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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to examine the extent to which cultural competence is a predictor variable to workplace conflict of multinational oil companies in Delta State and Rivers State, two of the highest oil producing states of the country. The researcher adopted the correlational research design and a total of 35 administrative management staff were sampled using the stratified sampling technique. The spearman correlation statistic was used in testing the hypotheses formulated. A total of 7 major multinational oil companies were investigated. The findings indicated that cultural competence influences intrapersonal and intergroup conflicts negatively and significantly. It was recommended that multinational oil companies should develop an enabling environment to enhance the propensity of employees to value culture personally and interpersonally thereby boosting a deeper sense of interconnectedness and harmony; likely prerequisites for greater cohesiveness and ultimately productivity and sustainability. Furthermore, organizations should enhance cultural competence as this will build confidence in the employees on all organizational processes, and this in turn will enable the workers share common understanding that will reduce intrapersonal and intergroup conflict in all their work endeavours.

Key Words: *Cultural Competence, Workplace Conflict, Intra-Personal Conflict, Intragroup Conflict Multinational Oil Companies*

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INTRODUCTION

In today's workplace, it is common to interact with numerous individuals throughout a workday, including supervisors, coworkers, and customers. While one may hope that each of these interactions is pleasant and meaningful, this is not always the case. For various reasons, employees who interact with a variety of people throughout the workday may occasionally experience conflict at work. Conflict at work is commonly associated with numerous outcomes. As noted, most commonly, "conflict at work manifests itself in petty arguments, spreading rumors, and gossiping" (Spector & Jex, 1998, 21). The omnipresent nature of conflict has led Tjosvold (2008) to argue that, "to work in an organization is to be in conflict" and as such, "to take advantage of joint work requires conflict management" (p. 13). Although conflict is ubiquitous in nature and embedded within the structure of organizations, the formal process of dealing with conflict in workplaces is prescribed by statute and workplace policies and procedures. It is central for every organization to strive and create a balance so as to be and remain a healthy organization, even in the face of conflict. In healthy organizations, employees are committed, conscientious, and have high morale and performance drive (Daft, 2006). Although no workplace is devoid of antagonisms, tensions, aggressions, stereotypes, negative attitudes, competition and frustration as long as workers (men and women) are from different cultures, religion, status, lifestyle, and personality work together (Fleetwood & Karen, 1987). These factors have both positive and negative reactions on the workers in terms of their behaviors.

Workers' practices as a rule fall inside the builds of the standards of the organization. Organizational standards are a gathering of "anticipated practices, languages, principles and propositions that permit the working environment to perform at a reasonable pace" (Roberson, 2005). In any case, when ordinary

work conduct goes outside the standards of the association, its outcomes are broad and influence all degrees of the association including its dynamic procedures, profitability and money related expenses and ends up in conflict (Sabharwal, 2014). Be that as it may, as opposed to being damaging, the conflict may really be utilized to overhaul progressively compelling and effective creation and administration frameworks. Be that as it may seem, most assessments propose that negative impacts are the more common, and this clarifies why most corporations find a way to decrease conflict.

"Cultural competence can be basically portrayed as the capacity to comprehend the requirements and norms of population different in relation to one's own" (Kumasi and Hill, 2013, 23). It means arranging contrasts between a group's standards and work activities, such as, adjusting work framework to oblige groups' varying methods for developing information; looking for data and learning; and joining other groups' standards, stories and festivities into programming. It is also seen as complex integration of knowledge, attitudes and skills that enhance cross-cultural communication and effective interactions with others (Patrick, 2010). It follows that, in order for executives of multinationals to effectively demonstrate their functional expertise, they need personal training to realize their own personal values, social training to perceive others' values as attractive and advantageous. One of the top managerial issues in multinationals that are now present in almost all sectors of economy is therefore the management of employees from different cultural backgrounds, (Dereli, 2005). Individuals in organizations usually experience two types of conflicts which may be task related or people related (Choi, 2010). Solansky, Singh & Huang (2014) state that unless we decouple task conflict and relationship conflict, the distinctive impact of both on individual outcomes in organizations cannot be understood and we would continue to have inconsistent results.

