

**KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY,
KUMASI, GHANA**

**The Influence of Culture on Conflict Management in the Ghanaian
Construction Industry: The Project Managers Perspective**

By

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MASTER OF SCIENCE

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that, this thesis submission is my own work towards the MSc. Project Management and that to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published by another person nor material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree of the university except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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ABSTRACT

Globalization has led to an increased emphasis on cultural diversity and its influence on personal, social, and organizational practices. As the world becomes a smaller place, the potential for conflict in our daily interactions is increasing. Therefore, the study was aimed at assessing the influence of Culture on Conflict Management in the Ghanaian Construction Industry from the perspective of the project manager. To achieve this aim, the following objectives aided in the realisation of the aim; to explore the cultural characteristics on construction projects in Ghana, to identify the conflict management styles on construction sites in Ghana and to identify the key effect of culture on the management of conflict in the Ghanaian Construction Industry. Using a purposive sampling, project managers were identified to aid in the collection of data for the research. The study used analytical tools such as relative importance index, one sample t-test and mean score ranking. After analysing the data, it was revealed that, I want to have all issues openly discussed was the only cultural characteristics that was not familiar to Ghanaian project managers. It meant that all the other cultural characteristics one way or the other was familiar to them. Again, emotional expression, avoiding and compromising were somehow not a good conflict management style used by project managers in Ghana. Notwithstanding, the relative importance proved that they were important as conflict management styles as they ranked from fourth to sixth on the table. The study also identified five challenging effects which are predicting the outcome of the conflict, communication problems, concern for self, prejudice in solving cases and decrease in productivity. The study recommended that; project managers treat every worker right devoid of the cultural background of the person. a recommendation also goes to project managers who dominate and neglect conflicts to desist from it as it does not bring any good results.

Keywords: Culture, Conflict, Influence, Management, Project manager, Ghana.

DEDICATION

The work is dedicated to God and my mother

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The increased emphasis on cultural diversity and its associated influence on personal, social and organizational practices is the result of Globalization. The probability for conflict in our daily interactions is increasing largely as the world turns to become a better place (Kaushal and Kwantes, 2006). Cultural influence on the behaviour of resolving conflict management has proved that collectivism and individualism has a major influence on the style a person chooses in resolving that particular conflict (ibid). An examination was conducted by Bond et al. (2004) to confirm the assessment measured by the Social Axiom Survey on the degree our social beliefs can push the power with which we predict a set a value, and also the way of explaining social behaviour through Schwartz' Value Survey (1992) of the choice of conflict management style to go with. Conflict happens to be one commonest facet of human life. Often viewed as difference in interests, motivations, the misalignment of goals, or actions, between two parties that can be real or only perceived to exist are the causes of conflict (Taylor and Moghaddam, 1994). In any form of occurrence like difference of opinion, harsh words, or a form of direct action taken to resolve competing goals, conflict has a larger aspect of an individual's life. However, the social culture has been identified as the catalyst to the process of conflict. Several studies have been made by researchers to explore the impact of social culture on the diverse ways of handling interpersonal interactions (Kaushal and Kwantes, 2006; Leung et al., 2002; Leung and Fan, 1997).

Beliefs and cognitions are 'the things people perceive and know' and the 'shared beliefs' that make up different social and organizational cultures (Nystrom &

Starbuck, 1984; Leung et al., 2002). It is therefore important to know the context in which an individual develops his/her beliefs since beliefs are learned through experiences and socialization (Bond et al., 2004). Particularly, the subject culture, provides the platform for which individuals see the outcome of certain actions or attitudes and enable them come out with their own understanding of the world and to how contingencies operate. The influence of culture on individuals' understanding is very strong as it determines what the outcome of a particular choice of action, and as well may serve as the path through which culture may be said to have affected the selection of a particular style of managing conflict (Lin et al., 2018). Hoffer et al. (2002), stated that, it is of much importance for Project Managers to acquire different sets of skills which comprises of management skills, leadership skills, technical skills, customer relationship skills, and conflict management skills which will enable them build an environment in which the needs of the individuals are met and does not only aim at its immediate goals. Cultural dimension of management is of much influence in the field of Project Management (ibid).

A team with several different cultural background is believed to serve as a source of higher degree of conflict as compared to a team that has relatively a lower cultural background of members, due to the difference in the value system among its members. The project manager with a strong cultural management skill must be able to manage any cultural conflict and as well be able to deal with conflicts appropriately in order to improve upon the performances of the team members (Mohammed et al., 2008). Addition to that, Project Managers must be able to understand and agree to the cultural demands in the area of work. For instance, the ability to communicate bad or good news and management of performance are considered major skills for successful Project Managers (Hofstede, 2001). Statistics

have shown that for every ten thousand people in developing countries there is an average of only five engineers and scientists; whereas there is less than one in some African countries. According to Furber et al. (2012), professional workers such as Engineers from developed countries will work successfully in developing countries if they are able to deal with cultural boundaries effectively. The influence of culture on management in the construction industry must be addressed specifically. As a result of the nature of the industry however, a clear management and commitment at all levels is required due to the successful changing of a culture or working with another national culture (Akiner, 2014) especially in Ghana.

1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Various literatures have emerged as a result of the influence of national culture on conflict management. These studies have revealed that the styles to managing conflict are affected by culture (Furber et al., 2012; Ting-Toomey et al., 1991; Kozan, 1989; Elsayed-Ekhouly & Buda, 1996). Culture has also shown to influenced the call or demand for intervention by a third party (Leung, 1987; Wall & Blum, 1991; Kozan & Ergin, 1998; Kozan and Ergin, 1999). Although there are benefits that are derived from internationalisation of business, it also presents difficulties to management. There is a high tendency of growth of challenges when the complexity and diversity of host cultures and their addition to intended or existing organisational are not properly handled (Lin et al., 2018). Loss of competitive advantage, marketing ineffectiveness, low staff retention and poor employee motivation are the potential results. Whereas alternatively, where proper cultural management is practiced will lead to a significant improvement in innovative practices, creation of education

organisational and become a potential source of competitive advantage (Lin et al., 2018; Hoecklin, 1996; Evans et al., 1991; Hofstede, 1985).

