



**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
SCHOOL OF COMMERCE**



ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
MASTER OF ARTS IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT

**EFFECTS OF THE CHALLENGES IN MULTI-CULTURAL SETTING ON
PROJECT PERFORMANCE: THE CASE OF MSF HOLLAND IN
ETHIOPIA**

BY;

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MASTER OF ARTS IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT*

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ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
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Statement of Declaration

I hereby, declare that this project work entitled “The effect of the challenge’s in Multicultural setting on Project Performance in the case of MSF Holland” is original work of my own, and has not been presented by anyone for any degree in any other university. And all the sources of materials used for the project work have been duly acknowledged.

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Candidate

Signature

Date

This is to certify that the above declaration made by the candidate is correct to the best of my knowledge.

Fesseha Afework (Asst. Prof.)

Advisor

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

ACSO	Authority of Civil Society Organizations
HIV/AIDS	Human Immune Virus/Accoutered Immunity Deficiency Syndrome
HQ	Head Quarter
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
MSF	Medicens Sans Frontiers
OCA	Operational Center Amsterdam
OCB	Operational Center Brussels
OCBA	Operational Center Barcelona and Athens
OCG	Operational Center Geneva
OCP	Operational Center Paris
PM	Project Management

Abstract

MSF Holland, being one of the influential medical humanitarian organizations, has been providing humanitarian assistance for more than half a century. The main objective of this study is to examine the effects of the challenges of working in a multicultural setting on project performance looking at the case of one of MSF sections (MSF Holland) in Ethiopia. The study conducted covered 4 out of the 6 projects being implemented in Ethiopia. The study used both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The methodology to conduct the research was based on interview and questionnaires' for the primary data, and documents from MSF Holland and research papers for the secondary data. The study uses both Exploratory and descriptive methods. Survey questioners were sent to all the targeted population (100 participants) in order to get a reliable data on the experiences of MSF Holland's employees working in a multicultural setting. In addition, higher level employees (managers and coordinators) where presented with interview questions in order to get a more detailed information and explanation on the research question. The gathered quantitative information was then analyzed using descriptive statistics by SPSS software. The qualitative data is analyzed using content analysis. The major findings of the study showed that the major challenges MSF Holland is facing are potential conflicts among its staff due to the difference of culture, delays of work due to the time needed to integrate the team members and language barriers. Even if the challenges seem major in their potential to affect the project performance, the study shows that the challenges were tackled in a way that project performance is not compromised. The researcher recommend that MSF Holland periodically evaluate the effect of the challenges of its multicultural setting so it doesn't affect project performance. In addition it is recommended that MSF Holland encourages and empowers its staff to work in a multicultural teams and are willing to learn from each other. Most importantly, the researcher recommends that MSF Holland focuses on having a policy or a procedure on how to deal with issues created due to its multicultural nature.

Key word- Project Performance, Tolerance, multicultural setting, MSF Holland

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, research objectives, significance of the study, scope of the study, and definitions of terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

"Project Management is the dynamic process that utilises the appropriate resources of the organisation in a controlled and structured manner, to achieve some clearly defined objectives identified as strategic needs. It is always conducted within a defined set of constraints." (Young, 2018). Some of the constraints are so crucial that projects cannot even move an inch if there are minor glitches. For instance resources like money, time and human resource are very crucial for the implementation of a project.

Project managers should be aware of the resources they have under their disposal and how to find away to make them even more effective. When dealing with human resources, even if different from project to project, people with the right expertise are the number one thing the project manager should strive to have in their teams. The second one is having a team that can work well, by complementing each other and filling the gaps. Having different team members means having to deal with different people with diverse background in terms of the work they do in the project, their educational background, their religious and cultural background and the way they see and interpret their world.

International organizations in our country, even though different in the number of international staff they employ, have made significant strides in ensuring that their teams are diverse. This was of course achieved due to the relatively newly implemented proclamation Number 1113/2019 of the Organizations of Civil Society Proclamation which is implemented by Agency for Civil Society Organizations

(ACSO) that has opened doors to have international staff with the proper work permit document to be employed in our country.

This means there are projects run by teams from different parts of the world. This multicultural setting of the organization doesn't only mean that the staff are from different countries, it also includes people from the same country but with diverse cultures and backgrounds.

Corporate culture is based in part on employees' shared values, and is in part defined by management, company history, employees' professional culture, etc (Huard, 2017). Once the corporate culture has been identified, members should try to adapt to the frequency, formality, and type of communication customary in that culture (Huard, 2017).

Having teams from different backgrounds will give the organization a unique opportunity to succeed and achieve its at most objective. This will however be a reality if the project manager, the sponsor or the organization has dedicated their resources to make it work and provide everyone with an environment suitable for all staff. Human resource management is therefore the crucial thing that has to be done right.

Human resource management is a strategic, integrated and coherent approach to the employment, development and well-being of the people working in organizations (Armstrong, 2016).

According to O'Riordan (2017), Human Resource Management (HRM, or sometimes abbreviated to HR) is concerned with all aspects of how people are employed and managed in organizations.

Effective human resource management is considered as one of the main factor for the success of any organization. In reality, good HR strategy is not only important for the

productivity of an organization, and employee commitment but organization culture is equally important for the company progress. (Sirshar, Liaqat & Siddique, 2019).

Multicultural teams who work well ensure success of the organizational performance. As seen from such settings, one can easily realize that it is not always easy for teams to work together especially when the team are not as of the same background. The inability to ensure that multicultural teams working together leads to failure of the organization in many ways. One of the effects being delays in achieving organizational goal or extra costs incurred by investing to ensure that the team understands and works together. Most importantly, misunderstandings of different cultures leads to conflicts which creates an environment impossible to work in for all staff leading to demotivation's and stress. Hence, the purpose of the study is examine the effect of the challenges in Multi-cultural setting on a project performance.

1.2 Background of the Organization

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is an International Non-Governmental Humanitarian Organization (INGO) also known in English as Doctors Without Borders. MSF was founded in 1971 in Paris, France by a group of doctors and journalists in the wake of war and famine in Biafra, Nigeria. Their aim was to establish an independent organization that focuses on delivering emergency medicine aid quickly, effectively and impartially.

MSF delivers emergency aid to people affected by armed conflict, epidemics, natural disasters, and exclusion from healthcare. MSF offers assistance to people based on need, irrespective of race, religion, gender or political affiliation. Its actions are guided by medical ethics and the principles of neutrality and impartiality and work based on humanitarian principles. (SANOU, 2019)

Since 1980, MSF has opened offices in 28 countries. They are bound together by MSF International, based in Geneva, Switzerland, which provides coordination, information

and support to the MSF Movement. Today, MSF has more than 35,000 employees and volunteers across the world. Since its founding, MSF has treated over one hundred million patients. Thousands of health professionals, logistical and administrative staff most of whom are hired locally are working on programs in 71 countries worldwide.

MSF operates independently. It conducts its own evaluations on the ground to determine people's needs. More than 90 per cent of its overall funding comes from millions of private sources; predominantly for its individual members, not governments.

MSF speaks out case studies openly that have led it to speak out. These include denouncing the forced relocation in Ethiopia in 1985, the inaction of the international community during the Rwandan genocide of 1994 and the Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech that demanded an end to indiscriminate bombings of civilians in Chechnya.

MSF rejects the idea that poor people deserve third-rate medical care and strives to provide high-quality care to patients. Through the Access Campaign, and in partnership with the Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative, this work has helped lower the price of HIV/AIDS treatment and stimulated research and development for medicines to treat malaria and neglected diseases like sleeping sickness and kala azar.

Among these offices, five country offices are directly implementing projects and called "Operational Centers". They are known as "Operational Center Amsterdam (OCA), Operational Center Geneva (OCG), Operational Center Paris (OCP), Operational Center Barcelona and Athens (OCBA), and Operational Center Brussels (OCB)". The rest of the offices provide human, financial and logistical and other resources for these offices.

MSF-Holland (MSF-OCA) is one of the operational centers called Amsterdam Operational Center (OCA) and has many projects around the globe. Its Head Quarter (HQ) is in Amsterdam, Holland.

MSF-OCA has been operational in Ethiopia since 1998 and is implementing projects registered under the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Authority for Civil Service Organizations (ACSO) with the registration license number 0654. Currently it is undertaking Six health care projects in different regional states of Ethiopia; namely, Abdurafi KalAzar and HIV/AIDS project, North Gondar, Amhara Region; Wardher Health Care project, Ethiopia Somali region, Kule Refugee Health Project and Tirkdid Refugee Health Projects, Gambella region and Shire and Sheraro Emergency Response Health Projects, Tigray region. All these projects report directly to the Coordination Office (CO) in Addis Ababa.

As of September 2021, MSF-Holland Ethiopia mission has a total of 67 international staff recruited from different countries around the world, around 1000 national staff most of them are recruited from the regions and around 500 incentive payment staffs who are recruited from the refugee communities in Kule Camp Gambela.

