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ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATION STUDIES

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN MULTI-CULTURAL PROJECT TEAM
(THE CASE OF CHINA STATE CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING
ETHIOPIA, NATIONAL STADIUM PROJECT)

By Yenework Kiros

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**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
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DEPARTMENT OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

**Conflict Management In Multi-Cultural Project Team
(The Case of China State Construction Engineering Ethiopia PLC,
National Stadium Project)**

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DECLARATION

I declare that the project entitled “Conflict Management In Multi-Cultural Project Team (The Case of China State Construction Engineering Ethiopia PLC, National Stadium Project)” is my original work and has not been presented in this or any other university and that all sources of material used for the study have been duly acknowledged.

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For the Grace of GOD

My Family and Friends who always believed on me even when I don't, all of this is because of you. My brother, Belachew, thank you for your support.

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Abstract

In order to increase the efficiency of project performance, the improvement of project team performance through avoiding and resolving conflicts is vital. The purpose of this paper is to increase the understanding of how multiculturalism projects will be affected by conflicts. Though conflict exist in every work environment, the nature of projects makes it easier for team members to encounter conflict more than other functional team. And again, the multicultural project team will be suffering more on facing conflicts than the monocultural project team. These case studies were made by selected CSCEC National Stadium Project.

According to the data collected and analyzed by this research, many staff of the project are nationals and employed on a temporary basis. These staff are young and degree holders who are supervised by more than one supervisor most of which are Chinese. Respondents replied that the cultural difference between them and supervisors has affected their work both positively and negatively. All the employees replied that they had encountered conflict with their supervisors and mostly compromising conflict resolution technique is used. The causes of conflict mainly lie on task and miscommunication among team members. There were no trainings given to project staffs about multiculturalism. However, employees attempt to understand and respect the cultures of others. The results of the data analyses show that multiculturalism has an effect in project team conflict and conflict management and should be considered while managing such project team in the China State Construction Engineering Corporation, National Stadium Project.

Key Words: *Multiculturalism, Multicultural Project Team, Conflict, Conflict Management, National Stadium Project.*

CHAPRER ONE

1.1. Background of the Study

Today's dynamic and changing businesses are showing an increasing number of concentrations on multicultural project teams. Globalization is playing the biggest role in shaping businesses focus on successful collaboration of employees having various cultural backgrounds.

A multicultural project team is made up of people coming from a minimum of three different national cultures, may be also called as "cross boarder team"¹.

Researches undertaken in the area of organizational psychology shows that multicultural project teams can be more innovative, creative and hence efficient². People with cultural diversity have vast mixture of different points of view, skills, values and talents which can be taken as added values to the organizations on the other hand, members of homogenous project teams speak the same language and words and expressions have the same meaning to them.³ This is where the disadvantage of multicultural project teams becomes apparent. The language barrier makes the communication between teammates problematic, the different cultural background makes it impossible to understand common expressions which might lead to negative effects on team unity and high degree of stress, uncertainty and numerous conflicts. Considering both the advantages and the disadvantages of multicultural project teams can benefit an organization if appropriately managed.⁴

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. When managed appropriately, conflicts could be constructive and even add substantial value to an organization. The focus area of this paper will be on

¹(Prabhakar, G. P. and Duda, D. (2009) *Multicultural project teams and their management. Journal of Social Management (English and French edition)*, 7 (2) pp 95.

² (Jackson, May & Whitney, 1995; Maznevski & Di Stefano, 2000)

³(Prabhakar, G. P. and Duda, D. (2009) *Multicultural project teams and their management. Journal of Social Management (English and French edition)*, 7 (2) pp 97

⁴ (ABID)

multicultural project team conflict management in the China State Engineering Corporation Ethiopia (CSCCE), National Stadium Project.

1.2. Background of the Organization

China State Construction Engineering Corporation Ltd (in short: China Construction; Stock code: 601668), formally established on December 10, 2007, was co-initiated by four Fortune Global 500 enterprises: China State Construction Engineering Corporation (CSCEC), China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), Baosteel Group Corporation Ltd and Sinochem Corporation. China Construction was successfully listed in Shanghai Stock Exchange on July 29, 2009. (www.chainastateconstructioncorporation.com)

China Construction is China's largest construction and real estate conglomerate and biggest building work contractor. It is the largest international construction company in the developing countries and the top home builder in the world. (www.chainastateconstructioncorporation.com)

Established in both domestic and international markets, China Construction operates in more than 20 countries around the world. (www.chainastateconstructioncorporation.com)

CSCEC joined the Ethiopia market and the first project was the African Union New Building. Currently the company owned six projects in Addis Ababa which are under progress in The National Stadium around Bole Medhanialem, Bus Stations around Shegole and Kality, and the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia Head Quarter Office around Beherawi are projects granted to the company by Ethiopian government. Two other projects, the National Oil Company Head Quarter and the China Embassy are projects granted by the private sector. The focus area of this paper is the National Stadium Project granted by the FDRE Ministry of Youth and Sport.

The National Stadium project granted to the company and the construction was commenced on February 2016. The stadium is \$115.5M (2.47 Billion Birr) project to be build on 48.8 hectares of land, it will accommodate 60,000 spectators. The stadium will meet FIFA and IAAF requirements and could host both FIFA World Cup finals and Olympic games. (Ethiopian broadcaster Fana).

The design contract for the stadium was awarded to Ethiopia's MH Engineering. Up to 40% of the construction work is being done by locals and thee project created more than 1,000 local jobs. The

National Stadium is a three years project. It will accommodate facilities for football, volleyball and basketball and swimming pool. (Ethiopian broadcaster Fana).

The company's core values, mission, vision and belief statements as stated on the website are discussed below:

Core Value

Chain State Construction Engineering Corporation Ltd (CSCEC) focus on providing high quality series and advocate strong management performance. The company always stressed a customer-oriented concept, family honor contracts with integrity, ensure the optimization of engineering quality and build service quality. CSCEC value the development of their "performance culture" and believe it is the best way to maximize the value and achieve win-win outcomes with stakeholders. (www.chainastateconstructioncorporation.com)

Company Mission Statement

It has established a mission of "Expanding a happy living environment". (www.chainastateconstructioncorporation.com)

1.3. Statement of the Problem

The construction sector is one of the fastest growing sectors in Ethiopia, which is characterized by many micro entrepreneurs, the majority of whom operate in the country's informal economy. Ethiopia's formal construction sector comprises indigenous and indigenized firms, as well as numerous major foreign civil engineering and construction companies.

China State Construction Engineering Corporation is the most popular construction company all over the world. In Ethiopia the company is undertaking number of projects which the government and the private sectors is constructing.

The corporation's employees are both Chinese and Ethiopians, the top-level positions, such as, Project Management, and Production Management, Chief Engineering are owned by the Chinese', Ethiopians are assigned on and technical works such as Engineering, Artcurial and Supervision positions. The company hire Chinese staff from top to lower level and segregate all the employees with the Ethiopians. The purpose of this is to transfer knowledge sharing among the staff. However, the Ethiopians' are dominant on the General Service work, and the labor workforce.