In organizational management, culture has been given much considerations, especially when managing projects that has to do with different cultures simultaneously (Jiang et al., 2017). The inability to manage the conflict successfully tends to result a major reduction in the performance of an organisation and can as well inhibit the successful operations carried out by the project teams. To many organisations and business disciplines, culture has become very important, especially in multicultural and international project management schemes. The differences in cultures has an influence in the degree of conflict and as such requires a careful consideration in its management (Mohammed et al., 2008). According to Assah-Kissiedu et al. (2010), the things that activates disputes in the Ghanaian construction industry are mainly from the three categorical collective viewpoint which are incomplete and unclear description due to cultural influence, failure of the client to honour payments as and when due and poor financial arrangements by clients leading to late payments. There is therefore the need to research into the effect of these cultural practices on conflict management in the construction industry of Ghana.

1.3. RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1.3.1. Aim

The aim of the research is to assess the influence of Culture on Conflict Management in the Ghanaian Construction Industry from the perspective of the project manager.

1.3.2. Objectives

The following objectives will aid in realising the aforementioned aim,

1. To explore the cultural characteristics on construction projects in Ghana.
2. To identify the conflict management styles on construction sites in Ghana.
3. To identify the key effect of culture on the management of conflict in the Ghanaian Construction Industry.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the cultural characteristics on construction projects in Ghana?
2. What managerial style exist for conflict management on construction project sites in Ghana?
3. How does culture affect the management of conflict in the Ghanaian Construction Industry?

1.5. SCOPE OF THE STUDIES

This research was conducted geographically in the greater Accra and Ashanti region of the country where most of the nation's construction projects are being undertaken. This is because of the need to identify projects with their respective project managers for responses to the research being conducted.

Contextually, the study deals with differences in the values of culture in Ghana and how this affect the management of conflict or choice of a good strategy in managing conflicts by project managers.

1.6. JUSTIFICATION

The priority of an individual, being personal or a group goal can often influence the strategy to use in dealing with conflict. For instance, the obliging style of resolving conflicts are most likely to be used by people from individualistic cultures, whereas an integrating or avoiding style are likely to be used by those from collectivistic

cultures (Rahim, 1992). A demonstration presented by Leung (1987) on a relationship between collectivism and dispute processing revealed that China which has a collectivistic culture are responsive to engage in strategies in conflict management that helped to reduce animosity as compared to US which has individualistic culture. There are several worthy values that can be learned in conflict management from studying problems caused by internal cultural differences (Kozan and Ergin, 1999). That is the need to study this subject into details and how it affects conflict management in Ghana.

1.7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology describes how data will be gathered and analysed through the use of systematic approaches and methods. Research design, research sampling technique, research population and sample size, source of data, data collection instrument and ethical consideration of the study are some of the approaches to be used. The quantitative approach will be used in the data gathering since the study focuses on a survey. The research population for this research will be identified through the use of purposive and snowball sampling to reach out to project managers on construction projects in the aforementioned regions of interest. The primary data is the main instrument for the collection of data. This will make use of questionnaires that will consider the objectives of the research, while the journals, articles and publications will serve as secondary source of information. All responses from respondents will be properly documented and correctly, in order to make away with any mistake made by the respondents. The Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) and the Microsoft excel would be used to analyse the data.

1.8. ORGANIZATION OF THE RESEARCH

The study will be structured into five main chapters. The first chapter is the introduction and it comprise of the background of the study, the research problem, the research objectives and question, the significance of the study, the scope and limitation and organization of the thesis. Chapter two reviews and discusses literatures on theories and empirical findings. Chapter three is the research methodology which describes how data will be gathered and analysed through the use of systematic approaches and methods. Research design, research population and sample size, research sampling technique, source of data, data collection instrument and ethical consideration of the study are some of the approaches to be used. Chapter four is the discussion of data and analysis. This chapter analyse all data drawn from the research studies. Chapter five is the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations. This chapter outline the studies into their respective findings, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the literature on culture and conflict management in the construction industry. To achieve the aim of this study, a review of extant literature was conducted to answer all the objectives under the study. A review of the construction industry in Ghana was first conducted. An overview of what conflict is was also reviewed. Conflict in the construction industry and culture were also reviewed in this chapter. The chapter goes ahead to discuss the various cultural characteristics and conflict management styles in solving conflicts in the construction industry. The effect of the culture on the conflict management was then discussed as the last review under this chapter.

2.2 THE GHANAIAN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Many countries economic development has its backbone coming from the contribution of the construction industry. This has proven that the construction industry is a major contributor to the economic development of every nation. This industry which provides largely the shelter and infrastructure and proper economies as it provides to the nation social development and employment (Narh et al., 2015). Similar to the pattern of Britain, the construction industry in Ghana was developed with bricklayers acting as the master-builders in the organization. A study by Ahadzie (2010) the formal construction processes in Ghana can be traced together with the British. Non-commercial family vocation, wood and mud shelters were the early limited form of construction. The forms of construction in the early days were very simple in the form of a circular shape or rectangular shapes which were single

storey shelters. The circular ones were limited to the north while the rectangular ones were also limited to the south. Local materials were used in all these design cases and was constructed by family members and family heads (Gyadu-Asiedu, 2009).