MSF Holland had massive projects with lots of employees before significantly reducing most of its national staff(around 90%) and all of its incentive staffs due to a three months suspension imposed by the Authority for Civil Society Organization(ACSO) on July 2021. MSF Holland's money was also frozen making the organization unable to pay its staff leading to the reduction of the significant number. Even after the suspension was lifted, on October 2021, MSF Holland still struggled to return back to its previous activities and capacity. It has started implementing activities in all its projects but with the reduced staff and some activities are still not started with full capacity.

The INGO sector in Ethiopia is becoming one of the fast growing sectors which may yield a tremendous opportunity for growth. It is also facing challenges that has to do

with the workforce diversity management among others, due to its growing size and number of projects and staff from different parts of the world. This incites the author to conduct the research to further look in to and determine what other challenges are there in such a diverse environment which can lead to improved performance if resolved well.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Project success or organizational performance and success are highly dependent on the resources allocated to achieve the objectives. Organizations set objectives which they believe they should achieve given the resources they are dedicating. It is not always easy to achieve the objectives set. This could be due to the poor planning at the beginning of the project or due to the fast changing internal and external environment that highly impacts the success of the project. The main constraints are money/finance, time and Human resources.

As one of the constrains, Human resource is the one that has to be carefully managed for a better outcome, especially given that human behavior is challenging to understand and manage. It is uniquely challenging when the team members are from different cultural backgrounds. In the current environment it has become apparent that organizations are leaning towards employing staff from diverse backgrounds, sometimes so diverse that it is from a different country, in the hopes of achieving success. Even if the hope is that it will lead to an overall success of the organization, this is not always true.

Multicultural staff also means many conflicts due to the differences and the lack of knowledge, experience or unwillingness to work together regardless of the differences. And most importantly lacking the willingness to use the differences as an advantage.

In such an environment clashes and conflicts are inevitable and bound to happen at a certain point. Conflict refers to some form of friction, disagreement, or discord arising

between individuals or within a group when the beliefs or actions of one or more members of the group are either resisted by or unacceptable to one or more members of another group. (Madalinaa, 2016).

It is very common to witness challenges that lead to conflict when dealing with multicultural staff. Managing conflicts and moving forward is however the only way an organization succeeds. Conflicts may occur even among members of a team with the same cultural background. But, the fact a team is composed of members having differing cultural background may increase the chances and frequency of conflicts (Kiros, 2018).

People from different backgrounds do not fit well unless they consciously work on their relationship. There were instances where minor disagreements and misunderstandings lead to major issues leading to people not wanting to collaborate which leads to the decline of productivity. People should be willing and motivated to work for a better outcome.

Different cultural backgrounds will also lead to delays in understanding of issues and one may not be equally equipped to understand the issues and solve them. This issues could be solved by allowing people the time and empowering them to solve their differences.

Having plans and strategies on how to handle conflicts and other challenges that may occur will help project managers to solve the issues head on when they happen. This is not however how it is mostly done.

If an organization manages to provide an environment where everyone in the team feels understood and included then it will lead to a harmonized team that contributes to the success of the project and ultimately the organization.

The research will try to address the how this challenges affect organizational performance and how they can be addressed.

1.4 Research Question

The survey attempted to resolve the research problem through representing the accompanying fundamental research questions regarding the effects of the challenges in a multicultural setting on Project Performance.

1. What are MSF's major challenges in a multicultural setting?
2. How does this challenges effect MSF's organizational performance?
3. How did MSF responds to issues created in a multicultural setting?
4. How can the multicultural setting of its work environment be used as an advantage by MSF?

1.5 Research Objectives

1.5.1 General Objective

The general objective of this project thesis was to assess the effects of the challenges in a multicultural setting on a project performance.

1.5.2 Specific Objective

The study has the following specific objectives.

- To assess the main challenges of MSF in a multicultural setting
- To examine the effects of these challenges in MSF's organizational performance
- To assess if the challenges faced by MSF are related to its multicultural staff
- To assess how MSF responds to issues created in its multicultural setting
- To assess how MSF can use its multicultural setting as an advantage for a better performance

1.6 Significance of the Study

With globalization, people's ability and willingness to travel to different parts of the world has become a normal phenomenon. This is especially true for humanitarian organizations who have been playing a significant role in responding to emergencies and other needs that pulled countries back from the rest of the world. With the establishment of international organizations, comes the idea of employing staff to work in countries other than their country of origin. This has contributed a lot to the development and the sharing of expertise and culture. It also has its challenges because dealing with human behavior especially with those from different cultures has its own challenges. The challenges are due to the different human behaviors which are affected by different backgrounds. Managing people is difficult, but even more difficult is managing people from different walks of life. This needs knowledge, expertise and good leadership skill.

Managing the teams and empowering them to achieve their objective by working together will lead to success which is eventually the bigger goal of achieving success in organizational performance.

The project management institute, (PMI, 2013), defines the project success as "completing the project within the constraints of scope, time, cost, quality, resources and risk". (Cheng, 2016), who investigate the project performance and success, agree that both are, highly, correlated with team's integration regarding the project objectives.

In a country like ours, the number of organizations with divers' staff has increased with the increasing humanitarian and other development needs. It is however not been researched if having a divers staff has challenges that may result in a reduced organizational performance. This paper therefore plans to show some of the challenges that organizations face when running projects in a multicultural setting and the

corresponding effect on the performance of the organization. Most importantly the author believes, the paper will give insight on how to best deal with multicultural teams and ensure that they achieve their goal.

1.7 Scope of the study

The main emphasis of this project thesis is to assess the challenges of project management in a Multicultural setting in terms of organizational performance in MSF Holland and this project work was restricted to MSF Holland projects in Ethiopia and not include the other MSF sections. The reasoning behind this is due to the vast nature of the projects of MSF Holland and the regular nature of the activities while the other sectors focus more on emergency intervention which means teams working for a shorter period of time.

1.8 Limitation of the Study

The study excludes the remaining two MSF Holland projects which are located in Tigray region. This is because it was not possible to collect data due to the inaccessibility of the region due to the current conflict. Even if the findings of the study were crucial to MSF Holland and the other sections. It may not be transferable to other projects due to the unique nature of the organization.

Due to the dynamic nature of the world, and especially with the current challenging world, the study is not guaranteed with future scenarios, which needs continues study with the change of human behavior and the work environment.

1.9 Definition of Key terms

Project - Project is a distinctive course of action consisting of a sequence of synchronized and controlled activities with start and end period of time, conducted to attain the aim. It meets the specific requirements, including the restrictions of time, cost

and resources. It follows from this definition that the project can be understood as a process by which individual activities are implemented in successive steps. (Honziroková, 2017)

Project Management - The Project Management Institute (PMI, 2017) defines project management as the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities in order to meet project needs.

Project performance- is the overall aspect of a project in terms of budget, time, quality, its impact, value to beneficiaries, implementation effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. (Abera, 2020)

Multicultural teams- A team is a group of people ,of a different cultural background, working together for a common goal and purpose.

1.9 Organization of the project

This study was organized into five chapters. First chapter contains, introduction to the research, statement of the problem, study objectives, research questions, and significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study and definition of key terms. Second chapter includes the literature review that is related to the study. Third chapter was about methodology, research design, study population, sample and sampling procedures, data collection techniques, and data analysis techniques. Chapter four is about data analysis, presentation and interpretation. Finally, the last chapter is about the summary of the finding, conclusions, and recommendation of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The ever increasing need for humanitarian aid are the driving forces for the establishment of humanitarian agencies. Humanitarian agencies have played a role in helping those who are in need of assistance ensuring that they live a better life than they were dealt with due to natural or man-made disasters.

Dealing with multicultural teams is an essential skill in today's project management to be successful in delivering the project. However, most project managers find it challenging to understand the people from other countries and cultures. This can create disputing situations and a level of misunderstanding when proceeding with projects with multicultural teams. However, instead of running away from a challenges in managing multicultural teams, project managers need to identify how to manage the project team for the successful completion of the project (Obikunle, 2002).

2.1.1 Concepts and Definition of terms

2.1.1.1 Project

Project is a growing idea which is being implemented in the whole world even if it is a big understatement if said if it is understood well be everyone. There are however efforts seen by people striving to learn more about it. It is from the curiosity and the determination to know more that we are seeing different definitions of the term.

Angermeier (2016) defines a project as intent, characterized by the uniqueness of conditions in their totality. The PMI has defined a project as "A temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product or service" (PMI, 2017). The temporary nature of projects indicates that a project has a definite beginning and end" (PMI, 2017).

2.1.1.2 Project Management

With the growing number of projects there was an increased need to manage them. Managing projects needs a different set of skills and procedures in which non projects may not need. The skills are being developed through the growing training of project managers which are equipped to deal with such complex projects involving the constrains that make or break the project and eventually the organization.

As clearly put by Vlahov (2016), the increased number of projects and portfolios should be managed professionally by experienced project managers and associates who have the ability and the necessary skills to face any problem that may occur.