Our knowledge of the process that explains how these conflicts are link to our background is somewhat narrow. Unfortunately, conflict researchers have not paid much attention to this fact. This gap in knowledge is also widened by the fact that less effort has been made for the identification of factors which may account for the positive and negative effect of conflict components in organizations.

Statement of the Problem

The work of Duckworth (2005) proposed that different opinions on the task can appear from organizational roles and personality stereotypes. This may create a tension and provide a basis of conflict between groups within the organization that is manned with the responsibility of organizational planning. Besides that, Jehn and Mannix (2001) claim that intense challenges in opinions between team members can decrease the level of trust among team members, which may trigger controversy due to cultural stereotype. People from different countries always have stereotypes about each other. Thus, it might influence workplace conflict and break the collaboration among the members of the organization. These will result into absenteeism, poor performance, loosing of good hands, poor behaviour, quitting of jobs. In response to these problems, our study proposed to investigate the role played by cultural competence on workplace conflict in major multinational oil companies.

The primary purpose of this research was to critically examine the role of cultural competence on workplace conflict in Nigeria major multinational oil companies. The study aimed at achieving the following objectives:

- To examine the role of cultural competence on intragroup conflict.
- To examine the role of cultural competence on Intra-personal conflict.

Based on the foregoing research objectives, the study was set to answer the following questions:

- What role do cultural competence played in intragroup conflict of major multinational oil companies in Nigeria?
- What role do cultural competence played in Intra-personal conflict of major multinational oil companies in Nigeria?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cultural Competence

Cultural competence is the capacity to perceive the hugeness of culture in one's own life and in the lives of others; to come to know and regard different social foundations and attributes through connection with people from assorted etymological, social and financial gatherings; and to completely incorporate the way of life of various groups into work and organizations so as to improve the lives of those being serviced (Overall 2009). Cultural competence can be characterized as a lot of scholastic, experiential and relational abilities that permit people and frameworks to expand their comprehension and energy about social contrasts and likenesses inside, among and between groups (Jansen and Zanoni, 2005). In this way, turning out to be culturally competent requires the capacity to draw on the qualities, conventions and customs of other social gatherings, to work with proficient people from different societies, and shape administration conveyance to meet others' cultural, social and semantic needs by creating focused mediations and varying supports (Betancourt, Green, and Carillo, 2002). Cultural competency is not merely a skill set to be taught, as argued by Wilmot & Hocker (2011) it involves a fundamental shift in the way one perceives the world. It is a path on which to travel, as opposed to an end to be achieved (Wilmot & Hocker, 2011). The concept emerged through rather simplistic attempts to increase provider-level cultural awareness and knowledge of other groups' unique

values, beliefs, and differences in regard to disability and rehabilitation (Sue, Zane, Hall, & Berger, 2009). In order for systems, organizations and practitioners to provide culturally competent services, they must take into consideration the values, beliefs and practices of clientele and adapt their services to address the specific socio-cultural and language needs of individuals (Betancourt, Green & Carrillo, 2002). Sue (2001) goes further, maintaining that the delivery of culturally competent platform 'must be about social justice'. Sue (2001) recommends that the 'center of cultural competence are incorporation, reasonableness, joint effort, collaboration and equal access and opportunity. From this premise, a culturally competent employee must get 'mindfulness, information, and aptitudes expected to work adequately in a pluralistic popularity based society', i.e., build up the 'capacity to impart, interface, arrange, and mediate for the benefit of customers from diverse foundations.

According to Tate (1995) Competency is one of the sets of behavior that the person must have and be able to display in order to perform the tasks and functions of a job with competence" (Hai & Wen 2010). Once workers can identify their own behaviors, they may be able to better identify similar behaviors in colleagues and to relate to others of diverse and similar heritage. This skill in the cultural competency continuum may reduce negative outcomes in the workplace setting, such as over identification of other workers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Abernethy, 2005).