2.3 OVERVIEW OF CONFLICT

Conflict is a disagreement and/or expressed struggle between two or more parties who perceive incompatible goals, interests, and viewpoints during interaction and interfere with each other's goal-directed activities (Khakimova et al., 2012). Numerous reports on sources of conflicts have been documented (Chan, 2002; Diekmann and Nelson, 1985; Kumaraswamy and Yogeswaran, 1998). There are two folds when it comes to the sources of conflicts in construction projects that are international. First and foremost, the experience and knowledge of the parties in management and construction law are not the same. The architectural, engineering and construction firms that are foreign in the country have problems with politics and law, culture and mostly understanding how the practices of the local construction is run (Chan, 2002). The second is the fact that conflicting goals and objectives set in between the contracting parties and also the lack of project team solidarity. The working together as a construction team and ensuring that the differences of the team are harmonised as well as the aligning their responsibility is the main obligation of the project manager (Walker, 1989). Disputes do not easily develop when the removal of differences between the parties are not removed or properly managed, which may in turn lead to breakdown of business relationships, increase tension and programme delay (Chan and Suen, 2005).

2.4 CONFLICT IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Conflict can be defined as an antagonistic interaction or controversy, incompatible behaviour, opposition, questioning or doubt (Jaffar et. al., 2011). Construction projects have become very complex in recent years and it has been acknowledged that construction projects are tantamount to conflict. A project coalition is formed when construction projects begins everywhere as people become desperate to form it when they come together. This is because people are brought together from different areas many at times when it comes to construction projects (Murray et al. 1999). Project failures arises when there is a lot of conflict and challenges in the construction industry (Kassab et al., 2010). Dada (2013) in conjunction with other research concluded that, the toughness, pressures and harshness that is the construction industry all leads to disputes and conflicts.

The construction industry can not stay without conflicts (Narh et al., 2015). There are number of reasons that bring about conflicts on construction projects. Even project with good intentions also has conflicts. Construction disputes are basically revolved around site supervision, construction information, contract documentation, payment, quality of workmanship, cost overruns and time. Culture is a multi-layered variable. There are three interrelated forms (i.e., work culture, organizational and national) of culture as concluded by Baba et al. (1996) in his study of the American culture in technology management and these are there for organisations who uses information technology. Project management for example have a particular way of defining work cultures. Organisational cultures are subcultures that are gotten from the experience of corporate founders in a nation. The culture of a nation is the behaviour of people in each specific country (Gu et al., 2014).

2.5 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE IN THE INDUSTRY

Organisational cultures are patterns of rudimentary assumptions that are discovered, invented, or developed by a particular group coping with problems like internal integration and external adaptation (Gu et al., 2014). Culture is a powerful, tacit and often unconscious force, which determines the behaviour of both the individual and the group, the way they perceive things, their thought patterns, and their values (Harinarain et al., 2013).

Cultural characteristics can be reinforced depending on that organisation because of the sense of meaning culture has in organisations and the extent with which culture gives clarifications to employees when it comes to ambiguity. Culture gives people a sense of belonging or identity that becomes part of them (Harinarain et al., 2013). Furber et al. (2012) posits that, a strong awareness should be shown by construction managers who are working at places which are cross-cultural. They have to be able to also effectively manage multi-cultural workers by adapting and applying their managerial style on the workforce.

Individuals come into contact with a collection of elements within their organisation and this phenomenon is explained by Martin (1992) as called organisational culture. The elements that are only understood by normally the insiders are jokes, jargons, pay systems, tasks, rituals, its informal codes of behaviour, the organization's formal procedures and rules, stories people tell about happenings and dress norms. They have been a lot of research on culture and people have identified some critical cultural elements which is believed to be very significant to the success of organisations. Throughout the last twenty years, a number of researchers have identified elements of culture that are believed to be critical to the success of an organization. An example cited by Pfeffer and Viega (1999) are employing self-

managed work teams, careful hiring and sharing information which are high involvement human resource practices that mirrors an effective organisational culture. Deal and Kennedy (1983) suggested that how a work is expected to be done and what an organisation needs from its people can be achieved when there is a strong organisational culture. There is also the idea that exclusive leadership and national culture are the main ideas that organisational culture is developed from (Shore, 2008). Organisational culture is very essential in establishing the organisational competence and that it represents a certain way where organisational business is conducted (Belassi et al., 2007).

2.6 PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND CULTURE

A diverse set of significant skills should be possessed by a project manager for example conflict management, customer relationship, technical, leadership and management skills (Hoffer et al., 2002). The individual members need must be met in the sense that an environment should be created in which the goals of the project must be achieved through the skills of the project manager. The cultural aspect or part of management has a great importance in the area of Project Management. According to Jessen in a proposal, stated that the demands for using Hofstede's cultural dimensions of power distance, individualism and uncertainty changes along the life cycle of a project and thereby having effect on the different stages in the life cycle of a project. The patterns of culture in the environment of a project shows in a wider society the cultural patterns. Project Managers are however faced with the challenges of entwined cultures from their societies, organizations and team members of a particular project (Mohammed et al., 2009; Earley and Mosakowski, 2004).

To accomplish this, it is expected of Project Managers to understand the cultural demands of the environment they find themselves working in. For example, the ability of a project manager to communicate information appropriately to team members are considered as valuable skills for a successful Project Manager. It was indicated by Hofstede (2001) that many cultures operate in subtle ways (Mohammed et al., 2009). For example, collectivist cultures provide feedback through third parties, and the failure to observe such acts will lead to a great harm to the project environment (Slevin and Pinto, 2004; Aycan and Kanungo, 2000).