The PMBOK® Guide definition of project management is “application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet the project requirements. Project management is accomplished through the application and integration of the 42 logically grouped project management processes comprising the 5 Process Groups: initiating, planning, executing, monitoring and controlling, and closing” (PMI, 2008).

Project Management has become a core competency, and nearly every manager is involved in managing one or more projects. Moreover, the role of projects in organisations is receiving increasing attention. Researchers are done and there are more inquiries to learn more about project and project managers.

2.1.1.3 Multicultural teams

A team is a group of people working together for a common goal and purpose, but the nature of the relationships and interactions is different – members of a team share leadership responsibility for creating a team identity, achieving mutually defined goals, while implementing innovative thinking (Kiros, 2018).

A team is said to be multicultural if and when its members have different background especially in terms of culture. These especially esteems from the different places they

came from. Due to the difference in their culture, teams tend to have different ways of doing things which sometimes is difficult to harmonize.

With management and employees from a variety of national and cultural backgrounds, developing an effective multicultural team provides a vital challenge for today's global businesses. First, they need to ensure this diverse workforce can work together harmoniously toward their common goals and, second, they need to maximize the contribution of each member. (Kiros, 2018)

Due to the dynamic nature of the world, it has now become apparent that multicultural teams are needed and employees ability to work with a multicultural team is seen as advantage when entering the work force.

Most importantly project managers are now judged by their ability to lead multicultural teams by managing the challenges and providing solutions. These new phenomenon is a challenges for both project managers and employees who are used to working with and managing teams of the same background.

The values that are the most important in one culture, cannot be very significant in another. Seniority means showing respect to people who stand higher in social hierarchy, and these are usually people belonging to the older generation. This value is typical for Far Eastern countries, but after examining e.g. American culture, you will come to the conclusion that seniority does not play a very significant role in this society.

The different in cultural values is therefore the main challenges teams have to face to ensure that they perform well. There are instances where some cultural differences don't have to be tolerated but understood.

2.1.1.4 Organizational Performance

Organizational performance refers to the degree to which the organization, with some

informational, financial, and human resources, positions itself effectively on the business market. (Conçe, 2020). Organizational performance is therefore the output of the organizations results as per its intended purpose.

To achieve success in the Organizational Performance, project team leaders and individual team members have to play a role. It is of course also the commitment of the organization that will lead to such success.

2.1.2 Challenges of Project Management

Project Management can be described as the activities of planning, organising, securing, monitoring and managing the necessary resources and work to deliver specific project goals and objectives in an effective and efficient way. The project management approach used should always be tailored to serve the needs of the project. When using Project Management, a Project Manager should use (and perhaps further customise) only the parts that contribute to their project's effective management. (European Union, 2016).

From our lessons so far, the basic knowledge that we got is that for a project to achieve its goal the constraints like time, project scope and budget have to be fulfilled. Is this however enough? can we say that a project will succeed if the above three are fulfilled?

The simple answer is no! Even if there is ample resource, a tool to manage the project and training materials we still see the challenges organizations are facing to tackle the project management challenges they are trying and mostly failing to face.

2.1.2.1 Workforce diversity and its impact on the success of the project

Some of the challenges of project management, related with the workforce diversity, that can affect the performance of the organization are ;

- Lack of communication between the project team, the project manager and the sponsors (Communication management)

- Human resource problems (Staff Recruitment Issues, Teamwork, Virtual teams, Cultural challenges, Cross-cultural leadership skills, etc)
- conflict and dispute management

Although the above and may be more challenges can be mentioned. For the purpose of this paper the focus was on the challenges faced in terms of the human resource aspect of project management. This has also been mentioned in different literatures.

Human Resource Management is among the key challenges of project managers in the current century. Under this part Project managers are mostly faced with the issues associated with staff recruitment, teamwork management, specifically those under virtual teams, cultural challenges and issues, labour related challenges, and cross-cultural leadership skills (Padalkar & Gopinath, 2016).

There are advantages and disadvantage to having a diverse teams. The advantages include

- High level of productivity if project managers succeed in harmonizing a diverse team creating a unique way of solving issues
- Exchange of ideas with different perspective
- Learning and Growth
- Diverse experience

The disadvantages of having a diverse work team are;

- High cost of Diversity Management
- Discrimination
- Communication Gap
- Myriad Accommodation- Challenges to accommodate the diverse workers request

Out of the generalized challenge stated above the main one is the clearly the cultural difference which are not tolerated. These differences and the inability to work together due to the differences has lead projects to failure.

2.1.3 Challenges of Project Management in MSF Hollands diverse staff

With the vast number of both National and International staff, MSF has an interesting and unique work environment. But what could never be denied is MSF's contribution to the medical humanitarian needs using its diverse staff.

The international humanitarian organization, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), is strongly committed to principles of universalism, egalitarianism, and equity, in both its internal and external relations. Nevertheless, the organization distinguishes between so-called "national" staff members (those who are indigenous to the countries where MSF projects are located), and "expatriate" staff (those who are involved in projects outside their countries of residence), in certain ways that it has self-critically termed "discriminatory," "colonialist," and even "racist." It has resolved to remedy such practices. (Shevchenko and Fox, 2008).

MSF's project locations are mostly remote locations where the national staff are mostly locals with unique cultures. Since the projects are located in areas where basic human services are lacking, it is safe to say the local employees may lack the opportunity to understand the cultures of people coming from different parts of the world. It is especially difficult if it is a person from a developed or advanced nation.

It is also going to be difficult for international staff to understand the culture and accept some parts as it might be considered backward in the places they come from. The other major challenge is the communication gaps created due to the different languages of the staff.

2.2 Empirical Review

Various researches have focused on Project performance but not a lot of focus has been in terms of the organizations multicultural setting. This ,however, has been realized as a valued factor and a challenge that must be addressed in order to achieve success in

the organizations performance.

Organizations do not always achieve the success that they have hoped by just employing qualified multicultural staff. These staff have to work in harmony. For teams to be in harmony, there are challenges that have to be resolved as they are especially the once that hinder the organizations positive performance. One challenges is language and trust among teams.

Antoniadus (2019) states that effective communication and individual trust are the most significant factors for the efficient operation of a multicultural project team, while their absence is characterized as the most crucial challenge that members have to face. Cheng (2016) states that language is a key factor at the development of trust among multicultural team members, providing as an example the poor Chinese level at foreign languages speaking.

If multiculturalism is focused on to be instituted in a work force, first there must be the assurance of effective communication. When there is good communication, it brings good collaboration among the different sectors in the organization when different issues regarding cultural differences must be addressed, this would see to it that there is adequate comprehension and ac-acceptance of the cultural beliefs of the other employees (Gyebi, 2016). Good collaboration among employees is one of the main ingredients for a better project performance. After all work is done when people do it together.

According to (Paul, Charlesraj & Khan, 2018), In the era of globalisation, cultural differences influence work in multi-national projects, particularly it impacts project performance. They also emphasis that Effective Management of diversity can increase work productivity, positively affect creativity and innovation and problem solving. Subsequently, it plays a vital role in improving overall performance and enhances competitive advantage of an organisation.

On the other hand failing to maintain an environment where there is a multicultural staff who are not empowered enough or are unable to pass those challenges results in gradual decrease of organizational performance.

Improper management of cultural diversity may lead to problems such as workplace conflicts, decline in productivity and resource inefficiency that shall have negative implications on the project performance. (Paul, Charlesraj & Khan, 2018).

2.3 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of the study shown in figure 1 is formed by considering different literatures. The Figure shows the relationship between the independent variables of multicultural setting and the dependent variable project performance.

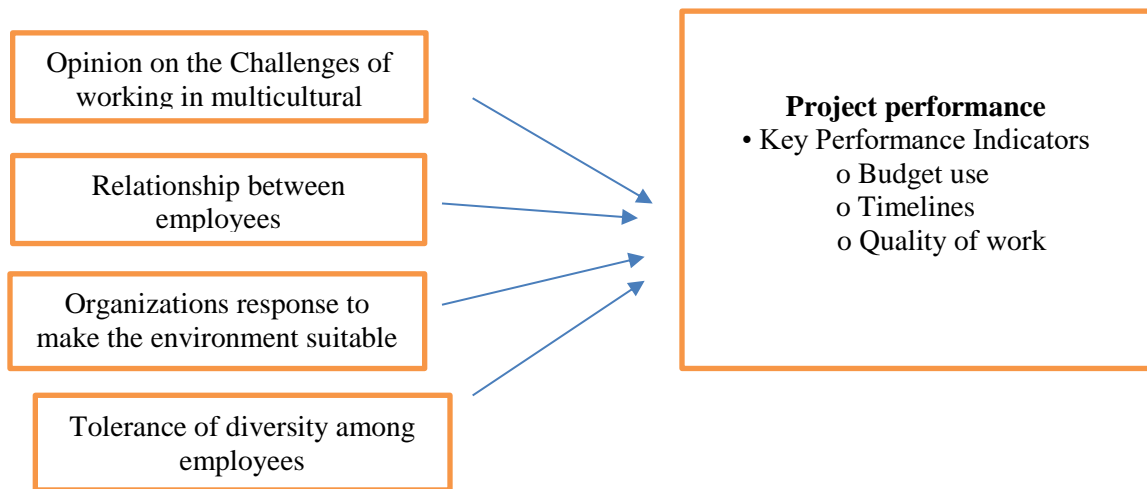


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Sources- Adopted from the literature reviews of (Antoniadis, 2019), Project Management in Multicultural Environment, and (Gyebi, 2018), The Impact of Multicultural Working Environment on Employees at Workplace

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The research methodology part clearly demonstrates the research design, targeted population, proposed sampling technique, data collection methods, data analysis techniques and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Approach and Design

Choosing the type of research design depends highly on the objective of the research or what we aim to get out of the research. Looking at this research title what was aimed to attain is to describe the challenges faced when having diverse staff and explore the effects of the challenges on the organizations performance. This study used a descriptive and an exploratory research design approach.