This thesis tries to indicate the effect of multicultural project team on conflict management on the China State Construction Engineering Ethiopia Plc. The thesis will try to explore and analyze issues related to the subject for further studies.

1.4. Research Questions

The major research questions this study is going to address are:

- What are the effects of culture on multicultural project team conflict management of CSCEC?
- What types of work conflicts encountering CSCEC Nation Stadium Project team due to cultural difference between Chines and Ethiopian employees?
- What kind of conflict management mechanisms is used by CSCEC project team?

1.5. Objectives of the Study

1.5.1. General Objective

The General objective of the study is to find out how multiculturalism affect the project teams on conflict management in the case of Chain State Corporation Engineering Ethiopia National Stadium Project.

1.5.2. Specific Objectives

The following are the specific objectives of the research:

- To identify the multi-cultural nature of the project teams in the CSCEC;
- To find out the conflict management mechanisms on the multicultural CSCEC Project team;
- To examine the effects cultural values on conflict management CSCEC Project team;

1.6. Scope of the study

The scope of this study is limited to a controllable and valuable size of the National Stadium project department, Engineering and General Service department. In the stated department the multiculturalism is highly observed, and employees can clearly understand and give valuable replays. However, large sample size is essential to understand in-depth the multicultural project team and conflict management practice in CSCEC, to collect this large sample size is difficult due

to shortage of time and language barriers, documents are kept in Chinese. Participants were selected based on their willingness to respond to the interview.

1.7. Significant of the study

This case study identifies the effect of multicultural project team and conflict management which are very useful to multicultural project team management. This study is believed to give information to project managers, team members and interested parties to consider multiculturalism and conflict management while dealing with multicultural environment and the result will be applicable as a background information for researchers who are interested in conduction in-depth in the future on the multicultural project environment conflict management.

1.8. Limitation of the study

This research is focused on the practice of multicultural project team conflict management. The absence of considering multiculturalism and conflict management creates significant effect on individual level, project team members and the overall organization level. This type of study needs ample time and intensive observations. It also requires reviewing different documents deeply and in-depth observations at the project sites. However, this research mostly stick on respondents' opinions, very few document review and little observations was made. In addition, some of the respondents' did not give the required information due to not trusting the purpose of the study regardless of the effort made to clarify the intended purpose was only for research.

1.9. Organization of the Study

This study consists of five chapters, the first chapter covers the background information, statement of the problem, research questions, objective of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, limitation and organization of the study. Chapter comprise of literature review of different books, articles, journals and concept papers. Chapter three discusses the research method and methodology of the study. The fourth chapter discuss the analysis and interpretation of the data collected. The last chapter covers the conclusion and recommendation.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Culture and Multi-Culture

There has been a consensus that culture has an intangible nature. Owing to such intangibility, it is difficult to come up with a universal definition of the word 'culture'. "Culture is not a static concept: cultures change all the time." (Prott, 1988, p.95). It is, however, relevant to discuss definitions forwarded by different scholars.

"Culture consists in patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values." (Kluckhohn, 1951)

"Culture refers to the learned repertory of thoughts and actions exhibited by members of social groups – repertoires transmissible independently of genetic heredity from one culture to the next." Harris (1979)

"[Culture is] the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another." Hofstede (1980)

"Culture is the way in which a group of people solves problems." Trompenaars (1993)

"Culture is an all-inclusive system of communications which incorporates the biological and technical behaviour of human beings with their verbal and nonverbal systems of expressive behaviour. Culture is the sum total of a way of life, including such things as expected behaviour, beliefs, values, language, and living practices shared by members of a society." Herbig (1994)

Given the varying scope and essence of the above definitions, it is better to identify the main features of culture for the purpose of this thesis. Firstly, culture "is always a collective phenomenon."(Hofstede, 1991). It could be discerned from this that the collectivity should be large enough to be self-sustaining and produce new generations of members. (Jandt, 1995). Even if it cannot be said that there is a minimum number of members, the number should be good enough to be self-sustaining.

Secondly, culture implies a set of values shared by all members of a group. (Mead, 1992). Such common values can be manifested in distinctive beliefs, assumptions, experiences, customs, artefacts, symbols, habits, morals, usages, rituals, traditions, rules, etc. Thirdly, culture is a pattern governing or at least influencing the way people think and behave. It also implies that people from the culture are inclined to evaluate and interpret situations in a similar way. (Earley/Gibson, 2002). Fourthly, culture needs to be passed on by the members (to new entrants, to following generations, etc.

The term culture came in to the business scene in the 1980s, even if it started to appear in the political context in the 1960s (McGoldrick, 2005), to refer to personal attitudes and behaviors of members of an organization. People join business organizations along with their attitudes and behaviors making it a necessity to give due attention and manage it properly.

Regarding multiculturalism, the same challenge of coming up with a universal definition could be faced. This is because cultural identity is itself a dynamic, evolving organism that is often blurred with political identity and political ideology. (Prott, 1988, p. 95). One can literally define multiculturalism as the existence more than one culture in the vicinity. As a collection of individuals manifesting the above defined features to establish a culture, more than one culture should exist to say that multiculturalism exists. Pluralism of cultures in a country or in an organization could be named as multiculturalism.

In the Western world, multiculturalism was less known until international migration made for different reasons after the Cold War brought it to their concern. Since then, the issue has been getting more and more attention among politicians and business organizations. Countries that suddenly became culturally diverse effected by immigration started to face multiple issues that strained their solid social framework: frictions and hostilities between the indigenous population and migrants, minorities and immigrants, minorities and the indigenous population, and between various immigrant groups. (Berkes, 2010, p. 2)

Comparative and so called intercultural studies are becoming increasingly more important in the global business environment and their results can be used in practical life. The valuable study of cultures by G. Hofstede and E.T. Hall (1988, pp. 4-21) have led to the culture dimensions, such as individualism versus collectivism, monochrony versus polychrony, masculinity versus femininity, high power distance versus low power distance, high uncertainty avoidance versus low uncertainty

avoidance, high context versus low context, high contact versus low contact, etc. Division to monochronic and polychronic cultures indicates how managers develop strategies related to negotiating contracts, what people's attitudes to time are, and how they react to deadlines. Southern European countries tend to belong to polychronic cultures, while Scandinavian countries for example, are monochronic.

2.2. What is Multicultural Work Environment/Team?

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 maximise the contribution of each member.

A group can be defined as three or more individuals who are working on a common goal, the result of which is reflected in relationships and interactions. Teams also have common goals and purposes, 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.

The definition emphasizes the key differences between groups and teams related to four areas. The first one involves leadership responsibilities in terms of defining goals, making decisions, and implementing ideas that should be shared by all the members of the team. The second key difference is related to the identity of the term, the third one to the defining of the goals, and the last one to striving for innovation. This means that a team strives for a magnified impact incremental to what its members could achieve in their individual roles (Katzenbach, Smith, 1993, p. 88)

Globalization and regional economic integration has increased the number of projects and multicultural project teams in different parts of the world. It has now become very common to require employee's ability to work in multicultural work environment during recruitment. This has created a new challenge for managers and employees than working in mono-cultural work environment. The crucial issue in the management of multicultural teams is creation of trust and confidence where Hofstede's culture dimensions can be some kind of help.