Studies conducted by Prabhakar (2006, 2005a b, 2004a b,) and Prabhakar & Walker (2005, 2004a b c) showed that leadership in project is a unique challenge as compared to the leadership in operations based on data on 153 projects from 28 nations collected. Periodically, in project, a Project Manager has to often examine his or her approaches to leadership and adopt changes to the stages of the project. Leadership therefore is the ability to change from one style to another in project. Other studies conducted by Walker & Prabhakar (2006, 2005) identified that dealing with a team with several different cultural backgrounds is a major challenge as the choice of who the Project Manager is as well as the team is critical from 25 nations on 111 projects. So then, the selection of the right project manager and team has identified four levels of maturity which are; ready, willing, able and optimal. Having adequate knowledge of a person's maturity can influence the decision of a Project Manager and the associated team of workers in a project that has a multicultural background.

2.7 CULTURE AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN CONSTRUCTION

There is dependency on the knowledge of cultural characteristics has increased by construction companies due to globalization. Researches have shown how the various stakeholders in the industry ought to behave and to what extent to behave but the challenges like misunderstandings and conflict often occur as a result of differences (Oney-Yazi et al., 2006). An assertion made by Kwan and Ofori, stated that culture is considered an international phenomenon in the construction industry; therefore the different cultures of people should be addressed with care (Kwan and Ofori, 2001).

The effect of differences in culture on the organizations management cannot be overlooked. Previously, it was thought that the practice of organizations management are universal irrespective of the culture. This thought has been proven wrong as culture differences among individuals or persons exist (Chan and Tse 2003). Management theories that did not consider the cultural dimensions of individuals have failed in their implementation as associated typical of the American theories. In order to function effectively, professionals must comprehend and consider the cultural background of participants. However in the construction, the cross-cultural seems to be limited (Gad and Shane, 2012).

2.8 CULTURAL DIMENSIONS/CHARACTERISTICS

Since culture is an intangible concept that can only be seen through people's behaviours, it is necessary to develop a means of making it more concrete. Culture can be identified in terms of constructs referred to as culture dimensions. Culture dimensions map culture differences in terms of values and practices embraced by the organization (Liu et al. 2006; Ankrah and Langford 2005). Defining certain cultural

dimensions for a nation does not indicate that every individual in this culture falls under this exact same dimension, yet it is an average pattern to the beliefs and values of the whole nation (Hofstede 1983). Dimensions defined form a continuum that allows a framework for analysis and management of culture differences (Gad and Shane, 2012).

Choi et al. (2015) provided a detailed discussion on culture in the construction industry and how culture is measured using culture dimensions. The Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness (GLOBE) Research Program, for example, categorized the world into 10 societal clusters to provide a measurement of culture, more specifically of the countries that share many similarities (Javidan 2002; House 2004). The GLOBE study was conducted over 11 years on 1,000 organizations in 62 countries to investigate cultural factors that affect leadership and organizational practices (Chhokar et al., 2007). The GLOBE study builds on the cultural dimensions developed by researchers, such as Hofstede, Schwartz, Smith, Inglehart, and others (Chhokar et al., 2007). It established nine cultural dimensions that make it possible to capture the similarities and/or differences in norms, values, beliefs, and practices among different societies. These dimensions were conceptualized in two ways —practices (as is) and values (should be). Thus, to attain these clusters, individuals were asked to rate themselves simultaneously in actual practice and how they should be according to their values (Gad and Shane, 2017).

According to Belassi et al. (2007) many researchers have offered various definitions of organizational culture, but few suggest ways of measuring it. Measuring organizational culture is not easy, especially when it is approached as a variable consisting of shared values and beliefs that are taken for granted and not obvious

even to an organization's members. Among the researchers who have suggested dimensions for organizational culture are Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961), Souder (1987), Gupta (1984) and Hofstede (1997, 2001).

Table 2.1: Cultural dimensions

Cultural Dimensions	Eastern Cultures	Western Cultures
Individualism/ Collectivism	High in collectivism	High in individualism.
Uncertainty avoidance	High uncertainty avoidance; avoid risks and conflict.	Low uncertainty avoidance; can embrace risks and conflict.
Power distance	High power distance; respect hierarchy.	Low power distance; value equality.
Concept of 'face'	Very important; self-face and other-face respect.	Not so important; self-face concern.
High/low-context	High context; use indirect communication; not conform to true intentions; diplomatic.	Low context; value information; direct communication; act in accordance with true feelings and intentions.

Source: Vu and Carmichael (2009)

2.9 CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLE

It was mentioned by Capozzoli (1999) that conflict “lies in the minds of those who are in conflict” and is often seen in the form of a discord. Despite conflict connoted as a destructive force, if managed properly, it can in fact be healthy for an

organisation. It will reveal past challenges that were not seen, enables challenges to be addressed and may also cause a significant impact to the understanding of the individual's goals and motives of one another (Rollag, 2005; Van Slyke, 1999; Capozzoli, 1999). There is an inevitable loss of team and organizational trust and bonds and reduced motivation when there is poor management of conflict (Cloke and Goldsmith, 2000; Capazzoli, 1999). A team with several different cultural background is believed to serve as a source of higher degree of conflict as compared to a team that has relatively a lower cultural background of members, due to the difference in the value system among its members. Thus the project manager with a strong cultural management skills must be capable of managing the cultural conflicts and as well be able to deal with conflicts appropriately in order to improve upon the performances in the output of the team members. Scheduling, management and administrative procedures, communications, goal definitions, allocation of resources, are some among others the mentioned sources of conflict Kezsbom (1992). Hofstede and others have identified the cultural traits although the relative significance is not known, they have the likeliness to contribute to each of these sources of conflict.

