resources for HEIs where performance is manifested in the form of good research output and a superior position in university rankings (Altbach and Balan,

2007).

According to Herbst (2007), institutions that demonstrate superior performance in diversity management get more income than lesser-performing ones, which would provide better performers with a competitive advantage that inspires other less-performing institutions. The vital issue yet is the lack of a feasible performance measurement scale for HEIs, suggesting the need for a valid performance measurement system for HEIs so that informed decisions can be made.

Numerous writers have explored the metrics of organizational performance, leading to the development of several performance metrics (Kaplan and Norton, 2005). While some of these works are based on non-financial indicators Gronum et al. (2012) and financial indicators Kamyabi and Devi (2012), others are based on a combination of the two (Kaplan and Norton, 2005). Since the primary purposes of these metrics were to support profit-oriented organizations, HEIs that prioritize teaching, research, community service, and peer-reviewed scientific publications should not use them.

Using metrics that assess research and teaching-related performances, several studies on performance evaluation were also conducted for HEIs (Badri and Abdulla, 2004). There are further reports available that concentrate on indicators of research and consulting projects related to income production (Asif et al., 2013). While certain study findings on student and institutional stakeholder satisfaction are also available, as per Asif and Searcy (2014), academic success indicators have often received less attention. In this study, leadership styles and diversity management will be used as indirect and direct influencing factors in the measurement of academic performance-oriented metrics.

Similarly, the topic of leadership results has inspired and still inspires scholarly and popular writing. Abujarad (2011) claims that many kinds of leadership outcomes have been applied to evaluate the efficacy of leadership. Three factors are used to assess a leader's effectiveness: the follower's extra effort, their job satisfaction, and the leader's efficacy (Bass et al., 2003).

By employing a few public higher education institutions as study subjects and assessing individual opinions of the diversity climate, the current study is intended to aid in the formulation of successful interventions on diversity management challenges. The study will also examine how followers and leaders see the current leadership philosophies at Ethiopia's public higher education institutions. Additionally, an examination of the moderating effect of leadership styles on the links between organizational performance and diversity management will be undertaken. It is believed that the target HEIs' vitality would seem to increase if leaders used evidence-based leadership techniques.

Diversity in the workforce has a number of benefits for HEIs and other corporate organizations' performance (Ellison and Eatman, 2008). These outcomes may be favorable or unfavorable. Among the benefits are more organizational adaptation and flexibility, which allow HEIs to respond more quickly to changes in the organizational landscape than homogenous organizations do. This increases productivity. According to Barabino et al. (2001), higher competitiveness can be attained through expanded problem-solving abilities, increased creativity and invention, improved skills, and improved organizational reputation. Additionally, a diverse workforce has been seen as essential to achieving the objectives of the business by fostering a sense of unity

among the workgroup (Ozbilgin, 2007).

According to Joshi et al. (2011), leadership is seen as a crucial factor in improving our comprehension of the connection between workplace diversity and its impact on organizational success. When leadership promotes identification with the work group or organization and facilitates the elaboration and integration of differences in expertise and perspectives, it has been widely reported to positively moderate the effects of workplace diversity on social integration, wellbeing, and performance-related variables (Kearney and Gebert, 2009).

Developing a deeper understanding of diversity leadership is essential, especially in higher education institutions (HEIs), because a diverse workforce with varying beliefs and interests works together, and leaders must manage this workforce. Leadership is the most important aspect of HEIs; however, it's getting harder to do due to growing globalization, technological advancements, and diversity management trends. Effective leaders must know what is expected of them and how to meet those expectations. As the demand for knowledge-based enterprises increases, leaders and employees have a responsibility to enhance workplace learning and workforce development (Gentry et al., 2014).

5. Research design and methodology

A descriptive research design was employed for this particular study. Both qualitative and quantitative data were used. The data were collected from the teaching staff of four purposefully selected Ethiopian public HEIs, namely Addis Ababa University (AAU), Bahirdar University (BDU), Jimma University (JU), and Hawassa University (HU). The study focused on the teaching staff population of the four universities. The study employed a combination of purposive, stratified, and systematic sampling techniques. The four universities used as the objects of the research were purposefully selected. The study population in the four universities was further stratified by gender, age, religion, and other diversity dimensions as appropriate, as the measurement of interest is believed to vary between these dimensions. The study sample was then chosen proportionately by taking non-equal sample sizes from each stratum, ensuring more realistic responses to the questionnaire survey. Accordingly, a total of 386 samples were drawn from the population using the Yamene (1967) formula with a margin of error of 5%. As far as data analysis is concerned, correlation analysis is used to see the relation between workforce diversity and organizational performance, and regression analysis is used to see the effect of workforce diversity on organizational performance. The deep diversity parameters, such as diversity climate, organizational justice, identity, values, schemas, and communication, are the independent variables, and academic performance is the dependent variable used in this study. The independent variables are the taxonomies of diversities developed by Tailor (2011). Whereas, the measurement of academic performance in HEIs that measure research and teaching-related performance indicators has been adopted from Asif and Searcy (2014) and also from new scales for measuring academic performance that have recently been developed by Ahmed et al. (2018).