According to G. Hofstede (2001, pp. 79-372) culture values are invisible behaviours. The possible culture values are for example family, job, money, religion, seniority, individualism, hierarchy, and others. The values that are the most important in one culture, can be not very significant in another one. 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.

2.3. What is Conflict?

Conflicts and misunderstandings among individuals could be traced back to the origin of humanity itself. This section of the thesis is, however, limited to discussing conflict in the context of organizations only. Montana (2000) defines it as a disagreement between two or more parties or between two or more positions as to how to best achieve the organization's goals. According to this definition, personal hostilities among individuals in an organization are not within the scope of conflict.

The most comprehensive definition was given by Gibson, Ivancevich and Donnelly. Their definition bases itself on the effect that it has on the organization. Some types of conflict which may impede proper functioning of the organization are named as dysfunctional conflicts- the confrontation between individuals, groups, or positions within the organization hinders organizational performance. (Gibson, Ivancevich and Donnelly,). In such cases, if the conflicting groups continue working together, then the organization may suffer. There are other categories of conflicts, which may benefit the organization, are identified by the writers as functional conflicts. Accordingly, such conflict is considered to be functional in that is often beneficial for identifying all options in response to business problems or 'business opportunities; selecting and refining the best option or course of action for many operational issues; resolving differences in technological advances; and resolving many other opportunities or issues where a consensus is necessary and multiple options are available.' (Bertocci, 2009, p. 75). From this approach of defining conflicts, it could be deduced that in situations where there are more than one individuals or groups, conflict being inescapable, should be identified as helpful to the organization or detrimental to it based on their nature. This tells us that one should identify which type of conflict is occurring in an organization before resorting to providing solutions it.

Conflict is also approached with a quite different gaze by some other writers. For instance, Whetten and Cameron (2002) states that businesses fail because of too much agreement and homogeneity making the organization focus on maintaining *status quo* and failing to adapt to changing environment.

Regardless of the differences of focus of the above decisions, conflict among individuals, groups or teams is inevitable in organizations comprising of more than one individuals and teams. This problem, saving its usefulness, may become more aggravated in organizations where there is more than one cultural identity, mostly international staffs. Needless to mention that managers and organizations are expected to handle such conflicts prudently based on their type.

Stephen P. Robbins and Timothy (2013) defines conflict as a process that begins when one party perceives another party has or is about to negatively affect something the first party care about. The definition describes that point in any ongoing activity when an interaction crosses over to become an interparty conflict; it encompasses the wide range of conflicts people experience in organizations: incompatibility of goals, difference over interpretations of facts, disagreements based on behavioural expectations, and the like.

2.4. Types of Conflicts

There are different types of conflicts as categorized by different scholars. Guetzkow, Harold and J.Gyr (1954) identify typically two types of conflicts in organizations: affective and substantive. Affective conflict refers to those conflicts that emanate from the personal relationship among individuals belonging to the organization. Substantive conflict occurs when the core cause of the dispute relates their tasks in the organization.

A distinguishing characteristic of personal conflict is that it is based largely on negative feelings about individuals or groups and less on substantive issues. (Bertocci, p. 78). The individuals or teams involved in such personal conflicts may have several reasons to do so. Jealousy, gossip, differences in personal preferences, political opinions, etc may be mentioned as causes for such types of conflicts. Such conflicts may be reflected through failure to communicate, cooperate or unite to achieve organizational targets.

Substantive conflicts are usually associated with those conflicts that emanate from disagreements related to organizational tasks. These organizational conflicts are based primarily on

disagreements over specific issues such as the allocation of resources, different organizational goals or objectives, control of personnel, changes in the organizational structure, or different priorities. (Bertocci, p. 79). Here, individuals or groups involved may have actual differences on issues related to the organization itself even if they have some personal overtones. It should be noted that some conflicts may involve both personal and substantive conflicts.

2.5. Culture and Conflict in a Workplace

Organizations are basically consisted of individuals. Individuals, which compose a team, have attitudes and behaviours largely derived from their culture. As it has been mentioned above, it is increasing common to look multicultural teams in projects and organizations. In many cases, culture is becoming an inescapable aspect of individuals at work places. (Robbins et al, 2009) Culture may have roles in the prevalence and management of conflicts in an organization. Regardless of differences in culture among individuals, conflict may still happen owing to the very nature of human being. Multiculturalism among members if an organization adds another source of potential conflict to the unavailability of conflicts. (Robbins et al, 2009)

2.6. Conflict School of Thought

Robbins et al.(2009) states Conflicts are inevitable which can be aroused at individual level, group level and organizational level. different scholars forward different views about conflict. These argues are classified in to three views as follows:

2.6.1 The Traditional View of Conflict

In this view, the term conflict considered as negative and its meaning has not different meaning from violence, destruction and irrationality. Traditional scholars argued conflict brings a negative result due to lack of good communication, lack of understanding of workers need and lack of trust between individuals in the organization. So, conflict is no useful to any firm, it should be removed. The view regarded all conflicts are harmful and we focus on the reasons of why conflicts occurred and take the necessary corrective action to get better the performance of the group and the organization. Recent studies have stronger support to dispute that " this approach to conflict reduction results in high group performance"(Robbins et al, 2009)

2.6.2 The Human Relation View of conflict

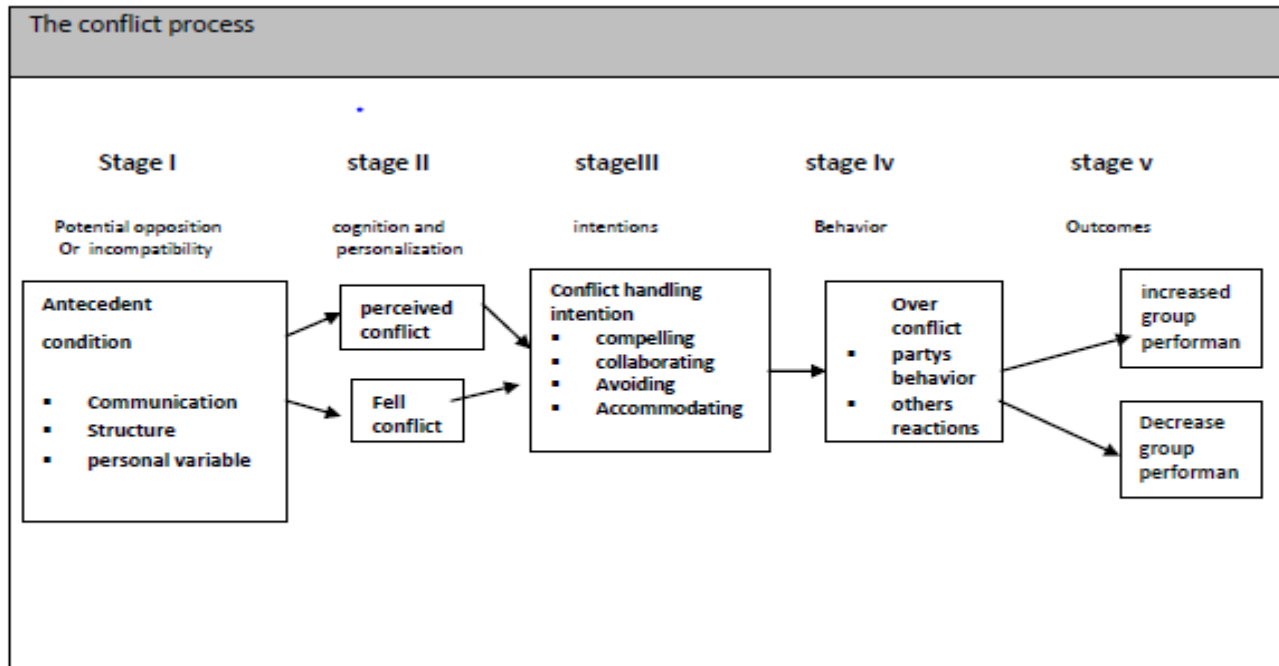
The human relations views of conflict accepted conflict cannot be avoided. It occurred in the group and in the organization at any time. This view did not deny the importance of conflict which increase the performance of individuals. (Kirk B. and James W.G,2002)