A considerable amount of research work on conflict management was conducted by Blake and Mouton (Mohammed et al., 2009) and identified problem-solving, smoothing, forcing, withdrawal and sharing as the five main conflict management approaches. Various authors have used their work as basis to further researches. For instance, a model developed by Thomas-Kilmann described conflict management methods. This model of methods included; competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding and accommodating. The survey used in identifying the individual's conflict management behaviour, but also to show that the individual can choose a mode to in conflict situations in order to increase the effectiveness (Kilmann, 2007).

Thomas and Kilmann emphasized that although one may prefer to adopt a one style in managing conflict, the five approaches to conflict management are also available to be used. However, one may be influenced to use a particular approach depending upon the nature of the conflict or it may be influenced by our one's own choice at the said time. The various characteristics are;

2.9.1 Dominating

Dominating is an act of enforcing one's own interest, at the expense of other people. It also means having a high concern for personal goals with little or low concern for others. This approach basically emphasizes on the win-lose intention or persuading behaviour of an individual in order to win the position of others (Mehr, 2012). Ultimately, the dominating style of conflict has very little potential to generate positive conflict outcomes; as it has a higher tendency of escalating conflicts (Vu and Carmichael, 2009)

2.9.2 Collaborating

This is an attempt to merge both parties' interests in order to reach a solution that satisfies both sides. This style allows for high concern for both personal goals and relationship. This approach includes opening up, exchanging of information, and the examination of differences so as to obtain an effective and efficient solution that is acceptable to either sides. Often glued to problem solving, that will result in a win-win solution (Mehr, 2012). A reduction in the potential for an uncontrolled and destructive conflicts escalations, and tensions are the results of this style (Loosemore et al, 2000).

2.9.3 Compromising

Compromising is a give-and-take approach in order to reach a midpoint agreement. Unlike the others, this style of conflict management has a moderate concern for both

personal goals and relationship. This approach is an act of give-and-take where both parties will give up on something in order to break even and have a mutual and acceptable decision (Mehr, 2012).

2.9.4 Avoiding

Avoiding is an act of evading the conflict topic, the other conflict party, or the situation altogether. There is low concern for both personal goals and relationships in the use of this style. This style involves putting the situation on hold, and sometimes associated with actions that would not yield outcome for examples; withdrawal, buck-passing, or sidestepping actions (Mehr, 2012). Rahim, buttressed this in his study as he also identified withdrawal, ignorance, and suppression as the characteristics of the avoiding style of conflict management (Rahim, 1983). In a short term this may serve a deceptive control as in the long term, there can be an escalation of conflict as the source of the conflict may look inactive to the degree that will result in a crisis that is unable to be dealt which in turn can endanger the capability of an organisation (Vu and Carmichael, 2009).

2.9.5 Accommodating

This is an act of accommodating the interest of others at the detriment of one's own. This implies one having a low concern with personal goals and having a high concern with relationships. It is often identified to play down differences as it emphasizes on various ways of satisfying the other party (Mehr, 2012). Accommodating allows point of view of everyone and synthesises to have an agreement and allegiance of the parties involved in conflict, which always produce a long-lasting term solution (Ogunbayo, 2013).

2.9.6 Third-Party Help

I would typically go through a third party to settle our conflict (Ting-Toomey et al. (2000). This type of conflict resolution is used by many managers as the results is accepted by all the parties involved.

2.9.7 Neglect

Out of anger, I would say things to damage the other person's reputation (Ting-Toomey et al. (2000).

2.9.8 Emotional Expression

I would listen to what my "gut" or "heart" says in the conflict situation (Ting-Toomey et al. (2000).

2.10 EFFECTS OF CULTURE ON CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

A project have different cultures of people and organizations and such people have different values, beliefs, and norms (Kogut and Singh, 1988; Hofstede, 2001) and among them can be the transfer of knowledge of the cultures (Miller et al., 2000; Javernick-Will and Levitt, 2009) relationships (Rahman and Kumaraswamy, 2004; Chan and Tse, 2003), and development of trust (Fong and Lung 2007). Several studies have examined thoroughly cultural diversity and its influence on a project. For example, Kivrak et al. (2008) studied through an interview with senior managers the effect of cultural diversity on construction management practices to the success of a project in the United Kingdom. But an agreement to its impact on project performance is yet to be reached. Barkema et al. (1997) claimed project performance is decreased as a result of cultural diversity and Mahalingam and Levitt (2007) argued costs of transaction both in monetary and efficiency terms increased due to cultural diversity. Comu, et al. (2011) also observed that projects with both the

cultural and linguistic diversity achieved better adaptation performance on average although they have a negative impact on initial performance. Miller et al. (2000) contended that, greater creativity, better problem-solving ability, and a more comprehensive approach to problem solving in the long term, are the benefits of cultural diversity that can be achieved (Choi et al., 2015).

2.10.1 Change in behavioural norms

Culture has the ability to change the shape of behaviours of various conflicting parties. These culturally driven behaviours can affect the state of issues as it causes new contentions or cause a delay in the resolution of existing issues. For instance, an acceptable behaviour by one party may not be acceptable by the other party which may create the grounds for conflicts. Where conflict has already taken effect, the local way in managing it can exacerbate the original conflict cause a rise of a new secondary conflict. Both of these situations will be described (Bercovitch and Foulkes, 2012).

2.10.2 Comprising values to resolve issues

Mahalingam and Levitt (2007) believe that conflicts stemming from cognitive or value differences are the most difficult ones to resolve, and can mean changing deep-seated values that may not be formally expressed or articulated.

2.10.3 Predicting the outcome of the conflict

Tijhuis (2002) is of the view that something about a person's behaviour can be learnt during a conflict. Conflict can give an opportunity to clarify the different viewpoints between parties. Thus, the analysis of conflict is an interesting focal point for analysing behaviour or culture of the parties involved. Conflict and cultures are then inter-related in a way that cultural traits are used for partial prediction of conflict behaviour while culture is learnt through conflict situations.