For this study both quantitative and qualitative research approaches were used to assess the effects of the challenges in a multicultural setting on project performance in MSF Holland.

3.3 Target Population and Sampling Design

The target population that have been considered for this study are all staff and managers at all levels from Coordination office (Addis Ababa), Kule Project (Gambela Region), Abdurafi project (Amhara region) and Wardher Project (Somali region). The total target population is around 100 employees from the above 4 projects. The study didn't consider the remaining two projects (Shire and Sheraro) as it has been difficult to reach them to acquire the needed information.

All members of the targeted population were chosen to be respondents and were contacted to provide information. The respondents are managers, coordinators,

supervisors and officers who are mostly Medical Professionals as MSF is Medical Humanitarian organization.

3.3.1 Sample size

Since we are considering all the targeted population as a participant, this study is going to be a census. The researcher, therefore, used surveys to get the information from them. The researcher also used purposive sampling when choosing all the targeted population as a sample. The researcher selected this technique since the responses were expected to be very subjective to participants and it is difficult to generalize and conclude from the limited samples acquired therefore it was best if it covers respondents from all locations and all departments. The researcher also considered that since it is easy to reach all respondents, due to the suspension of MSF's activities, taking the opportunity to contact the non reduced employees was relatively possible. The respondents for the interviews are selected as they are believed to be ideal to answer the research question due to their direct involvement in the subject matter. Their capability to articulate and cover what were not covered in the questioner or what needed detailed explanation was also a factor considered. The respondents of the interviews were 15 in number and they include 4 coordinators and 11 managers from all the projects. There are only 4 coordinators in the missions and all of them are based in Addis. The coordinator position is the highest position in the mission and they are responsible for all activities in the coordination office and as well as the projects. As per the selection of the managers, 2 were selected from Abdurafi, 3 from Wardher, 3 from Kule and 3 from Addis. They were all on duty during the suspension and were found to be ideal to respond to the questions raised in the interview.

3.4 Data Source and Collection Instrument

In this study, the researcher used both primary and secondary data collection methods. Questionnaires were used as a tool for primary data collection in addition to the organizations annual and quarterly reports and project agreements which are used as a

secondary data. The questionnaires are structured for quantitative data collection and unstructured open-ended questions to collect data for qualitative analysis.

The questioners are sent to all respondents in hard copy since email connection was not consistent throughout the whole time. Interviews, consisting of 11 questions, were conducted with the managers in the project locations and for coordinators and managers at the coordination (Addis Ababa) office. The interviews were face to face for Addis Ababa office colleagues and most of the managers at the project and via teams for few of the managers from the projects. The respondents for the interview are chosen as they are expected to have an in-depth knowledge and first-hand experience about the effect of the challenges in a multicultural environment in MSF. The rationale behind using interviews was to allow the respondents to freely express their opinions and feelings. The obtained data were used for analysis purposes.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

After relevant data's are collected using the close ended questions, it was quantitatively analyzed using SPSS 20 software. Since the study used census, Descriptive analysis (frequency, percentage mean and standard deviations) was conducted using the software.

Qualitative data analysis involves organizing, accounting for and explaining the data; in short, making sense of data in terms of the participants definition of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regulation (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). For the qualitative data's collected, the researcher used content analysis as a method of data analysis.

3.6 Validity and reliability of data

3.6.1 Reliability

Reliability is defined as 'the extent to which test scores are free from measurement

error' (Muji, 2011). It is a measure of stability or internal consistency of an instrument in measuring certain concepts (Jackson, 2003). This is meant to say that a reliable study is one that is able to obtain the same result if it is done by other researchers using the same method.

This study was intended to explore both primary data and secondary data in addressing the research objectives as well in answering the overall research question and grounded on a numerous literature. The data collected was supported by personal observations and triangulated with secondary data. In this regard, data collected is deemed to be consistent and reliable. The reliability of the data was checked and measured using the Cronbach's alpha a reliability measure.

Measurement of reliability is administered by the internal consistency where it assumes that items which measure the same variables should correlate. Cronbach's alpha (α) is used to measure internal consistency. In the study, a Cronbach's alpha of more than 0.7 was adequately drawn.

Table 1. Reliability Analysis

	Variable	Cornbach's value	Number of questions
1	Opinion on the Challenges of working in multicultural environment	0.965	10
2	Relationship between employees	0.989	7
3	Organizations response to make the environment suitable for all	0.978	4
4	Tolerance of diversity among employees	0.731	6

Source – own survey

3.6.2 Validity

In this research, what is intended to measure or explore is the effects of the challenges of MSF Hollands's multi-cultural setting on project performance. The Data's Collected through interview and questionnaire are deemed to be credible since most of the data's were collected from primary sources (interviewee) that considered rational personalities.

An instrument is valid when it is measuring what is supposed to measure or, in other words, when an instrument accurately measures any prescribed variable it is considered a valid instrument for that particular variable. (Mujis, 2011).

To insure validity of the study appropriate and acceptable standards were applied, the researcher made an effort to modify the questions to make them understandable by the respondents in order to collect the intended information and reflect on the findings.

3.7 Ethical Consideration

The researcher exercised utmost caution while administering the data collection instruments to the respondents to ensure their rights and privacy are upheld. Prior to actual administration of the instruments, the respondents were presented with the approval letter written by the management of MSF Holland informing them of the awareness of the research conducted. The researcher introduced the aim and purpose of the study which is for academic purposes and all participants were asked to willingly participate in the data collection by cooperating in filing the questioners and responding to interviews. The researcher ensured the respondents of the confidentiality of their answers by not including their identity on their response.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This Chapter discusses the data analysis, the research finding and the interpretation made to the analyzed data. It also includes the general characteristics of demographic profile in descriptive statistics.

The study undergoes through both qualitative and quantitative (mixed approach) to collect primary data. Qualitative data was collected through interview and the qualitative data was collected through a questioner distributed to respondents all of whom are MSF Holland Employees. This section presents response rate and analysis of data followed by presentations about findings of the study.

The study uses descriptive analysis (frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation) and inferential analysis (correlation and regression) for the quantitative data and content analysis for the qualitative data analysis.

4.2 Response Rate

A total of 100 Questionnaires were distributed to respondents who MSF Holland employees in 4 projects and 89 questionnaires were filled and returned. The remaining 11 questionnaires were not returned as 3 of the staff had to travel abroad for a field visits and the remaining 8 were on annual leave and sick leave. This, therefore, means the response rate is 89% which is considered adequate for analysis.

4.3 Descriptive Analysis

4.3.1 Demographic Data

The study tried to determine the demographic data in the following variables as

indicated in the below table.

Table 2. Demographic Data

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Sex of the respondent	Female	37	41.6	41.6
	Male	52	58.4	58.4
Age of respondent	21-35	37	41.6	41.6
	36-45	43	48.3	48.3
	46-60	9	10.1	10.1
	Above 60	-	-	-
Years of service	Below 1 year	18	20.2	20.2
	1-5 years	49	55.1	55.1
	5-10 years	22	24.7	24.7
Education Level	Grade 12 and Below	-	-	-
	Certificate	-	-	-
	Diploma	35	39.3	39.3
	Degree	39	43.8	43.8
	Masters	15	16.9	16.9
	PHD	-	-	-
Department of the respondent	Finance	10	11.2	11.2
	Logistics	16	18.0	18.0
	Human Resource	11	12.4	12.4
	Medical	43	48.3	48.3

	Operation	9	10.1	10.1
Role of the respondent/Job title	Support staff	8	9.0	9.0
	Junior Professional	36	40.4	40.4
	Supervisor	23	25.8	25.8
	Manager	18	20.2	20.2
	Coordinator	4	4.5	4.5
Marital Status	Single	42	47.2	47.2
	Married	43	48.3	48.3
	Divorced	4	4.5	4.5
	Widowed	-		

4.3.1.1 Gender and age of the Respondents

As shown in the above table, out of the total respondents 58.4% are male and the remaining 41.6% are female. In terms of the age of the respondents, 48.5% of the respondents are between ages 36 and 45 and 41.6% of the respondents are between the age 21 and 35. The remaining 9% of the respondents are between the age 46 and 60. 21 years is the lowest age range because when MSF Holland made reduction of the staff those who had few years of experience were the first to be redundant according to the Ethiopian Employment law.