2.6.3 The Interactions View of conflict

This view support the existence of minimum conflict in the organization. this minimum conflict should be functional which is useful to increase the performance of the group. Mostly, Process and task conflicts bring constructive conflict. On the other hand, there are conflicts which hold back group performance called dysfunctional conflicts. Among the three types of conflict relationship conflicts are dysfunctional which boost personal clash, diminish common understanding and slow dawn to finish organizational jobs. (Kirk B. and James W.G,2002)

2.7. The Conflict Process

Stephen P. Robbins and Timothy (2013) indicates that conflict process has fives stages; namely, potential opposition or incompatibility, cognition and personalization, intentions, behaviour and outcomes.



(source S.P. Robbins et al, Organizational Behavior, 13th edition, 2009 page 533)

2.7.1 Stage one - Potential Opposition or incompatibility

Communications

A review of research suggests that differing word connotation, jargons, insufficient exchange information and noise in the communication channel are all barriers to communication and potential antecedent conditions to conflict. Researcher has further demonstrated a surprising finding: the potential for conflict increases when either too little or too much communication takes place

Structure

Conflict can be encouraged by size and specialization. if the organization has large size, there is a probability of more specialized activities and as a result there is a greater conflict occur. The word structure in this context consists of size, specialization, jurisdictional clarity, *compatibility of individual to goal, leadership style, reward system, and degree of dependency between groups.*

personal variables

This is one of the major source of conflict that composed of *personality, emotionality and values.*

2.7.2 Stage -Two cognition and personalization

This is the necessary stage to identify the conflict issues and the situation in the previous stage of conflict and incongruity are foot on the ground in this, second, stage. which means one of the party conscious of the conditions of predecessor the occurrence of conflict, this is named perceived conflict, but the party is still not personalized. In the 12 level of felt conflict, *when individual become emotionally involved, the parties experience anxiety, tension, frustration.*

2.7.3 Stage -Three Intention

It mediates between the feeling and insight of individuals. Intention is a decision to act in a give way, there is big difference between intention and behaviour as a result individual intension are not showed correctly all the time by the behaviour. There are five conflict handling intention (see fig 2.1) which are making use of two dimensions namely cooperativeness and assertiveness. The former dimension indicates the level of one party to satisfy other concern and the later shows the level of one party to satisfy himself.

2.7.4 Stage -Four Behaviour

In this stage, conflicting individuals forward statements and made different actions and reactions. in the behaviour stage conflict become clear

2.7.5 Stage -Five Out comes

As indicated above in the model, the result of this conflict can be functional or dysfunctional. If it is functional, it develops the performance of the groups, if not, the reverse is true.

2.4 Conflict Management

For ordinary people, the word conflict has negative connotations. But, conflicts may be either positive or negative effects on the organization. There may be situations where conflict is desirable as it may increase effectiveness through different means. Conflict appears to represent exactly the opposite of what most managers want—namely, a smooth-running, efficient organization, performing at all levels in the most cost-efficient manner. (Bertocci, 2009, p. 76). Therefore, the dominating opinion nowadays is that conflict is necessary part of team working on condition that the conflict is productive and positive. When team members face conflict, a recommendation is to use one of three modes of conflict resolution – flight, fight or unite. Flight mode appears when team members do not want to engage in a conflict. In some situation sit can be a proper strategy, but in others avoidance can make the problem worse.

Fight requires team members to be involved in some confrontations and usually leads to the win-lose situation. Two parties become opponents and one party is a winner while the other one is a loser. The unite approach means that team members are joint problem solvers, not adversaries, and the team is united against the problem. There are no arguing positions in the team and team members focus on the interests they share. It is necessary to be aware of the fact that the unite approach requires effective listening and participation of all team members. (Kirk B. and James W.G,2002)

Cultural differences sometimes create obstacles to effective team work that can be recognized only after they have already damaged communication and relationship in the team. It is the manager's responsibility then to identify the underlying cultural reasons of conflict, choose the right strategy, and to intervene. The most frequent causes of conflicts in multicultural teams are as it was mentioned above especially hierarchy and other phenomena related to Hofstede's culture

dimensions, but also decision making, direct versus indirect communication styles, and the language.

According to Brett, Behfar and Kern (2006, pp. 85-97) team members coming from some cultures where they are treated differently according to their status in an organization. In a team, where the majority belongs to an egalitarian culture, they can even feel humiliation if their status in their home country is high. There are a lot of examples of the North Americans cooperating with the Koreans in the situations when the Americans complain to the higher Korean management causing embarrassment and nearly damaging of the deal.

Decision making can be a source of conflicts as it can differ in terms of speed and analysis made before it. Some cultures prefer fast decision making while other insist on long analyzing the topic re-discussing the most important points. The only possible way seems to respect the other approach to decision making. It is necessary to control impatience on one side and learn asking explicit questions related to specific issues. (Robbins et al, 2009)

Another problem occurring during working in multicultural teams that can cause a serious damage to relationships may be direct versus indirect communication. In Western countries communication is mostly direct and explicit while in Asian cultures, for example, the dominating style is indirect and implicit. In the first case it means that the meaning is on the surface, but in the second one much information is hidden in the context and it takes a lot of time before the individuals belonging to this type of culture are sure that there is harmony and agreement within their team. (Robbins et al, 2009)

Even if the international language of business communication is English, there can occur misunderstandings related to non-natives' pronunciation, accent, and lack of fluency. Sometimes the most experienced members of a team with their high expertise cannot express their ideas, which lead to frustration, impatience, and even to interpersonal conflicts. Having side conversations in native languages can also deteriorate the situation and annoy the other side. (Robbins et al, 2009)

There are numerous strategies how to overcome conflicts in multicultural teams, but the most efficient one seems to be adaptation in terms of team members' willingness to identify culture differences and overtaking responsibility for living with them. This approach does not require much managerial time as the team members participate in solving the conflict themselves and learn from the process, preserving their national cultures at the same time. (Bertocci, p. 78).