2.10.4 Concern for self

The concern for personal goals and concern for relationship is mostly preferred in conflict management as the two measures for handling conflict. Thomas and Kilmann (2007) suggested that there is the desire to satisfy one's self and that of others. This suggestion was adopted by Rahim (1983). In managing the conflict, the parties will be concerned about themselves and how the ruling will favour them instead of solving it amicably.

2.10.5 Communication problems

Differences in language can be a major source of communication problems since language is the most vital channels of communication and is often used to distinguish one culture from another (Walker et al. 2003). A common theme that was identified from analysis of the interviews was the issues concerning communication. The difference in language were identified to be the major limitation to effective communication. It is asserted that this problem can cripple down businesses and thus reducing productivity. A comment made by a manager stated that communication is the most affected management practice by cross cultural diversity. Another manager commented that although language gives a clear cultural difference, patience however can be an intriguing regard and trying to communicate on both sides is important for success. The influence often depends on the personal beliefs of those involved as to whether it is positive or negative'' (Kivrak et al., 2008).

2.10.6 Decrease in productivity

Working with different cultures on a project can result in several serious problems. Where it is inappropriately managed can result in a low output and failure of projects. Some other major challenges that project managers may face in with different cultures includes the challenge of dealing with coordination and control

issues, maintaining a rich communication, and developing and maintaining team cohesiveness (Marquardt and Horvath, 2001).

2.10.7 Prejudice in solving cases

Prejudices are remarked also as a serious problem in organizations. If people have some prejudices about others having different cultural backgrounds, this can also lead to serious conflicts (Kivrak et al., 2008).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the quest to examine the Influence of Culture on Conflict Management in the Ghanaian Construction Industry from the Project Managers Perspective, it is important to obtain adequate information that will inform the conclusions and recommendation to be made upon analyzing. The focus of the study is however on the construction industry of Ghana. Unlike the previous chapter which allowed for discussions and reviewing of literatures, this chapter will show how relevant data and its collection will be carried out. In a summary, this chapter will explore the methods of the research as it clearly indicates how scientifically the research will be done. It reveals the whole methods through which the pertinent problems that will be raised by the aim and objectives will be addressed with the necessary approaches, designs, tools and methods as well as the collection, analysis and presentation of primary data collected. It also describes how the collected data will be treated as well as how it will contribute to the influence of culture on conflict management in the construction industry. In totality, this chapter describes vividly the systematic way the research problems are to be solved employing various ways as the data analytical method which will be used in the analyzing of data and also the determination of the population sample and size.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

The research approach undertaken by any researcher is either to aid the researcher in theory testing or theory building (Saunders et al., 2009). The right approach should be chosen in any research work. There exist two types of approaches in research and

they are deductive research and inductive research approaches (Babbie and Halley, 2008). Deductive approach deals with gathering facts to deduce hypothesis from theory and connected to the positivist paradigm (Gill and Johnson, 2010). Inductive approach builds theory by analysing collected data and giving explanation on the results acquired (Crowther and Lancaster, 2009). This research chooses the deductive research approach as it gathers literature to test a hypothesis.

3.3 RESEARCH STRATEGY

Research strategy particularly tackles the approach that is adopted in this research. It shows which strategy was adopted, the type of research design, the reasons for the choices made and the research process. This section also describes the traditional research strategies and the reasons for which it was selected for this particular research. Finally, this section will justify the strategy that was adopted for this research.

3.3.1 Quantitative Research

A research strategy that emphasizes on the measurement and quantification in the collection and analysis of data is referred to as quantitative research (Bryman, 2004). It entails a deductive approach to the relationship between theory and research, in which the accent is placed on the testing of theories.

This research adopted the quantitative research approach as it follows a deductive approach in respect to theories and is also concerned with the design measurement and sampling (Naoum, 2002 cited by Asah-Kissiedu, 2009). The strategy makes a great use of statistical techniques in order to identify the facts and casual relationships in the data obtained. The quantitative research is as well objective in its nature and is based on the testing of hypothesis or theory composed of variables

(Naoum 2002). Frechtling and Sharp (1997) as cited by Naoum (2002), characterised questionnaires, tests and existing databases as the commonest data collection techniques used in quantitative research. The quantitative research is used for difficult and reliable data collection and as such emphasizes often on quantification as it allows for large data collection and representation. This implies the results of a quantitative research can be generalized to a wider population within an acceptable error limits. The study therefore chose this strategy for the study.

3.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLE SIZE

3.4.1 Population Definition

The selection of the respondents was limited to project managers on construction projects with relevant work experience of five years and above in the Greater Accra and Ashanti Region of the country. The basis for this selection of population was because these group of professionals are well established firms that have their offices easily to be identified and as well their exposure to cost management practices due to the nature projects they undertake.

3.4.2 Sampling Method and Sample Size

The non-probability and probability sample are the two main sampling methods (Page and Meyer, 2000). The probability samples are used in generalizing the findings, whereas the non-probability samples are used in generating ideas (Page and Meyer, 2000). The commonly used non-probability sampling methods are: judgmental, quota, purposive, snowball and convenience sampling (Page and Meyer, 2000).

The purposive sampling technique and the snowball sampling technique however will be used for this research to obtain a total sample size for the work. The

purposive sampling technique, a non-probability sampling technique was used to identify the key respondents that is the project managers. This was because the researcher needed a category of respondents with adequate experience in construction projects and as such had encountered some level of culture and conflict management, to respond or answer the questionnaires. This sampling technique allowed for the selection of project managers from the two dominating are; Greater Accra and Ashanti Region in well-known and reputable construction companies as the researcher believed that they were representative to the population of interest and could provide adequate practical and convincing answers to the questions asked.