6. Results and discussion

6.1. Correlation analysis

One of the main objectives of this research is to investigate the relationship between workforce diversity management and the organizational performance of the Ethiopian HEIs.

The relationships between workforce diversity management (diversity climate, organizational justice, identity, values, schemas, and communication) and organizational performance were analyzed as indicated in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Correlation between diversity management dimensions and performance (source: Pearson correlation output.).

Workforce diversity management diminutions		Organizational performance of the Ethiopia HEIs
Diversity climate	Pearson correlation	0.849**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
Organizational justice	Pearson correlation	0.831**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
Identity	Pearson correlation	0.820**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
Values	Pearson correlation	0.800**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
Schemas	Pearson correlation	0.845**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
Communication	Pearson correlation	0.778**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
N		386

The correlation analysis result shows that there was a strong, positive correlation between each diversity dimensions and performance of the Ethiopia HEIs.

There was a strong, positive correlation between diversity climate and organizational performance of the Ethiopian HEIs ($r = 0.849$, $N = 386$; $p < 0.05$), indicating that high levels of diversity climate practice are associated with high levels of performance. There is also a strong, positive correlation between organizational justice and the performance of the Ethiopian HEIs ($r = 0.831$, $N = 386$; $p < 0.05$), indicating that high levels of organizational justice practice are associated with high levels of performance. There was also a strong, positive correlation between identity and performance among the Ethiopian HEIs ($r = 0.820$, $N = 386$; $p < 0.05$), indicating that high levels of identity practice are associated with high levels of performance. There was also a medium, positive correlation between values on diversity and academic performance of the Ethiopian HEIs ($r = 0.800$, $N = 386$; $p < 0.05$), indicating that high levels of values on diversity are associated with high levels of performance. There was also a strong, positive correlation between Schemas and the performance of the Ethiopian HEIs ($r = 0.845$, $N = 386$; $p < 0.05$), indicating that high levels of schemas practice are associated with high levels of performance. There was also a

strong, positive correlation between communication and the performance of the Ethiopian HEIs ($r = 0.778$, $N = 386$; $p < 0.05$), indicating that high levels of communication practice are associated with high levels of performance.

6.2. Regression analysis

6.2.1. Assumption tests of the classical linear regression model

In order to run the classical linear regression model, it is mandatory to test the fitness of the assumptions of the model.

Linearity: to run classical linear regression, the relation between independent variables (diversity management) and the dependent variable (organizational performance) has to be linear. A scatterplot is used to check the linearity of the relationship between the dependent and independent variables, and the result is indicated in **Figure 1**.

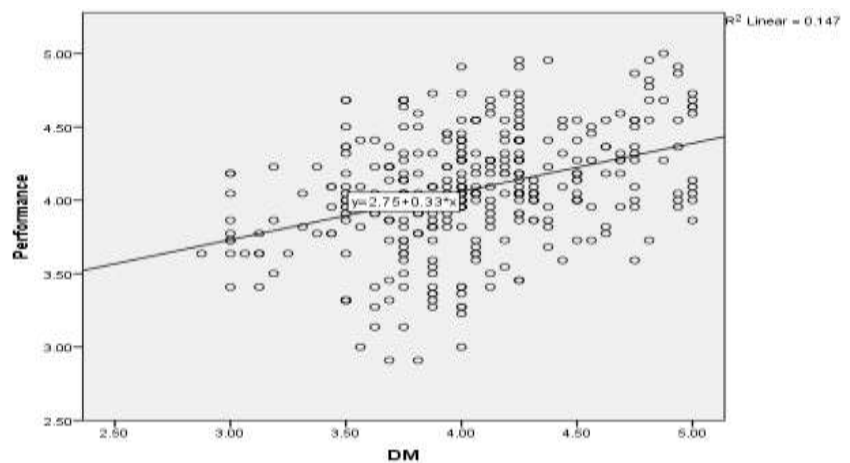


Figure 1. Linearity test (source: SPSS output).

From the scatter plot, one can understand that there is no linearity problem in the model.

Normally: This test indicates whether the residuals (errors) of the regression line are approximately normally distributed. Shapiro wilks test was used to test the normality and the result is indicated in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Normality test result (source: SPSS Output).