In order to solve personal conflicts, leaders may be more adept or effective in managing differences between people than managers based on a leader's ability to empower people through a vision that enables them to see how they are part of the solution to a larger problem and to recognize their importance to accomplishing a mission. Managers, on the other hand, often want to formalize issues, strategize a plan to deal with the issues, reorganize work to better control the issues, or prepare memoranda that define and describe the issues. Leaders know that some differences between people are natural, and some people want to feel they have been heard. One method for dealing with personal conflict calls for meeting with the individuals involved: a simple meeting between the conflicting parties to communicate to them that the ability to get along with others is a key factor in determining continuing employment and future advancement. (Bertocci, p. 78).

In cases of substantive conflict, managers may be better equipped to resolve the conflict than leaders, because managers are more likely to be familiar with issues involving resources, operations, and time management. Leaders, on the other hand, are typically not involved with the issues at the same level of detail. Once the issues are identified by each individual, along with their recommendations for resolution, managers may have an easier time meeting with the individuals to resolve the conflict. Another approach is for the manager to ask the conflicting parties to try to reach a compromise on their own, with the understanding that the manager will become involved only if they cannot agree. When successful, this technique has another advantage: it develops the ability to resolve conflicts without requiring a mediator. (Bertocci, p. 79).

Peter Wallensteen and Niklas Swanström (2005) argue that "conflict management should imply a change, from destructive to constructive, in the mode of interaction" Robbins, et al (2009) conflict management as " the use of resolution and stimulation techniques to achieve the desired level of conflict" This needs the skills of Manager/supervisor which includes counselling, positive intent and stating outcome. There are several conflict resolution techniques which are used in the organization. According to PMBOK(2008) there are six conflict resolution techniques 13 which

are used to handle different conflicts between /among individuals who are working together. These are:

- *Withdrawing/Avoiding* - this is a conflict handling technique which are used when individual withdraw from conflict that are potential or actual;
- *Smoothing / Accommodating* - this technique are employed when conflicting parties leave the distinction and focus on common understanding;
- *Forcing* - this is Win -loss situations when one party press his/her standpoint to another party;
- *Compromising*-this is a technique that is used to find solution to all conflicting parties in some degree;
- *Collaborating-incorporate multiple standpoints and insight from different perspectives, leads to consensus and commitment;*
- *Confronting/Problem solving*- give and take attitude by opening a face to face discussion to define the problem and to resolve it.

These are not the only techniques that are used to handle conflicts in the organizations. However, other method are also employed to minimize or avoid conflicts among /between parties in the organizations. Robbins et al (2009) point out the following additional methods of handling conflicts:

- *Expansion Resources*: when shortage of resources are the reason for conflict, increase the supply to create "win-win" condition.
- *Super Ordinate goal*: techniques use of which conflicting parties must working together to achieve the common goal.
- *Authoritative Command*: manager uses his power to settle the disagreements and forward his stand to them.
- *Alternating human*: techniques used to change individual behaviours.

- *Organization structure*: techniques used to change the organizational structure and patterns of conflicts and,

The conflict stimulation techniques are as follows:

Communication- to increase the intensity of the conflict, different messages which are confusing are forwarded to individuals;

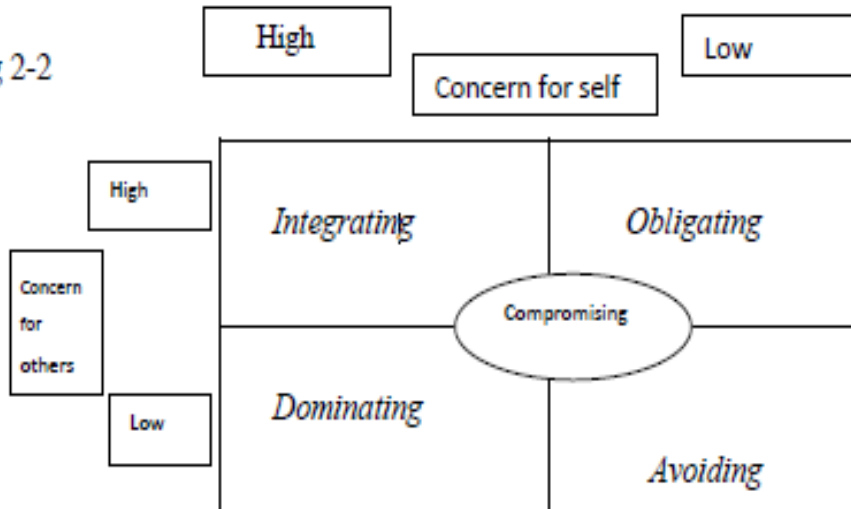
- *Bringing in outsiders*: the new member, who has totally different behaviour, join in the present team.
- *Restructuring the organization*: significant changes in their overall strategies, practices and operational tactics.
- *Appointing Devils advocacy*: one argues a position not because believing the position but for the purpose of challenging the opposite position.

Niklas L. Swanstrom and Mikael S.W(2005) cited in their concept paper that ,

The process of conflict management is the foundation basis for more effective conflict resolution. A distinction between conflict management and conflict resolution is, however, needed as a starting point as the concepts often are confused or integrated in an inappropriate manner. Conflict resolution refers to the resolution of the underlying incompatibilities in a conflict and mutual acceptance of each party's existence, while conflict management refers to measures that limit, mitigate and/or contain a conflict without necessary solving it. (Peter w. 2002) 15

M.Afzalur R (1983) indicates in his study that the degree of concern to himself or others is an important dimension to be considered when handling interpersonal conflict. *A combination of the two dimensions results in five specific styles of handling interpersonal conflict.* This shows in figure 2.2.

Fig 2-2



(source Article a measure of style Handling Interpersonal Goals, M.Afzalur R 1983 Page 369)

2.8. Conflict Mode

How to discern your conflict mode? The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument, (2016) is used as a conflict score indicator that used to decide the conflict resolution methods within 15 minutes in the five resolution techniques as we can see from the above fig 2-2.

The first conflict mode to discuss is competing which needs a skill of influencing, contesting, asserting feelings and clear stand. It is described by high assertiveness and low cooperation. And it is suitable if fast, unpopular or important decision is needed, and if it is important to keep the concern of self.