4.3.1.2 Educational Level

Regarding their educational level of the respondents, 43.8% of the respondents are Degree holders where as 39.3% of the respondents are Diploma holders and the remaining 16.9% of the respondents are Masters Holders.

4.3.1.3 Year of Service

When we look at the year of service of the respondents, 55.1% of the respondents have worked in MSF from 1 to 5 years and 24.7% have worked for 5 to 10 years. The remaining 20.2% worked for less than a year.

4.3.1.4 Department of the Respondents

Out of the randomly selected respondents, most (48.3%) are from Medical department, 18% are from logistics department, 12.4% are from Human Resource, 11.2% are from Finance and the remaining 10.1% are from Operations.

4.3.1.5 Job Title

As it is also crucial to know the role of the respondent, the questioner also identified the job title of the respondents. Accordingly 40.4% of the respondents are Junior professionals, 25.8% are supervisor, 20.2% managers, 9% are support staff and the remaining 4.5% are coordinators which is the highest level of title in MSF structure.

4.3.1.6 Marital status

Even if less relevant, the questioner also tried to identify the marital status of the respondents. Therefore it was discovered that 48.3 % of the respondents are married, 47.2% are single and the remaining 4.5% are divorced.

4.3.2 Challenges of Working in a Multicultural Setting

The respondents were asked questions to determine if they prefer working in a mono cultural environment or if they find it challenging working in a multicultural environment. The questioners also asks if there are specific challenges that could exist in a multicultural setting like language barriers, cultural differences, working style and

the conflicts emanating due to the differences impact their work.

The staff were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on different statements on the work environment and the challenges of working in a multicultural environment by stating the extent 1 represents strongly disagree (SD), 2 represents disagree(D), 3 represents neutral (N), 4 represents agree (A) and 5 represents strongly agree (SA)

Table 3. Working in a Multicultural Environment

		Mean	Standard deviation	Frequency and Percentage				
				SD	D	N	A	SA
1	I prefer working in a monocultural environment	2.2697	1.27711	38(42.7%)	14(15.7%)	12(13.5%)	25(28.1%)	-
2	Working in a multicultural setting is challenging negatively affecting performance	2.2921	1.26313	36(40.4%)	16(18%)	12(13.5%)	25(28.1%)	
3	I feel misunderstood by my colleagues from different cultural backgrounds	2.3146	1.23026	34(38.2%)	16(18%)	16(18%)	23(25.8%)	

4	Language barriers do keep me from integrating with my colleagues	2.2921	1.27210	37(41.6%)	14(15.7%)	13(14.6%)	25(28.1%)	
5	There was/still is a colleague who i couldn't/ donot understand because of the language barriers	2.3820	1.24778	32(36%)	17(19.1%)	14(15.7%)	26(29.2%)	
6	I feel like the working style of those coming from a different culture donot fit with mine	2.2809	1.27019	38(42.7%)	12(13.5%)	15(16.9%)	24(27%)	
7	I feel demotivated when working with people who are different than me	2.3034	1.26495	36(40.4%)	15(16.9%)	13(14.6%)	25(28.1%)	
8	The frequent changes of especially international staff	2.3371	1.25176	34(38.2%)	16(18%)	14(15.7%)	25(28.1%)	

	makes it difficult to work							
9	I have been in a conflict with a colleague who is from a different culture due to our cultural differences	2.3034	1.26495	36(40.4%)	15(16.9%)	13(14.6%)	25(28.1%)	
10	I believe working in a multicultural team is challenging	2.3034	1.282	37(41.6%)	14(15.7%)	12(13.5%)	26(29.2%)	

From the questionnaires collected the researcher discovered that a majority number of the respondents (58.4%) don't prefer working in a mono cultural environment. On the other hand 28.1% of the respondents prefer working in a mono cultural environment and 13.5% are neutral towards the statement.

Looking at the detail of the above questionnaires 42.7% strongly disagree with the statement "I prefer working in a mono cultural environment", 15.7% disagree with the statement, 13.5% feel neutral about the statement and the remaining 28.1% agree with the statement. One can see that a large number of employees are open to working in a multicultural environment with the mean value of 2.269.

When looking at the respondents answers towards the statement "working in a multicultural setting is challenging negatively affecting performance", 40.4% strongly disagree, 18% disagree with the statement, 13.5% feel neutral and 28.1% agree with the statement. Most of the respondents (58.4%), even if the extent is different, don't

believe that it is challenging to work in a multicultural environment. This is shown in the mean value of 2.29.

When looking at the respondents answers towards the statement “I feel misunderstood by my colleagues from different cultural backgrounds”, 38.2% strongly disagree, 18% disagree with the statement, 18% feel neutral and 25.8% agree with the statement. Most of the respondents (56.2%), even if the extent is different, don’t feel misunderstood by his/her colleagues from different cultural backgrounds. This is shown in the mean value 2.3146.

When looking at the respondents answers towards the statement “Language barriers do keep me from integrating with my colleagues”, 41.6% strongly disagree, 15.7% disagree with the statement, 14.6% feel neutral and 28.1% agree with the statement. Most of the respondents (57.3%), even if the extent is different, don’t feel language barriers keep them from integrating with his/her colleagues. It is also important to see that a fairly big number of respondents (28.1%) are affected due to language barriers. Majority of the respondents , with the mean value of 2.2921, are not kept from integrating with colleagues due to language barriers.

The respondents answers towards the statement “There was/still is a colleagues who i couldn’t/ donot understand because of the language barriers”, shows that 36% strongly disagree, 19.1% disagree with the statement, 15.7% feel neutral and 29.2% agree with the statement. Most of the respondents (55.1%), with the mean value of 2.3820, stated they didn’t face difficulty to understand their colleagues due to language barriers. However 29.2% of the respondents faced difficulty due to language barriers.

When looking at the respondents answers towards the statement “I feel like the working style of those coming from a different culture donot fit with mine”, 42.7% strongly disagree, 13.5% disagree with the statement, 16.9% feel neutral and 27% agree with the statement. Most of the respondents (56.2%), with the mean value of 2.2809, feel like the working style of those coming from a different culture fit with theirs.

The respondents answers towards the statement “I feel demotivated when working with people who are different than me”, shows 40.4% strongly disagree, 16.9% disagree with the statement, 14.6% feel neutral and 28.1% agree with the statement. Most of the respondents (57.3%) , with the mean value of 2.3034, feel motivated to work with people who are different than them.

When looking at the respondents answers towards the statement “The frequent changes of especially international staff makes it difficult to work”, 38.2% strongly disagree, 18% disagree with the statement, 15.7% feel neutral and 28.1% agree with the statement. Most of the respondents (56.2%), with the mean value of 2.3371, are not affected by the turnover of the international staff.

The respondents answers towards the statement “I have been in a conflict with a colleague who is from a different culture due to our cultural differences”, shows 40.4% strongly disagree, 16.9% disagree with the statement, 14.6% feel neutral and 28.1% agree with the statement. Most of the respondents (57.3%), with the mean value of 2.3034, have not been in a conflict with colleagues emanating from cultural differences.

When looking at the respondents answers towards the statement “I believe working in a multicultural team is challenging”, 41.6% strongly disagree, 15.7% disagree with the statement, 13.5% feel neutral and 29.2% agree with the statement. Most of the respondents (57.3%), with the mean value of 2.3034, don't think being a member of a multicultural team is challenging.

4.3.3 Relationship Between Employees

The respondents were asked questions to determine how they were making an effort to make the multicultural working environment a better environment to help for a better performance. The questions also help to determine the relationship of the respondents in a multicultural setting.