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Performance	0.075	133	0.065	0.985	133	0.163
Diversity climate	0.070	133	0.200*	0.984	133	0.127
Organizational justice	0.064	133	0.200*	0.980	133	0.052
Identity	0.074	133	0.068	0.990	133	0.457
Values	0.061	133	0.200*	0.984	133	0.129
Schemas	0.075	133	0.067	0.984	133	0.110
Communication	0.065	133	0.200*	0.988	133	0.294

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

All the results of the Shapiro-Wilks test’s *p* value are greater than 0.05 at the 95% confidence level, and there is no significant normality problem.

Multicollinearity: This is essentially the assumption that the predictors are not too highly correlated with one another. In this study, there is no multicollinearity in the data, as revealed in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Multicollinearity test (source: SPSS Output).

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	Collinearity statistics	
		B	Std. error	Beta	Tolerance	VIF
	(Constant)	0.910	0.202			
	Diversity climate	0.320	0.046	0.360	0.485	2.061
	Organizational justice	0.124	0.052	0.137	0.399	2.506
1	Identity	0.116	0.058	0.112	0.425	2.351
	Values	0.004	0.054	0.004	0.663	1.508
	Schemas	0.119	0.055	0.116	0.460	2.174
	Communication	0.114	0.045	0.132	0.494	2.025

a. Dependent variable: Perform.

The result indicated that there is no tolerance value less than 0.1 or a VIF value greater than 10, indicating that there is a multicollinearity problem and that the independent variables are independent of each other.

Homoscedasticity: Homoscedasticity describes a situation in which the error term (that is, the “noise” or random disturbance in the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable) is the same across all values of the independent variables. Since there is no linearity or normality problem, there is no significant reason to believe that there is a heteroscedasticity problem.

6.2.2. Model fitness

Multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine how diversity affects the organizational performance of Ethiopian HEIs. The goodness of fit results of standard linear multiple regressions adjusted *R*² with performance as a dependent variable and communication, values, and diversity climate, identity, schemas, and organizational justice are independent variables.

The multiple regression model with all six predictors produced adjusted *R*² = 0.488, *F* = 62.067, *p* < 0.005. This indicates that 48.8% of the variance in organizational performance can be predicted from the combination of communication, values, diversity, climate, identity, schemas, and organizational justice indicated in **Table 4**.

Table 4. Model fitness (source: SPSS Output).

Model summary ^b					
Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> square	Adjusted <i>R</i> square	Std. error of the estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.704 ^a	0.496	0.488	0.63589	1.954

a. Predictors: (Constant), communication, values, diversity climate, identity, schemas, organizational justice;

b. Dependent variable: Performance.

Furthermore, the *F* statistics of the ANOVA result ($P = 0.000$) are statistically significant, indicating that the model is fit to test the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable. The ANOVA result is indicated in **Table 5**.

Table 5. ANOVA test result (source: Regression output).

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
1	Regression	150.581	6	25.097	62.067	0.000 ^b
	Residual	153.249	379	0.404		
	Total	303.829	385			

a. Dependent variable: Performance;

b. Predictors: (Constant), communication, values, diversity climate, identity, schemas, organizational justice.

6.2.3. Test result of the CLRM

The result of the major assumption test of the classical linear regression model indicated that there is no significant violation of the assumptions, and we can conduct the regression.

The following table indicates the regression output to see the effect of diversity management as the independent variable and academic performance as a dependent variable.

The table shows that each of the diversity management practices contributes to the overall model. All predictors had positive regression weights, indicating institutions with greater diversity management practices contributed to higher organizational performance, with the exception of organizational values. Diversity climate: The regression result indicated that diversity climate has a statistically significant ($P = 0.000$) positive effect on the academic performance of higher educational institutions in Ethiopia. This implies that if employees perceive that an organization’s policies, practices, and procedures have given due attention to diversity and inclusion, they will develop institutional ownership and be committed to achieving the vision of their organization. Organizational Justice: The regression output indicated that organizational justice has a statistically significant positive effect on the performance of the Ethiopian HEIs ($P = 0.018$). This indicates that employees’ moral decency with regard to the distribution of resources, procedures, and interactions significantly affects academic performance in higher educational institutions in Ethiopia. If employees perceive that the workplace is fair from the perspective of the distribution of outcomes, procedures that result in outcomes, information provision, and interaction and treatment of staff, they will be committed to providing their time, knowledge, and skills to accomplish the teaching and learning, research, and community service endeavors of the universities. Identity: The regression results further indicated that identity has a statistically significant ($P = 0.046$) effect on academic performance at the 5% significance level. If employees perceive that they are fairly included in a system and do not feel that they are excluded in a diverse work setting, their performance will be better, which will further enhance the performance of their university. Values: The result of this study indicated that value has no