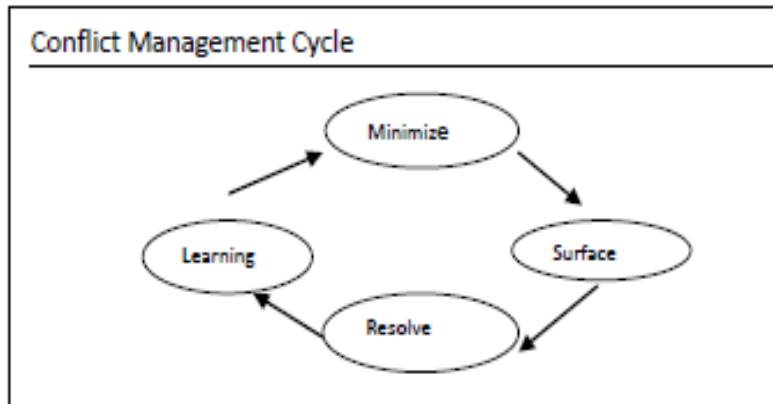
Avoiding is another conflict resolution technique which is used when people fear of conflicts and have little skill in conflict management. It is explained in the above table by low assertiveness and low cooperative. This mode is suitable when stakes are low, to minimize stress, to get time and when the person is low position. Avoiding Skills include *ability to withdraw, ability to side step issues, ability to leave things unresolved and sense of timing* Accommodating is explained by low assertiveness and high cooperative. It is suitable to demonstrate rationality, to build helpfulness and to create harmony environment. Its skills include *forgetting your desires, selflessness, ability to yield and obeying orders*. Collaborating is explained by “putting an idea on top of an idea on top of an idea...in order to achieve the best solution to a conflict.” Some admit this mode is the best to use because it puts a creative solution, but it is time consuming. It is showed in the table by high assertiveness and high cooperative. It is important when the issue is important to bring

combine solutions, to get better connection and to learn. Collaborating skills *include active listening, nonthreatening confrontation, Identifying concerns and analysing input*

2.9 Conflict Management Cycle

There are four roles in conflict management cycle. each role doesn't represent by itself, but it is part of the cycle. This nonstop cycle helps the organization to improve itself through the process. these parts are (Kirk B. and James W.G,2002):

Fig 2-3



(source *Capitalizing conflicts*, 2002, PP 40)

1. *Minimizing* -potential and definite conflicts should be minimized
2. *Surface*- courses of conflicts that nonetheless exist to be surfaced
3. *Resolve*- after the courses of conflicts surfaced, it should be handled effectively
4. *Learning* -to decrease the stage and impact of conflict in the future, learning plays an important role in conflict management cycle

2.6 Conceptual Frame Work of Conflict Management Practice

Mei-yung Leung, S. Thomas Ng and Sai-On Cheung (2002) in their study on Improving Satisfaction through Conflict Stimulation and Resolution in Value Management in Construction Projects indicate that Conflict is regarded as harmful to the successful performance of the team, but cognitive scientists disagreed with this statement. They argued that team creativity in work can be stimulated by conflict. This implies team enhanced decision making, productivity and satisfaction. The three case studies which were made at Hong Kong investigated conflict and members satisfactions in the organization. These studies found that appropriate level of conflict improves satisfaction up to some point but when conflict rises, satisfaction is minimized. So by stimulating conflicts, optimal level of satisfaction is made and handled any unnecessary conflicts among members Theories indicate that here are four conflict handling techniques; namely: contending (or forcing), conceding (or Yielding), avoiding (compromising in action and withdrawing), and collaborating (or problem solving). Among these strategies, individual choice depends on concern for self (low, high) and concern for others (low, high). *These dimensions were influenced by traits including social value orientation, power motivation, and need for affiliation. So, conflict management strategies thus derive from both the person and the situation. Conflict management, therefore, is not simply personality characteristic.* (Carsten KW De Dreu & Bianca Beersma,2005) In the present day, organizations manage conflict to improve the organization learning by acquiring knowledge. This is the primary point of modern firms. The organization learning is a process that enables individuals to access data that are put in the conflict information pool. This includes knowledge acquisition, knowledge distribution and information interpretation and organizational memorization and documentation. This helps them to analyse and to intervene the problems. (M.Afzalur Rahim,2002)

CHAPER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design, population, sample size, sampling techniques, data sources, data collection tools and procedure, methods of data analysis, validity and reliability testing methods are presented below.

3.1. Data Sources

There are two types of data sources, primary and secondary. And Both will be utilized for this research.

Primary Sources of Data

This study utilized the primary data source to get an original insight in to the perception of CSCEC National Stadium project team member on how the multicultural team is managing conflicts among team member. The project manager, human resource manager and project coordinator were interviewed on overall multicultural project environment and specifically on conflicts among the Chines and Ethiopians. These data were gathered through the utilization of questionnaires and interviews. In addition to the management interviewed, questionnaires were distributed to employees and responses collected and summarized.

Secondary Sources of Data

Project reports, office memos and activity reports on the projects, company strategy papers and other relevant documents were used to collect relevant secondary data.

3.2. Population, Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The study used mixed concurrent sampling method, in which purposive sampling technique was used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data.

The National Stadium Project has about 800 permanent and temporary employees from both nations. However, for these studies the researcher focused on top level and technical project staff. Hence the sample size of this study is 26 employees, whom are willing to respond to questions.

3.3. Data Collection Methods

As per the research methodology, this research was mixed. Meaning, it used both qualitative and quantitative data.

From among various quantitative and qualitative techniques of data collection, this research applied the following survey method.

Survey Method

The survey method has been further classified into four categories: Descriptive, analytical, school survey and genetic. This research used the descriptive survey method which has three further classifications. Namely, survey testing method, questionnaire survey method and interview survey Method. Only the Questionnaire and interview survey methods were used for this research.

Questionnaire Survey

This study employed structured questionnaires to collect primary data from employees. The data was collected on the perception of CSCEC National Stadium Project staff about the multiculturalism in the project and on conflict management.

Interview Survey

Face to face interviews was conducted with the supervisors and HR head of the project. Semi structured interviews were held with the supervisor and team leader who have in-depth knowledge about the effect of the multicultural environment and conflict. The rationale behind using semi structured interviews is to allow the respondents to freely express their opinions and feelings.

3.4. Data Processing and Analysis

Data processing is the most important part of the survey operation. It includes editing, coding, data entry, data cleaning and reliability examination. Once the data is collected, it was checked for accuracy, it was analyzed, interpreted and discussed using statistical techniques. SPSS 2.0 software was used for this purpose.

3.5. Ethical Consideration

By adhering to the scientific method, researchers can, in due course, obtain valid and reliable findings that may advance scientific knowledge. Unavoidably, however, to advance knowledge in

this manner it is often necessary to impinge upon the rights of individuals. Virtually, all studies with human participants involve some degree of risk. These risks may range from minor discomfort or embarrassment caused by somewhat intrusive or provocative questions to much more severe effects on participants' physical or emotional well-being. This research will ensure that such physical and emotional risks are avoided when designing and conducting the study (Marczyk, DeMatteo, & Festinger, 2005).

3.6. Scope of the Study

The research examined the multicultural project team on conflict management of CSCEC in National Stadium Project. It reviewed the conflicts raised due to the cultural difference between the project team member, and what mechanism is being used by the team leaders to settle the conflicts, by taking conflict management theories into consideration.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1. Introduction

This chapter will present a discussion of the results and how results obtained through the process. First the background information of the respondents that will be presented in the tabulation form then, the method of analysis is discussed, which include a descriptive analysis through SPSS to get frequency tabulations. Concurrently, the result obtained is also interpreted and compared with literature to confirm if they are consistent.