Intra-personal conflict

An individual encounters frustration when a certain obstacle stands in the way of achieving his/her goal, thereby creating what is called frustration (Luthans, 2008). This, in turn, may create a kind of defensive reaction such as justification, withdrawal, aggressive behaviour, inertia or the acceptance of a compromise or an alternative (Elmagri, 2002). The negative consequences of frustration affect the morale of

individuals and their satisfaction with the work (Luthans, 2008). However, frustration can also have positive results such as continuous and hard work to reach a goal and thus to improve the performance and productivity of the individual; however, this all depends on the individual's personality. Intrapersonal conflict as a result of the individual's incompatible goals: This type of conflict relates to the goals of an individual. Therefore, it can be distinguished here between frustration and clashing or incompatible goals. In the case of frustration, an individual seeks to achieve a particular goal but there is an obstacle(s) that impedes/impede this achievement. In the case of incompatible goals, an individual has two or more goals that clash with each other. An individual can be faced with three types of incompatible goals (Luthans, 2008; Maher, 2004). Positive conflicting goals: In this scenario there are two or more positive goals. However, achieving one goal prevents the achievement of others. An example is the presence of more than one job opportunity for an individual and thus the individual finds themselves in the position of having to make a choice; Negative conflicting goals: Here the individual is faced with two or more goals; all of them are negative and the individual must choose one of them. Usually in this case, the individual chooses the least harmful goal. Conflict between achieving and not achieving the goal: This type of conflict takes place when an individual has one goal and, at the same time, achieving this goal leads to both negative results and positive ones. Here, the individual is in a state of confusion as to whether or not to achieve this goal. Maher (2004) states that, in this case, the culture of the individual and his/her education and experience play a large role in his/her decision.

Intergroup conflict

This is also known as interdepartmental conflict. It refers to conflict between two or more units or groups within an organization. Conflicts between manager and staff, production and marketing,

headquarters and field staff are examples of this type of conflict. One special type of intergroup conflict is between labor and management. For example, one group of employees can unite against another group. Such conflicts can arise from the differences in status and contradicting goals of the groups. Intergroup conflict usually leads to miscommunication or even to no communication, affecting an organization's ability to function. The manager can try to resolve the problem through problem solving tactics or following an internal dispute resolution process. Sometimes a facilitator can be useful to help discuss issues of conflict and related concerns. Such types of conflicts should be solved quickly but if the problem continues it can destroy the organization (Bankovskaya, 2012). Conflict between different groups or teams can become a threat to organizational competitiveness (Bankovskaya, 2012). One of the main seeds of Intergroup Conflict can be cohesiveness, but a certain amount of it can make a smooth running team, but too much of it can be harmful. The study of in-groups has revealed such changes connected with increased group cohesiveness: Firstly, members of in-groups view themselves as unique individuals but they stereotype members of other groups as all alike. Secondly, In-group members see themselves positively as people with high moral standards, as opposite to viewing members of other groups negatively and as immoral people. Thirdly, outsiders are viewed as a threat to the group and fourthly, In-group members exaggerate differences between their group and other groups. Lastly, In-group thinking is an inseparable part of organizational life, which is why it guarantees a conflict. Managers cannot eliminate in-group thinking, but they shouldn't ignore it (Bankovskaya, 2012). Intergroup conflict is the perceived incompatibility of goals or values between two or more individuals, which emerges because these individuals classify themselves as members of different social groups.

Empirical Review

Jehn's (1995) "field review of workers in the logistics business and looks at two components of conflict in work groups: relational conflict and task conflict" (p. 3). Relational conflict is about interpersonal contradiction and incorporates irritation, disturbance, and threatening vibe among colleagues. Task conflict is about colleague contradiction over thoughts, the deciphering of data, and ways to deal with a hierarchical issue that the group is confronting (Jehn, 1995). Jehn (1995) found that "group performance has an inverted-U relationship with task conflict" (p. 39): "at low and elevated levels of task conflict, group performance is low, while a moderate degree of errand struggle improves group performance" (p. 40). Relationship conflict is powerfully adverse to group execution. Furthermore, "the nature of the task directed the force of the impacts between the two conflicts measurements and group performance" (p. 41). In routine tasks, groups that accomplished either type of contention did not perform well, however in non-routine assignments, directed degrees of task conflicts were a gift, not a revile.