Also, the snowball sampling technique was used to select construction projects that are currently operating in the Kumasi and Accra metropolis. The snowball sampling was used to identify construction projects from site to site that are relevant to the study. This sample technique was used after initially contacting a few potential respondents (project managers) operating in the metropolis for questionnaire administration and when the process was concluded they were expected to provide names and nature of other projects, within the area of study so that the sample size will be reduced with less costs. A sample of Fifty (50) project managers were used for the analysis.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION AND INSTRUMENTATION

3.5.1 Questionnaire Design

Frazer and Lawley (2000), defined a questionnaire as a formalized set of questions that aids in soliciting information from individuals and others willing and able to provide. A questionnaire provides instruction for its completion, alternatives in response where appropriate and well as the specific means for recording their

responses. They also identified mail questionnaire; personally, administered questionnaire; telephone questionnaire; and internet questionnaire as the four main methods for questionnaire administration (Frazer and Lawley, 2000). The questions that are developed in the questionnaire could either be open-ended, close-ended or a mixture of the two (Frazer and Lawley, 2000; Oppenheim, 1992), on the basis of the outcome expected.

In order to achieve the aims and objectives of the research a detailed close-ended questionnaire was developed based on the stated objectives of the study. The questionnaire included five parts, part one was made up of four questions on general background and information on respondent, part two had questions on the characteristics on construction projects in a Likert scale, part three also had conflict management styles used by project managers on a likert scale of five, part four also having a likert scale of five with the question on the key effects of culture on the management of conflict in the construction industry and the last part contained some of the measures that can be put in place to improve conflict management in the midst of different cultures which was open ended.

The aim to the developed questionnaire was to obtain from the respondents the various answers to the objectives set as it was developed mainly, with respect to the stated objectives of the study, with the help of the thorough literature review done on the topic. The likert scale with scores ranging from 1-5 was also used.

3.5.2 Instrument Administration

The questionnaires were self-administered by hand delivery by the researcher to professionals on the construction projects that is the project managers to respond to the questions adequately. Some of the questionnaires were retrieved instantly while the rest were retrieved two weeks after their administration.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

The amount of data collected was very large and as such the need for reviewing methods thoroughly had to be conducted in order to adopt a proper tool for analysing. This section deals with two major issues thus the; processes and analysis of the quantitative data collected. At the concluding part of the section, it provides a summary of the methods adopted.

In relation to the above, the collected data from respondents were processed using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS version 23) and Microsoft Excel for the organization of the data presentation, description and analysis. The Relative Importance Index is the tool employed for the analysis as it clearly reveals the outcome of various the factors within a specific method or strategy and means.

3.6.1 Mean Score Ranking

The relative importance index was used to analyse some of the data by computing to deduce their rankings as below. The agreement or disagreement of the respondents to data was looked at. A five-point Likert scale rating was used against the statements made by the respondents and were combined and converted to deduce the Mean Score (MS) by the formula:

$$MS = \frac{\sum (f \times s)}{N}$$

Where MS = Mean Score

S = the respondents score given to each factor

F = the rating of responses to the frequencies

N = total number of respondents

The factor with the highest mean was then ranked as 1, and then followed by two as the next higher rank and so on.

3.6.2 Relative Importance Index

Relative Importance Index helps in the identification of the hierarchy of variables. The closer the identified factors value to one, the bigger the importance of that variable. The importance indices obtained would be ranked to ascertain the most frequent effects. The relative importance index (RII) shall be calculated using the following formula (Fagbenle et. al., 2004).

$$\text{Relative Importance Index (RII)} = \frac{\sum(W \times R)}{A \times N}, \text{ where;}$$

W = the weighting given to each cause by respondents, ranging from 1 to 5,

A = the highest weight (i.e. 5 in the study)

N = the total number of samples.

R = ranking

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter four of this research explains the analytical techniques and tools used and the discussion of the various results. The questionnaire which was developed for the collection of the data from the respondents were retrieved after a thorough face to face distribution and checking on the respondents. The data collected from the respondents were screened for errors and consistency of the answers on the part of the respondents. The researcher aims at achieving three objectives of the study. The questions on these objectives were rated by the respondents. The one sample t test, mean score and relative importance index was used in analysing these objectives. The results are discussed below.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF RESPONDENT

The demographic data of the respondents was essential to the researchers in identifying the credibility and reliability of the data collected. To check this, various questions were posed by the researcher to the respondents. The question had to do with their level of education, the experience they have in their profession, the background of their profession that is their occupation and the sort of professional body they were affiliated with. Owing to that, the options were made in an objective manner so they could tick the one which applied to them. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics (using simple frequencies and percentages). The result of the analysed data is presented in the table below.

Table 4.1: Demographic Data of Respondent

		Frequency	Percent
Educational Level	Diploma / Professional Certificate	6	12.0
	Bachelor's Degree	20	40.0
	Masters / Postgraduate Degree	21	42.0
	PhD	3	6.0
Professional Experience	1 – 5 years	28	56.0
	6 - 10 years	14	28.0
	11 – 15 years	5	10.0
	16 years and above	3	6.0
Profession Background	Architect	11	22.0
	Civil/Structural Engineer	10	20.0
	Project Manager	13	26.0
	Quantity Surveyor	7	14.0
	Other	9	18.0
Professional Affiliation	Ghana Institute of Architects	12	24.0
	Ghana Institutions of Surveyors	10	20.0
	Ghana Institutions of Engineers	13	26.0
	Project Management Professional	7	14.0
	Other	8	16.0
Total		50	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2018)