4.2. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data was coded, edited and put in table. This helps to disclose any inconsistencies in the response that create problems to analyze the data effectively. Besides, data was checked out if there were any error during data entries and the necessary corrective actions were taken. The descriptive statistics utilized are based on frequency tables to provide information on the demographic variables and other variables.

Data was collected from twenty-six respondents and all of them answer the questions and among the twenty-six interviews was made for four key informants, who are working in the CSCEC head quarter. Besides, observation was made, and some documentations were reviewed through the support from translators in the office, hence, the analysis of the study is based on the above collected data.

4.3. Descriptive Statistics

Background Information of Respondents

Table 4.1:

S. No.	Item		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	Age of Respondents	18-30 years	22	84.6	84.6	84.6
		31-45 years	4	15.4	15.4	100.0
		Total	26	100.0	100.0	
2	Gender of respondents	Male	20	76.9	76.9	76.9
		Female	6	23.1	23.1	100.0
		Total	26	100.0	100.0	
3	Respondents Nationality	Ethiopian	17	65.4	65.4	65.4
		China	9	34.6	34.6	100.0
		Total	26	100.0	100.0	
4	Respondents Educational Background	Degree	26	100.0	100.0	100.0
5	Respondents Work Experience with the Project	Below 1 year	9	34.6	34.6	34.6
		1-3 years	15	57.7	57.7	92.3
		above 3 years	2	7.7	7.7	100.0
		Total	26	100.0	100.0	
6	Nature of the Job	Temporary	18	69.2	69.2	69.2
		Permanent	8	30.8	30.8	100.0
		Total	26	100.0	100.0	

Source :- own survey 2018

The above information in the table shows the back ground of the respondents which includes age, gender, educational level, nature of employment (nature of the job) in the project. In this table, item number one, Age, distribution of the respondents 22 (84.6%) of the total respondents age are between 18-30 years, 4(15.4%) respondents are between 31-45. This shows most of the project team members are in productive, young age. Regarding gender, 20(76.9%) of the respondent's distribution are male and only 6 (23.1%) of the total respondents are female. This implies men are dominant in the project and in the Engineering Department of the project.

The table indicates that 17(65.4%) of the respondents are Ethiopian while the rest 9(34.6%) are Chinese, we can understand the multicultural environment in the project.

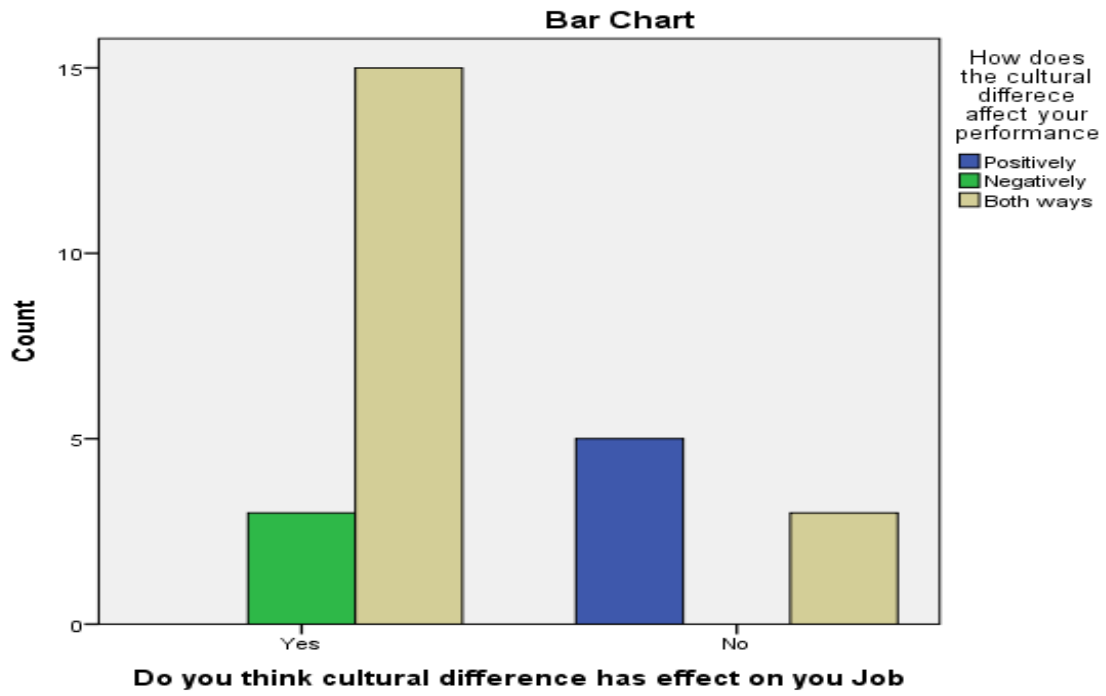
The other information raised in the table is the distribution of the respondents based on educational background, 26 (100%) of the total distribution of respondents are degree graduates, which indicates that most of the professional employees of the project are degree holders. The term of employment in the project is either temporary or permanent. As it is observed in most projects employees are hired on temporary base, 18(69.2%) are temporary employees while the rest 8(30.8%) are permanent employees.

4.4. Result of Descriptive Statistics on Variables

This section reveals the result of descriptive statistics in use in the study. To assess the objective of this study, data was collected through structured and unstructured interviews from twenty-six respondents and their key informants respectively.

The below graph indicates that 18(69.2%) of the respondents the cultural difference has effect on their jobs out of which 3(16.7%) says it has negative effect and 15 (83.3%) replied that it has both negative and positive effect. In the contrary 8(30.8%) of the respondent replied that the cultural difference has no effect on their job.

Bar Chart 4.2:



Source: Own survey 2018

Table 4.3:

S. No.	Item	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	More than one supervisor	Yes	17	65.4	65.4
		No	9	34.6	100.0
		Total	26	100.0	100.0
2	supervisors from different nationalities	Yes	9	34.6	34.6
		No	17	65.4	100.0
		Total	26	100.0	100.0
3	Encounter conflict with your boss	Yes	26	100.0	100.0
4	Solve the conflict	Yes	26	100.0	100.0
5	Type of conflicts frequently arise with your boss/supervisor	Task conflict	9	34.62	34.62
		Process conflict	7	26.9	62.5
		Relationship conflict			
		Miss Communication	2	7.7	69.2
		Task & Miss Communication	8	30.8	100.0
		Total	26	100.0	100.0
6	Conflict Resolution Mechanisms	Compromise	21	80.8	80.8
		Avoidance	3	11.5	92.3
		Withdrawal	1	3.8	96.2
		Accommodation	1	3.8	100.0
		Total	26	100.0	100.0
7	Conflicts frequently arise with your colleagues	Yes	21	80.8	80.8
		No	5	19.2	100.0
		Total	26	100.0	100.0

Source: Own survey 2018

The above table summarizes respondent replies for conflict, conflict resolution techniques. 17(65.4%) of the respondents that they have more than one supervisor in their jobs and 9 (34.6%) out of 26 respondents indicated that they have supervisors from different nationalities.