The staff were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement to the statements in the questioner by stating the extent 1 represents strongly disagree (SD), 2 represents disagree(D), 3 represents neutral (N), 4 represents agree (A) and 5 represents strongly agree (SA)

Table 4. Creating a Suitable Working Environment

		Mean	Standard deviation	Frequency and Percentage				
				SD	D	N	A	SA
1	I do my best to ensure that a person from a different culture feels included in the office	3.4270	1.47623	15(16.9%)	12(13.5%)	10(11.2%)	24(27%)	28(31.5%)
2	I tolerate my colleagues who have a completely different and sometimes a culture which is against mine	3.3146	1.40288	14(15.7%)	12(13.5%)	18(20.2%)	22(24.7%)	23(25.8%)
3	I make an effort to develop trust among my team who are of different background	3.3820	1.47329	15(16.9%)	13(14.6%)	11(12.4%)	23(25.8%)	27(30.3%)

4	I make an effort to understand what their culture is like and tell them about mine	3.40 45	1.4516 4	14(15.7%))	13(14.6%))	12(13.5%))	23(25.8%))	26(29.2%))
5	I am always up for communicating issues to my colleagues to address challenges	3.39 33	1.4664 5	15(16.9%))	12(13.5%))	12(13.5%))	23(25.8%))	27(30.3%))
6	I have friends from work who I socialize with after work	3.41 57	1.4756 3	15(16.9%))	12(13.5%))	11(12.4%))	23(25.8%))	28(31.5%))
7	I learnt a lot from my colleagues who are from a different culture	3.38 20	1.4499 7	15(16.9%))	11(12.4%))	14(15.7%))	23(25.8%))	26(29.2%))

When looking at the respondents answers towards the statement “I do my best to ensure that a person from a different culture feels included in the office”, 16.9% strongly disagree, 13.5% disagree with the statement, 11.2% feel neutral, 27% agree and 31.5% with the statement. Most of the respondents (58.5%), with the mean value of 3.4270, state that they do their best to ensure that a person from a different culture feels included in the office.

The respondents answers towards the statement “I tolerate my colleagues who have a completely different and sometimes a culture which is against mine”, shows 15.7%

strongly disagree, 13.5% disagree with the statement, 20.2% feel neutral, 24.7% agree and 25.8% with the statement. Most of the respondents (50.5%), with the mean value of 3.3146, state that they tolerate their colleagues who have a completely different and sometimes a culture which is against theirs.

When looking at the respondents answers towards the statement “I make an effort to develop trust among my team who are of different background”, 16.9% strongly disagree, 14.6% disagree with the statement, 12.4% feel neutral, 25.8% agree and 30.3% with the statement. Most of the respondents (56.1%), with the mean value of 3.3820, state that they make an effort to develop trust among their team who are of different background.

The respondents answers towards the statement “I make an effort to understand what their culture is like and tell them about mine”, shows 15.7% strongly disagree, 14.6% disagree with the statement, 13.5% feel neutral, 25.8% agree and 29.2% with the statement. Most of the respondents (55%), with the mean value of 3.4045, state that they make an effort to understand what their culture is like and tell them about theirs.

When looking at the respondents answers towards the statement “I am always up for communicating issues to my colleagues to address challenges”, 16.9% strongly disagree, 13.5% disagree with the statement, 13.5% feel neutral, 25.8% agree and 30.3% with the statement. Most of the respondents (56.1%), with the mean value of 3.3933, state that they are always up for communicating issues to their colleagues to address challenges.

When looking at the respondents answers towards the statement “I have friends from work who I socialize with after work”, 16.9% strongly disagree, 13.5% disagree with the statement, 12.4% feel neutral, 25.8% agree and 31.5% with the statement. Most of the respondents (57.3%), with the mean value of 3.4157, state that they have friends from work who they socialize with after work.

The respondents answers towards the statement “I learnt a lot from my colleagues who

are from a different culture”, shows 16.9% strongly disagree, 12.4% disagree with the statement, 15.7% feel neutral, 25.8% agree and 29.2% with the statement. Most of the respondents (55%), with the mean value of 3.3820, state that they learnt a lot from their colleagues who are from a different culture.

4.3.4 Organizations Response to Make the Environment Suitable for All

The respondents were asked questions to determine if they believe MSF Holland as an organizations makes an effort to ensure the multicultural environment is suitable for all leading to better performance.

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement to the statements in the questioner by stating the extent 1 represents strongly disagree (SD), 2 represents disagree(D), 3 represents neutral (N), 4 represents agree (A) and 5 represents strongly agree (SA)

Table 5. Organizational Commitment for a Better Work Environment

		Mean	Standard deviation	Frequency and Percentage				
				SD	D	N	A	SA
1	My organization is quick and ready to respond to issues created due to its multicultural setting	3.4382	1.35642	10(11.2%)	16(18%)	12(13.5%)	27(30.3%)	24(27%)
2	My organization ensures that all staff work in an environment suitable for all	3.5618	1.20562	5(5.6%)	14(15.7%)	20(22.5%)	26(29.2%)	24(27%)
3	I have seen management solve issues	3.4944	1.22589	6(6.7%)	15(16.9%)	19(21.3%)	27(30.3%)	22(24.8%)

	which were created due to misunderstandings due to cultural differences of staff							7 %)
4	My organization organizes events to ensure that its employees know each other and share their cultures	3.48 31	1.30656	8(9%)	16(18%)	14(15.7%)	27(30.3%)	24 (27 %)

When looking at the respondents answers towards the statement “My organization is quick and ready to respond to issues created due to its multicultural setting”, 11.2% strongly disagree, 18% disagree with the statement, 13.5% feel neutral, 30.3% agree and 27% strongly agree with the statement. Most of the respondents (57.3%), with the mean value of 3.4382, believe that MSF Holland is quick and ready to respond to issues created due to its multicultural setting.

The respondents answers towards the statement “ My organization ensures that all staff work in an environment suitable for all” shows 5.6% strongly disagree, 15.7% disagree with the statement, 22.5% feel neutral, 29.2% agree and 27% strongly agree with the statement. Most of the respondents (56.2%), with the mean value of 3.5618, believe that MSF Holland ensures that all staff work in an environment suitable for all.

The respondents answers towards the statement “I have seen management solve issues which were created due to misunderstandings due to cultural differences of staff ”, shows 6.7% strongly disagree, 16.9% disagree with the statement, 21.3% feel neutral, 30.3% agree and 24.7% strongly agree with the statement. Most of the respondents (55%), with the mean value of 3.4944, stated that have seen management solve issues which were created due to misunderstandings created due to cultural differences of

staff.

When looking at the respondents answers towards the statement “My organization organizes events to ensure that its employees know each other and share their cultures”, 9% strongly disagree, 18% disagree with the statement, 15.7% feel neutral, 30.3% agree and 27% strongly agree with the statement. Most of the respondents (57.3%), with the mean value of 3.4831 , stated that MSF Holland organizes events to ensure that its employees know each other and share their cultures.

4.3.5 Tolerance of Diversity among Employees

In order to understand the respondents tolerance and willingness to work with people who are different from them, they were asked questions.

The respondents were asked to indicate their comfort or discomfort to work with people of different backgrounds stating the extent 1 represents i don’t like it , 2 i am less comfortable (LC), 3 represents neutral (N), 4 i am more comfortable (MC) and 5 represents i love it (L).

Table 6. Collaboration and Tolerance in the Work Place

		Mean	Standard deviation	Frequency and Percentage				
				Don't like	LC	N	MC	L
1	Working with people from different gender	3.5169	1.25329	8(9%)	14(15.7%)	11(12.4%)	36(40.4%)	20(22.5%)
2	Working with people from different ethnicity	3.5169	1.25329	8(9%)	14(15.7%)	11(12.4%)	36(40.4%)	20(22.5%)

3	Working with people from different country	3.24 72	1.4164 7	14(15.7%)	16(18%)	15(16.9%)	22(24.7%)	22(24.7%)
4	Working with people from different religion	3.51 69	1.2532 9	8(9%)	14(15.7%)	11(12.4%)	36(40.4%)	20(22.5%)
5	Working with people who have no religion	2.23 60	1.3316 3	39(43.8%)	17(19.1%)	10(11.2%)	19(21.3%)	4(4.5%)
6	Working with people speaking different language	3.52 81	1.2885 5	10(11.2%)	10(11.2%)	14(15.7%)	33(37.1%)	22(24.7%)

When looking at the respondents what they feel about working with people from a different gender, 9% say they don't like it, 15.7% feel less comfortable, feel neutral 12.4%, 40.4% feel more comfortable and 22.5% love working with people of a different gender. Most of the respondents (62.9%), with the mean value of 3.5169, are open to working with people with different gender. 24.7% of the respondents prefer not to work with people from different gender due to cultural and religious opinions. The remaining 12.4% feel neutral about it.

The respondents what they feel about working with people from a different ethnicity, shows 9% say they don't like it, 15.7% feel less comfortable, feel neutral 12.4%, 40.4% feel more comfortable and 22.5% love working with people of a different gender. Most of the respondents (62.9%), with the mean value of 3.5169, are open to working with people with different ethnicity. 24.7% of the respondents prefer not to work with people from different ethnicity due to political opinions. The remaining 12.4% feel neutral about it.

When looking at the respondents what they feel about working with people from a different country, 15.7% say they don't like it, 18% feel less comfortable, feel neutral 16.9%, 24.7% feel more comfortable and 24.7% love working with people of a different gender. Most of the respondents (49.4%), with the mean value of 3.2472, are open to working with people with different country. 33.7% of the respondents prefer not to work with people from different country due to growing political opinions. The remaining 14.9% feel neutral about it.