Jehn (1997) analyzed the "connection among relationship and task conflict measurements with group performance and, all the more critically, presented process conflict" (p. 2). Process conflict is about contradictory inclinations over how an undertaking ought to be performed; for example how assets are apportioned, who does what, and when (Jehn, 1997). Jehn, Northcraft, and Neale (1999) "field study connected group diversity characteristics with group performance, utilizing conflict dimensions as moderators" (p. 3). Group diversity characteristics included social class qualities (for example sexual orientation and race), enlightening qualities (for example training and foundation), and value characteristics; for example amount versus quality. Jehn et al. (1999) found that "information characteristics expanded task conflict among partners that emphatically influenced group performance"

(27). Second, "value characteristics expanded relationship conflicts inside the group that adversely influenced group performance" (27). In conclusion, "value characteristics expanded process conflicts among colleagues that contrarily influenced partner opinions of teams, intent to remain, and commitment" (40).

Some experts argue about cultural competence, such as Tomlinson and Masuhara (2004) split sense of cultural competence into two parts, namely the definition of cultural and competence. Tomlinson and Mashura (as cited in Saniei, 2012,) stated that cultural can be interpreted as remarking to the totality of a way of life shared by a group of people associated by common and different characteristics, activities, beliefs, circumstances and remarking to the beliefs and behavior of a community of people who share capability, attitudes, interests and goal. Kourova and Modianos (2013) said that cultural competence helps not only to bridge differences of cultural background, but also to bring them closer to the richness of the variety of their own local culture.

The foregoing statement gave rise to the following hypotheses:

H₀₁: *There is no significant relationship between cultural competence and intergroup conflict*

H₀₂: *There is no significant relationship between cultural competence and intra-personal conflict*

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a correlational research design to solicit responses from the administrative department employees of 7 major multinational oil companies in Nigeria, which served as the accessible population of the study. The study adopted stratified sampling technique, meaning the researcher deliberately selected the sampling units that would be included in the study because felt that they were representative of the target population. Questionnaire was the major instrument for data collection. 35 questionnaires were distributed to the seven (7) major multinational oil companies under study, the 35 copies were retrieved. The spearman rank correlation coefficient with the aid of statistical package for social science was used to test proposed hypotheses.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics for Instruments Variable

	Cronbach Alpha	No. of Items
Cultural Competence	0.975	3
Intergroup Conflict	0.937	3
Intrapersonal Conflict	0.850	3

Bivariate Analysis

The "secondary analyses from the results of the hypotheses were presented with test conducted using Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient at 95% confidence level which was adopted as criteria for the probability for either accepting the null hypotheses at ($p > 0.05$) or rejecting the null hypotheses formulated

at ($p < 0.05$)" (Baridam, 2001, 56). In clear terms, the test covered the two hypotheses postulated for the study (i.e. H₀₁ and H₀₂) which were bivariate and stated in null form

Test of Hypothesis one

H₀₁: *There is no significant relationship between cultural competence and intergroup conflict.*

Table 2: Correlation Results

			Competence	Intergroup
Spearman's rho	Competence	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.715**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.003
		N	35	35
	Intergroup	Correlation Coefficient	-.715**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.
		N	35	35

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Research Data, 2020

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between cultural competence and intergroup conflict in the multinational oil companies in Nigeria.

The above table showed a negative and significant relationship between cultural competence and intergroup conflict with a rho value of -0.715. This indicated that there is a 71.5% explanation of the relationship between both variables, while 28.5% are

explained by other variables not considered in this relationship. However, this statement is true as the level of significance of 0.003 is lesser than 0.05, therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, and its alternative form accepted.

Test of Hypothesis Two

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between cultural conflict and intrapersonal conflict.

Table 3: Correlation Results

			Competence	Intrapersonal
Spearman's rho	Competence	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.665**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.007
		N	35	35
	Intrapersonal	Correlation Coefficient	-.665**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.
		N	35	35

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Research Data, 2020

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between cultural competence and intrapersonal conflict in the multinational oil companies in Nigeria.