All the respondents indicate that they encountered conflicts with their boss which 9(34.62%) is task conflict, 7(26.9%) process conflict 2 (7.7%) miss communication conflict and 8 (30.8%) task and miss communication/language conflict. The above analysis indicates that conflicts mostly

encountered due miss communication. The growing of multicultural teams in today's workplace necessitates for the development of the understanding of communication essential to maintain high performance of the team (Wheelan, Buzalo & Tsumara, 1998). The big number on the conflict due to miss communication on National Stadium project will have a significant effect on the project performance.

It was also evaluated if conflicts are also encountered with in team members and the above analysis indicates that 21(80.8%) of the respondents encounter conflict with their colleagues.

According to the data collected compromising conflict resolution technique is used by 21(80.8%) of the respondents. As per the interview made with the supervisors and HR personnel the project has a negotiation office which employees discuss their conflict in the presence translator.

Employees were requested about trust, cooperation and respect among team members and 16 (61.5%) of the employees said that there is trust among team members while the rest 10(38.5%) replied that there is no trust among team members. 22(84.6%) and 23(88.5%) of the respondents indicates there is cooperation and respect among the team members.

Jarvenpaa & Leidner (1996) discuss the challenge of trust and whether it is possible to build and maintain trust in multicultural project team due to their temporary nature and geographical dispersion. Most of the respondents on the interview, indicate that the Chinese supervisor don't have trust for their assistant employee's, respondents indicate that their supervisors do not understand the working culture in different government organizations and conflicts often raised with an employee who is interacting with external organizations, especially with those who are interacting with government offices.

The researcher tried to find out if employees are happy on their job and 15(57.7%) of the respondents replied "No", that they are not happy about their overall job and salary. As it was observed on another question that 17(65.4%) of the employees work more than eight hours and in similar manner 17(65.4%) of the respondents indicate that they have more than one supervisor.

These analyses may clearly shows that frustration on employees due to long working hours and satisfaction due to too many supervisors.

The study also tried to observe if multi-cultural trainings were given to project staff in order to enlighten employees on cultural difference and create awareness on how work can be affected due

to different cultural background. 23(88.5%) of the employees replied that multicultural training was never given to the team. However, 14(53.8%) answered that their supervisors respect and understand their culture.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1. Conclusion

This case study was conducted to examine the multicultural project environment in conflict management in the National Stadium Project of CSCEC. The construction company, CSCEC as international construction company recruit project staff from the host country and project site or the client's country. From the study we can conclude:

- Most of the project team are recruited on temporary base and most of the national staff have short time experience.
- Most of the national stadium project staff are young and degree holders.
- Respondents indicated they are mostly supervised by more than one supervisor and supervisory positions are given to the Chines.
- Many of the respondents replied that the cultural difference has affected their work in both negatively and positively.
- All the employees replied that they had encountered conflict with their supervisor and mostly compromising conflict resolution technique is used.
- The conflict was mostly occurred due to task and miscommunication among team members.
- No training is given to the project staff concerning multiculturalism however, employees respect and understand others culture.

Hence, based on the above we can conclude that lots of conflicts are observed in the CSCEC National Stadium project team due miss communication/language and task, though most conflicts are resolved through compromising the Project Leander never tried to observe the multicultural team effect on conflict.

5.2. Recommendations

Based on the finding and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are suggested to the National Stadium Project team, project managers and contractors;

- Building project team with young and educated staff has a significant advantage for project success but more experienced staff will add greater value to the project success, hence including experienced employees on the team should be considered other than having homogenous group.
- Task and miscommunication were the major reasons for the conflict within the project team; as Matveev & Nelson (2004) reveals on their studies multicultural project teams' performance is subject to how effectively the team members cooperate together and whether they can build up a synergy in working relationships, an effective communication within the project team can assist in conquering the number of challenge often face. With the increasing diversity of employees, project managers must be able to develop and maintain communication with the aim of realizing high team performance.
- Project management team leader are highly recommended to focus on the developing of employee's language skills in addition, to the translator who are mostly used as intermediaries between staff.
- Multiculturalism has significant effect on project team's communication, trust, understanding and overall performance, therefore understanding the effect will be the first stage to the solution.
- Project managers should be trained to understand the society work culture, way of communication, verbal and non-verbal communications and gestures; which will have effect on understanding their employees. At the same time national staff should be trained on their foreign colleagues and supervisor culture and expectations.
- Creating social platforms in the office and arranging social clubs might create the opportunity to develop culture sharing and team building among employees.
- The none existence of multicultural training for a project team in which 40% of the members from China and 60% from Ethiopia will be the main cause for team members to miss understand each other and face conflicts on simple issues.

- Assigning local staff on supervisor position would motivate and creates sense of belonging to other national staff.
- In addition to the multicultural trainings knowledge and experience sharing frame works would capacitate and can be very good opportunity to for team building.

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Annex
Questionnaire

Interview Questionnaires

1. Name: _____
2. Age (in years):
a) 18-30 b) 31 – 45 c) Above 45
3. Sex:
a) Male b) Female
4. Nationality: _____
5. Educational Background:
a) Diploma c) Degree d) Above
6. Total number of years in working for this organization? _____
7. Nature of your Job:
a) Temporary b) Permanent c) Other; specify _____
8. What is your Job title? _____
9. What is your job position?
a) Project Manager b) Chief Engineer c) Civil Engineer d) General Service staff
10. What is the nationality of your Supervisor? _____
11. What is your first language? _____
12. What other language are you able to speak? _____
13. Do you think the cultural difference has effect on your job performance?
a) Yes b) No
14. How does the cultural difference affect your performance?
a) Positively b) Negatively c) Both ways
15. Please explain how your performance is affected by the cultural difference affect your performance?

16. Are you happy by working in multicultural environment? Please explain why

17. What is the main difficulty you are facing by working with other nationalities?

18. What is the main benefit you gained by working with other nationalities?

S. No.	Questions	Answer	
		Yes	No
1.	Do you spend more than 8 hours in the work place?		
2.	Are you happy on your job and the salary you are earning?		
3.	Do you have more than one supervisor?		
4.	Do you have supervisors from different nationalities?		
5.	Do you have:		
	A) Trust among the team members?		
	B) Coordination of work among the team?		
	C) Coordination of work among team?		
	D) Respect among each other?		
6	Do you encounter conflict with your boss?		
	If Yes, what type of conflicts frequently arise with your boss/supervisor?		
	A) Task conflict		
	B) Process conflict		
	C) Relationship conflict		
	D) Culture		
	E) Miss communication (Language)		
7.	Do you solve the problem? If Yes, how?		
	A) Compromise		
	B) Avoidance		

	C) Withdrawal		
	D) Accommodation		
	E) Competing		
8.	Do conflicts frequently arise with your colleagues?		
	If Yes, what is the reason?		
	A) Task		
	B) Resource		
	C) Process		
	D) Culture		
	E) Miss Communication/Language		
9.	Do you solve the problem? If Yes, how?		
	A) Compromise		
	B) Avoidance		
	C) Withdrawal		
	D) Accommodation		
	E) Competing		
10.	Does your project give trainings on multiculturalism?		
11.	Does your supervisor respect and understand your culture?		
13.	Are you happy by working with other nationalities?		