The respondents what they feel about working with people from a different religion, shows 9% say they don't like it, 15.7% feel less comfortable, feel neutral 12.4%, 40.4% feel more comfortable and 22.5% love working with people of a different gender. Most of the respondents (67.4%), with the mean value of 3.5169, are open to working with people with different religion. 24.7% of the respondents prefer not to work with people from different religion. The remaining 12.4% feel neutral about it.

When looking at the respondents what they feel about working with people who don't belong to any religious group, 43.8% say they don't like it, 19.1% feel less comfortable, feel neutral 11.2%, 21.3% feel more comfortable and 4.5% love working with people of a different gender. Most of the respondents (62.9%), with the mean value of 2.2360, are open against working with people who don't have a religion. Surprisingly 25.8% of the respondents are somewhat ok to work with people who are non believers and the remaining 11.2% are neutral. From further discussions with some employees , the researcher discovered that this is due to the tolerance built over the years due to working in international organizations with mostly people from the develop world.

The respondents what they feel about working with people from a different language, shows 11.2% say they don't like it, 11.2% feel less comfortable, feel neutral 15.7%, 37.1% feel more comfortable and 24.7% love working with people of a different gender. Most of the respondents (61.8%), with the mean value of 3.5281, are open to working with people speaking different language. 22.4% of the respondents prefer not

to work with people speaking a different language. The remaining 15.7% feel neutral about it.

To understand the diversity of the respondents, the researcher asked if one is a national or international staff and what their first language is and the below information is collected.

- 78 National staff
- 11 international staff

Regarding their first languages, the respondents responded below

- 9 Nuer
- 19 Oromiffa
- 13 Somali
- 26 Amharic
- 8 Tigregna
- 1 Sidama
- 2 Guragegna
- 2 English
- 2 Arabic
- 3 Swahali
- 1 Shona
- 1 French
- 1 Spanish
- 1 Belarussian

4.3.6 Multicultural Working Environment and Organizational Performance

In order to know their understanding of the effects of multicultural working environment on a project performance, respondents were asked whether they believe that it leads to delays of work and has an impact on the quality of work leading to increased budget use or if they believe that it leads to a better performance.

Over 58% of the respondents believe working in a multicultural environment or setting leads to a better project performance while 25% disagree and the remaining 6% remain neutral. Having a diverse setting means people from different backgrounds, expertise and experience working together to achieve organizational goals. This has certainly been the case when looking at MSF Holland. Being a medical humanitarian organization, it mostly relies on the expertise of its employees and management to ensure that the best possible care is provided to its beneficiaries.

Looking at its history, MSF works in the most remote and vulnerable area which makes it crucial for it to have people coming together for the work to be done as it is difficult to find adequate qualified expertise in the most vulnerable areas. Those coming from different parts of the world then set shop and work together.

MSF Holland has camps where employees live which makes it even more suitable for them to get acquainted with one another and helping them to work together and pass any challenges that come to them when it comes to implementing its activities.

4.4 Challenges of a Working in a Multicultural Setting: Analysis from the Interviews

To fully understand the data collected in the survey, the researcher also collected qualitative data by interviewing around 15 respondents of which 4 are coordinators and 11 are managers from the coordination office in Addis and projects. The research was lucky enough to interview 12 of the respondents face to face as most of the managers in the projects came to Addis for a meeting and temporarily assigned work. 3 Respondents were interviewed using teams. The interviews took more than one and half hour for each respondent.

According to the discussions held the researcher understood that the respondents believed it is challenging to work in a multicultural setting but the challenges have brought opportunities leading to better performance. This was made possible because as an international medical organization MSF Holland has had employees from

different backgrounds and has developed tools over the years to ensure that working in a multicultural setting is an opportunity rather than a hindrance.

The respondents have identified challenges that they believe were seen as an opportunity and their effect on project performance.

4.5.1 Differences of backgrounds leading to potential conflicts

Coming from different cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds can lead to misunderstandings and sometimes conflicts if the team are not open to embracing those differences. Working at MSF Holland, employees are aware that they will be working with people of different background due to the introduction provided to them during their onboarding process.

SANOU training, which is an introduction to MSF and its activities around the world, is given to employees who are new to MSF. The aim of the training is to provide employees with information that will help them navigate through their task over the duration of their employment. After taking the training, the new staff will be integrating with the diverse teams and is ready to learn from and work in the multicultural setting. Even though not smooth for everyone, it is a learning process where most thrive at.

Though not a common phenomena, the respondents agreed that it is not a rare occurrence to notice conflicts emanating due to such differences. This could be discriminations seen due to such differences. When such things happen the higher management is always ready to help staff solve issues by discussion and if necessary intervene and solve it to ensure that the performance of the members in conflict and others around them are affected to the extent that it affects performance.

As mentioned various times in the discussion, MSF Holland is very strict in ensuring that its team perform better. Because decreased performance means deteriorating beneficiary care which is unacceptable as it costs lives.

4.5.2 Differences of backgrounds leading to delays in work

When projects are planned, a timeline where it is planned to be accomplished is set. As experienced in project management projects don't go according to the plan. During the discussion with the respondents, the researcher learnt that even if the difference in background of its employees makes it hard to perform according to the plan, this doesn't usually have a significant effect on the work. This is because in the planning stage of the project one of the assumptions put is that there will be delays due to difference in backgrounds of team members.

As a medical organization the emergency nature of the work also forces people to work despite having such a challenge. Because delays of work in the medical team leads to decreased number of beneficiaries being untreated and delays in purchasing items leads to the same issue. Therefore team members also do their best to solve their issues and learn fast not to delay the work and save lives.

4.5.3 Language barriers

This is one of the mostly identified challenge. As people are coming from different parts of the world, their language is also that much different. This is challenge which the researcher had personally noticed as well. English is the working language of MSF and both the national and international staff are expected to communicate using the language.

In reality however, most national staff prefer to communicate with those speaking their language and are discouraged to try communicating in English. This could be due to fear of making a mistake and embarrassment and being afraid of judgment. Having a difficult time understanding each other due to language barriers will definitely lead to delays of work because this is a skill that doesn't improve over night and needs lots of

exercise.

MSF Holland tried to break the barrier and provide language lessons and provide translators but this is not as successful as it is expected to be.

One important thing to note here is that working in remote area means that the employees may not understand the language of the host community and may need translators when providing services. Translators may not be available for all employees at all times which will lead to delays until the translators are located.

Please note that budget is not mentioned as one challenge because MSF Holland and MSF in general don't have a fixed budget and increase their budget whenever they feel like it is needed.

4.5.4 Opportunities of Working in a Multicultural Setting

In the discussions conducted the respondents identified opportunities they believe are created due to the multicultural setting of MSF Holland. One of the advantage is exchange of ideas between team members of different background . People coming from different backgrounds bring their expertise and experience with them when they join the new team. Their expertise and experience, if taken advantage of, will be a tremendous source of knowledge for the team members in the organization. It therefore facilitates learning and growth.

Having a diverse team also creates a unique opportunity to solve issues due to varying creativity because of different backgrounds and perspectives leading to high level of productivity eventually leading to better performance.

The respondents also believe that being in a multicultural setting will help team members to learn about the rest of the world and will allow them to learn to fit well where ever life takes them.

Even if they weren't able to say that MSF Holland provide its staff with all the tools needed to deal with the challenges created due to its multicultural setting and even if they cant completely say that the environment is suitable for all, they all agreed that MSF Holland to suggestions and is determined to solve issues and make the organization a better work environment for all. They all therefore agreed that it is every employees responsibility to make sure that the multicultural setting is indeed an advantage and a learning ground leading to better project performance.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDING CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the finding that the researcher discussed and analyzed in the previous chapter will be summarized and concluded. Also based on the finding the researcher will give possible recommendation to be improved.

5.2 Summary of the finding

From the data's collected the interviews conducted, the researchers finding shows that

- ❖ MSF's major challenges emanating from its multicultural setting are potential conflicts due to difference in back ground, potential delays of work due to time needed to integrate the diverse team and language barriers leading to delays of work.
- ❖ As the findings show this challenges don't bring about a significance negative effect on the organizational performance. The minor effects can lead to delays of work but these have been anticipated by MSF due to its experience and are planned for in advance. In other words as an international organization with almost the same kind of policy around the need for multicultural teams, it is also prepared to tackle issues accompanying it. Even if delays are created this delays doesn't necessarily affect the organizational performance.
- ❖ MSF organizes trainings and workshops in order to help its team to learn about the organization and how to work together. Whenever issue are created due to its multicultural setting, MSF encourages staff to solve the issues by themselves but if that is not possible the higher management will be forced to solve the issue either through mediation or decision from management. However there is not a well written and updated policy or procedure on how to solve such issues.