The above table showed a negative and significant relationship between cultural competence and intrapersonal conflict with a rho value of -0.665. This indicates that there is 66.5% explanation of the relationship between both variables, while 33.5% are explained by other variables not considered in this relationship. However, this statement is true as the

level of significance of 0.007 is lesser than 0.05, therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, and its alternative form accepted.

Discussion of Findings

Association between Cultural Competence and Intrapersonal Conflict

There is a negative and significant relationship between cultural competence and intrapersonal conflict in the multinational oil companies in Nigeria.

Cultural competence can be defined as a set of academic, experiential and interpersonal skills that allow individuals and systems to increase their understanding and appreciation of cultural differences and similarities within, among and between groups (Jansen & Zanoni, 2005). Therefore, becoming culturally competent requires the ability to draw on the values, traditions and customs of other cultural groups, to work with knowledgeable persons from other cultures, and shape service delivery to meet patients' social, cultural and linguistic needs by developing targeted interventions and other supports (Betancourt et al., 2002).

An individual can be faced with three types of incompatible goals (Luthans, 2008; Maher, 2004). As proposed by Elmagri (2002) cultural competence allows the worker to be well defined and compatible to organizational goals and in relation to his/her personal goals: Thus;

- Cultural competence shows and gives employees a sense of work compatibility that reduces work frustration.
- The presence of this perceived compatibility creates a platform for reduced frustration, which also eliminates intrapersonal conflict.
- Therefore, cultural competence reduces intrapersonal conflict.

Association between Cultural Competence and Intergroup Conflict

There is a negative and significant relationship between cultural competence and intergroup conflict in the multinational oil companies in Nigeria.

Cultural competence is defined as perceived ability, skill and expertise within a work area of cultural backgrounds and specialization and the ability to interpret and perceive patterns and conduct forward reasoning (Ibrahim & Ribbers, 2009). This ability gives one the openness and the willingness to share information based upon transparency and equity (Ibrahim & Ribbers, 2009). Chen and Chang (2010)

stated that competence was firm-specific and was dependent upon employee interaction. Without interaction, competence was only potential and was hidden within the organization. Therefore;

- Cultural competence encourages the learning of shared values and the facilitation of intergroup cohesiveness in an organization.
- Cultural competence decreases intergroup conflict through its resultant group cohesiveness.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the summary of findings, the following conclusion was made. The study concluded that cultural competence contributes negatively and significantly to intergroup conflict and intrapersonal conflict in the multinational oil companies in Nigeria.

This suggested that the capacity to draw on the inherent characteristics of other social gatherings, to work with people from different societies based on merit, and even shape administration conveyance to meet others' cultural, social and semantic needs by creating focused mediations has a negative and significant relationship with intergroup, intragroup, interpersonal and intrapersonal conflict. Therefore concluding that an increase in cultural competence amongst employees results in a decrease in intergroup and intrapersonal conflict in an organization.

From the conclusion above the following recommendations were made.

- It was recommended that multinational oil companies should develop an enabling environment to enhance the propensity of employees to value culture personally and interpersonally thereby boosting a deeper sense of interconnectedness and harmony; likely prerequisites for greater cohesiveness and ultimately productivity and sustainability.
- Organizations should enhance cultural competence as this will build confidence in the employees on all organizational processes, and

this in turn will enable the workers share common understanding that will reduce intrapersonal and intergroup conflict in all their work endeavours.

- Furthermore, greater emphasis should be placed on creating an atmosphere of inclusivity and tolerance where employees are encouraged to imbibe positive attitudes towards all manifestations and interpretations of culture in the work place. In addition, organisations should

prioritize the emotional and psychological health of employees by insisting on more specialised support mechanisms whenever deemed necessary such as employee orientation, mentoring, counselling and if necessary psychotherapy. All of which would foster an atmosphere where employees can more freely tackle the range of cultural issues that may have a tendency to instigate intrapersonal or intergroup conflict.

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