statistically significant ($P = 0.938$) effect on the academic performance of public universities in Ethiopia. Schemas: The classical linear regression result indicated that schema has a statistically significant ($P = 0.032$) effect on the academic performance of public universities in Ethiopia. This indicates that employees’ patterns of thinking and behavior to interpret the world affect academic performance. If employees use shortcuts in analyzing and interpreting the information, poor decisions will be made that lead to the worst performance, and vice versa. Communication: Finally, communication is observed to have a statistically significant ($P = 0.012$) positive influence on academic performance. This implies that the availability of language barriers, differences in communication styles, overreliance on nonverbal communication over verbal communication, and poor language fluency negatively result in miscommunication, which results in poor academic performance, and vice versa. The result is indicated in **Table 6**.

Table 6. CLRM regression output (source: Regression output.).

Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	<i>t</i>	Sig.
	<i>B</i>	Std. error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.910	0.202		4.515	0.000
Diversity climate	0.320	0.046	0.360	6.878	0.000
Organizational justice	0.124	0.052	0.137	2.370	0.018
1 Identity	0.116	0.058	0.112	2.006	0.046
Values	0.004	0.054	0.004	0.078	0.938
Schemas	0.119	0.055	0.116	2.150	0.032
Communication	0.114	0.045	0.132	2.537	0.012

a. Dependent variable: Organizational performance.

6.3. The moderating effect of leadership style on the relationship between workforce diversity and academic performance

The interrelationships between diversity management, leadership styles, and organizational performance are presented in **Figure 2**. The direct effect of diversity management on organizational performance was found to be positive ($r = 0.30$). The relationship between organizational performance and transformational ($r = 0.28$) and transactional ($r = 0.06$) leadership styles was observed to be positive, though the correlation values were observed to be low. On the other hand, laissez-faire leadership was observed to negatively affect organizational performance ($r = -0.09$). The relationship between all the leadership styles and diversity management was found to be positive. The correlation values (r values) for transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez-faire leadership in relation to diversity management were found to be 0.32, 0.05, and 0.05, respectively. Transformational and transactional leadership styles can thus be used in combination with good diversity management practices to improve the academic performance of higher education institutions in Ethiopia. This can be explained by the positive relationship between transformational and transactional leadership styles and diversity management.

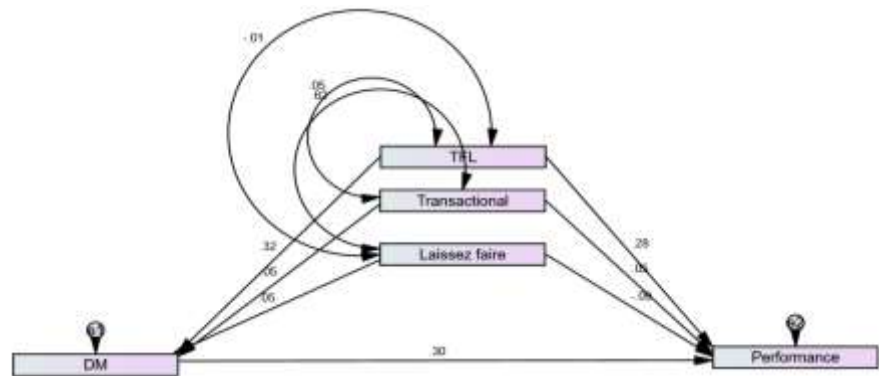


Figure 2. Moderating role of leadership between diversity management and performance (source: AMOS output).

7. Conclusions

The study indicated that the teaching staffs of the sample universities are diverse in terms of their demographic features. The staff agreed that diversity management dimensions are prevalent in their universities but opined that the presence of some of the dimensions needs to be ensured. The dimension ‘values’ signifies the extent to which one’s central guides influence the perceptions of that staff with regard to identity, preference, beliefs, and behaviors in a diverse workplace. The practical implication of this is that attention needs to be given to the creation of a democratic work environment where the staff is capable of expressing their identity freely. The freedom to express one’s own identity in the university landscape was observed to be limited in the universities studied, and this has to thus be improved. A democratic work environment is critical for enhanced staff productivity, and an effort has to be made towards the goal of creating such an environment. Hence, the leaders of higher education institutions in Ethiopia are advised to create an environment that accommodates the diversities needed to provide quality education, one of the sustainable development goals that Ethiopia aspires to achieve.

8. Direction for future researchers

This study is not all-inclusive in nature. Diversities among students and administrative staff could be an area of interest for future researchers. Diversity management and organizational performance, with the mediating role of organizational culture, could be areas for future researchers too.

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