- ❖ On working in a multicultural environment and its challenges, even those majority of the respondents are open and willing to work and be around people of different cultural back grounds, there is still a fairly big number of respondents who still feel uncomfortable and feel like the environment negatively affects their performance. This leads to some kind of delay of the work and affect the project performance even if it is not significant.
- ❖ Regarding the employees efforts to make the multicultural working environment suitable, the researcher found out that even if the majority of the respondents show their willingness and effort to create a better environment. The number of staff who are not making an effort is fairly high. This shows a gap in the understanding the need for tolerance in the work place.
- ❖ Commitment of an organization in creating a better work environment for employees is one of the crucial things discussed. Even if the majority of the respondents believe MSF Holland is doing a good job by providing an environment where its diverse teams perform better, the number of respondents disagreeing with this notion should not be ignored.
- ❖ As learned from the discussion having a multicultural setting doesn't necessarily lead to decreased performance instead it leads to a better performance if used wisely.
- ❖ Instead of seeing it as a challenge negatively affecting the project performance, being in a multicultural team is seen as an opportunity leading to a better project success.
- ❖ The advantages of working in a multicultural setting include increase learning and growth, increased creativity, a more open perspective to what is happening in once environment and incased tolerance to differences.

5.3 Conclusion

Under this study, the effects of the challenge's in a multicultural setting on a project performance are identified. The study shows how MSF Holland's multicultural setting faced challenges and used them as an advantage to increase project performance.

The study identified conflict, time needed for team integration and language barriers as the major challenges for MSF due to its multicultural setting. But surprisingly these challenges don't lead to significant reduction of project performance. The delays of work created due to the above challenges are not as major, and doesn't affect the project performance, because MSF has already anticipated and planned for it when employing such a multicultural team.

It is therefore not surprising to see that its multicultural setting leads to project delays but provides an opportunity for a better performance. The advantages of working in a multicultural setting include increase learning and growth, increased creativity, a more open perspective to what is happening in once environment and incased tolerance to differences.

As an organization MSF provides platforms where its employees are encouraged to get to know each other, learn from one another and solve issues that come about. This however needs to be strengthened and should be supported by policy documents and internal procedures where one is guided by whenever issues arise.

MSF has succeeded in building a team dedicated to making a difference and helping those in need. This is seen in the teams dedication to work together and respect on another. It cannot however be said that not all team members are on board with this notion of working together. This, the researcher believes, could be the time the employees need to understand the principles of MSF as stated in its charter.

5.4 Recommendation

1. MSF should periodically assess the challenge that may have arisen due to its multicultural setting and try to solve them as soon as possible in order to minimize the effects on the project performance.
2. MSF should invest more on ensuring that its staff are willing and empowered to work in a multicultural setting and are open to learning from their colleagues.
3. MSF Holland should invest more in ensuring that its teams are more diverse and create a platform for its employees to learn more about each others differences
4. MSF Holland should have a written policy on how to deal with difference's to tackle issue like discrimination and intolerance
5. MSF should invest more to break language barriers and t at least ensure that all its employees can adequately communicate in English to understand each other
6. MSF should also provide its staff with language courses to learn the language of the area they are working in
7. There should be a continues refresher training to ensure that staff are constantly aware of the need to create a better working environment for a better performance. This should be put as a criteria for performance evaluation

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Annex

Questionnaire

Addis Ababa University, School of Commerce

Project work on Effects of the challenges in Multi-cultural Setting on project Performance

Dear Respondent,

I am currently carrying out research on identifying the effects of the challenges in Multicultural Setting on project performance in the case of MSF- Holland.

The main purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data on challenges of working in a multicultural setting, Medicine Sans Frontiers, and assess its effects on the project performance for the partial fulfilment of my master's degree in the Project Management program at Addis Ababa university, School of Commerce.

You are therefore, requested to give your honest responses to the questions below. The questionnaire is developed for academic purposes only. The information you provide will help to determine how your organization is managing multi-cultural staff and how its projects are effected because of it. Your genuine response is appreciated, as it is vital for the study. No need of giving your name and I would like to assure you that your responses will be kept confidential

Your maximum co-operation will be highly appreciated.

Thank You,

Selam Zelalem

Part one: Demographic Variables of Respondents

Instruction: Please specify your answer by placing a (√) on the relevant option provided.

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Age in years: 21-35 36-45 46-60 over 60

3. Years of Service in MSF-H Ethiopia: below 1 year 1-5Years Below 5-10 years
4. Educational level: Grade 12 and below Certificate Diploma Degree
Masters PHD/MD
5. Department: Finance , Logistics , Human resource , Medical , Operations
6. Job Title: Support staff , Junior professional , Supervisor , Manger , Coordinator ,
7. Marital status: single Married Divorced Widowed

Part 2: Opinion on working in a multicultural work environment

Based on your dispositions, please indicate the most appropriate opinion/response with the scale below by placing a (√).

Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Neutral = 3, Agree = 4, Strongly Agree = 5

		1	2	3	4	5
1	I prefer working in a mono cultural environment					
2	Working in a multicultural setting is challenging					
3	I feel misunderstood by my colleagues from different cultural backgrounds					
4	Language barriers do keep me from integrating with my colleagues					
5	There was/still is a colleagues who i couldn't/ donot understand because of the language barriers					
6	I feel like the working style of those coming from a different culture donot fit with mine					
7	I feel demotivated when working with people who are different than me					
8	The frequent changes of especially international staff makes it difficult to work					
9	I have been in a conflict with a colleague who is from a different culture due to our cultural differences					
10	I believe working in a multicultural team is challenging					

11	I do my best to ensure that a person from a different culture feels included in the office					
12	I tolerate my colleagues who have a completely different and sometimes a culture which is against mine					
13	I make an effort to develop trust among my team who are of different background					
14	I make an effort to understand what their culture is like and tell them about mine					
15	I am always up for communicating issues to my colleagues to address challenges					
16	I have friends from work who I socialize with after work					
17	I learnt a lot from my colleagues who are from a different culture					
18	My organization is quick and ready to respond to issues created due to its multicultural setting					
19	My organization ensures that all staff work in an environment suitable for all					
20	I have seen management solve issues which were created due to misunderstandings due to cultural differences of staff					
21	My organization organizes events to ensure that its employees know each other and share their cultures					
22	Working in an environment with diverse cultures leads to delays of work and has an impact on the quality of work done and the budget used					
23	Working in an environment with diverse cultures can lead to a better performance					

2. Are you comfortable to work with colleagues from the below categories?

The answer should be 1. i don't like it 2. I am less comfortable 3. Neutral 4. I am more comfortable 5.i love it

	Working with people from a different culture/background	1	2	3	4	5
A	Working with people from a different gender					
B	Working with people from a different ethnicity					

C	Working with people from a different country					
D	Working with people from a different religion					
E	Working with people who have no religion					
F	Working with people speaking a different language					

3. What is your first language? _____

4. Are you an international staff? Yes NO

5. Does working in a multicultural setting negatively Impact on your performance

Yes NO I don't know

6. If your answer is Yes to the above question to what extent does it affect your performance.

The answer should be 1. Very high 2. To some extent

A	Extent to which a multicultural setting reduces productivity at work place due to lack of harmony		
B	Extent to which it multicultural setting leads to low moral or motivation		
C	Extent to which it multicultural setting leads to Poor work relation		
D	Extent to which it multicultural setting leads to High turnover		
E	Extent to which it multicultural setting leads to resistance to change working procedure		
F	Extent to which it multicultural setting leads to Delayed delivery of work		
G	Extent to which it multicultural setting leads to Lower quality of work		

Any other, please specify _____

7. General questions

	Questions	Yes	No
A	Do you work for more than 8 hours a day?		
B	Are you satisfied with your salary?		
C	Do you have more than one supervisor?		

D	Do you have supervisors from a different culture?		
E	Have you ever been in a conflict with your boss?		
	If yes, what were the reasons?		
	A. Cultural conflict		
	B. Due to miscommunication from language differences		
	C. Due to the work/task		
F	Do you make an effort to solve issues created in the work place? if yes, how?		
	A. By addressing the issue right away		
	B. By compromising		
G	Does your organization provide trainings on how to work in a multicultural setting?		
H	Do your colleagues respect and accept your culture?		

Interview question

Part One: Background Information

1. Age: _____

2. Sex: Male ____ Female _____

3. Educational Background: _____

4. Marital Status: Single () Married() single mother() single father()

Part 2: Interview Questions

1. How long have you been working with MSF-H? Tell me few things about the nature of your Job?

2. How did you find your job with regard to its working environment?
3. How is it like to work in a multicultural setting like MSF- Holland?
4. What are the major challenges that emanate from the multicultural setting of MSF?
5. Do you think the challenges you identified in question 4 affect organizational performance?
How?
6. Do you think the different cultural backgrounds are hindering or increasing the project performance?
7. Do you believe the challenges wouldn't have existed if MSF didn't have a multicultural staff?
Why?
8. What are the advantages of working in a multicultural setting like MSF?
9. Is your organization providing you with tools to work with people of different cultural backgrounds?
10. Were there instances where MSF solved issues that emanated from its multicultural staff? if so, please specify how?
11. Do you think your office is set up to be equally suitable for all of your colleagues who are from different cultural backgrounds?