The table above describes the demographic data of the various respondents of the study. To ascertain the educational level of the respondents, the first question in the questionnaire was posed to realise that. It was observed that, almost all the professionals had a form of qualification. About six of the respondents had a

diploma/professional certificate which represents twelve percent. Those with bachelor's degree were twenty also representing forty percent. The respondents with the masters/postgraduate degree were made up of about twenty-one respondents making forty-two percent which was the highest. The least of the frequency which is three represents professionals holding a PhD and they made up six percent of the sample. The researcher went ahead to also find out the experience of the professionals in that various work places. It was revealed that, twenty-eight of the professionals had worked for about one to five years which was fifty-six percent of the sample, fourteen representing twenty-eight percent had six to ten years of experience, five of them representing ten percent were also between eleven to fifteen years of experience. The least was the respondents with sixteen and above years of experience which made up of three of the respondents with six as their percentage. To be able to know whether the questionnaires were being answered by the right people, their professional background was checked. From the analysis, the architects were made up of eleven people representing twenty-two percent, the civil/structural engineers were ten representing twenty percent, the project manager were thirteen representing twenty-six percent, the quantity surveyors were seven representing fourteen and other professions constituted eighteen percent which was about nine of the respondents. The last question put forward to the respondents were their professional affiliations. Most of the respondents were one way or the other a part of a professional body. The ones with the highest members according to this survey was the Ghana Institutions of Engineers which had thirteen members constituting twenty six percent, the next was the Ghana Institute of Architects which had twelve members constituting twenty four percent, the following one is the Ghana Institutions of Surveyors which had ten members constituting twenty percent, the

members in the Project Management Professional were seven constituting fourteen percent and the other members were part of other professional bodies which was not mentioned. They made up sixteen percent of the sample with about eight members. The gathered information gave the researcher the assurance of a credible and reliable data to work with because of the experience and qualification of the respondents.

4.3 CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS ON CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

This research is divided into three measurable objectives of which questionnaires were sent out to gather data for a possible result to achieve the main aim of the study. To do that, the first objective which was to explore the cultural characteristics on construction projects in Ghana gave the researcher an idea to formulate a questionnaire through reading literature and cases on culture. This part of the questionnaire was to elicit information on the cultural practices and behaviours of professionals that is the project managers on construction projects. To do that, the various variables identified were designed in a form of a Likert scale ranging from to five. On gathering the information from the respondents. The data was analysed using one sample t-test and mean score ranking. The results are shown below.

Table 4.2: Cultural Characteristics on Construction Projects in Ghana

Characteristics	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Rank
I am interested in what others can contribute to the achievement of a common goal	4.260	0.803	11.091	49	0.000**	1
I respect the status of other people	4.120	0.961	8.238	49	0.000**	2
As long as problems are solved and goals achieved, it does not matter who got the solution	4.060	0.956	7.837	49	0.000**	3
It is important for me how much I can contribute to the group	4.060	0.956	7.837	49	0.000**	4
It is important for me to have a group consensus in any decision	4.000	0.948	7.462	49	0.000**	5
I would like to play a major part in decision making.	3.980	0.958	7.233	49	0.000**	6
I am concerned about giving other people equal opportunities to raise their voices and opinions	3.840	0.955	6.217	49	0.000**	7
A company's or organisation's rules should not be broken not even when the employee thinks it is in the company's best interest	3.780	1.112	4.960	49	0.000**	8
I want my ideas and	3.720	1.011	5.036	49	0.000**	9

opinions recognised.						
I am concerned about people recognising my status	3.600	1.050	4.041	49	0.000**	10
I do not plan to leave the current company within the next 5 years	3.560	1.163	3.404	49	0.001**	11
It is important for me to save my face.	3.540	1.216	3.141	49	0.003**	12
I want to have all issues openly discussed	3.100	1.249	0.566	49	0.574	13
I am more concerned about my personal achievement than the achievement of my company.	2.500	1.233	-2.867	49	0.006**	14

**Significant

Source: Field survey (2018)

From the above table, I am interested in what others can contribute to the achievement of a common goal received a mean value of 4.260 with a value of 0.803 as its standard deviation ranking first. I respect the status of other people received a mean value of 4.120 with a value of 0.961 as its standard deviation ranking second. As long as problems are solved and goals achieved, it does not matter who got the solution received a mean value of 4.060 with a value of 0.956 as its standard deviation ranking third. It is important for me how much I can contribute to the group received a mean value of 4.060 with a value of 0.956 as its standard deviation ranking fourth. It is important for me to have a group consensus in any decision received a mean value of 4.000 with a value of 0.948 as its standard deviation ranking fifth. I would like to play a major part in decision making received a mean

value of 3.980 with a value of 0.958 as its standard deviation ranking sixth. I am concerned about giving other people equal opportunities to raise their voices and opinions received a mean value of 3.840 with a value of 0.955 as its standard deviation ranking seventh. A company's or organisation's rules should not be broken not even when the employee thinks it is in the company's best interest received a mean value of 3.780 with a value of 1.112 as its standard deviation ranking eighth. I want my ideas and opinions recognised received a mean value of 3.720 with a value of 1.011 as its standard deviation ranking ninth. I am concerned about people recognising my status received a mean value of 3.600 with a value of 1.050 as its standard deviation ranking tenth. I do not plan to leave the current company within the next 5 years received a mean value of 3.560 with a value of 1.163 as its standard deviation ranking eleventh. It is important for me to save my face received a mean value of 3.540 with a value of 1.216 as its standard deviation ranking twelfth. I want to have all issues openly discussed received a mean value of 3.100 with a value of 1.249 as its standard deviation ranking thirteenth. I am more concerned about my personal achievement than the achievement of my company received a mean value of 2.500 with a value of 1.233 as its standard deviation ranking last. To be able to realise the aim of the study, there needed to be a further analysis into the research. The one sample t test was again used to identify the significance of the statements made by the project managers. Using a test value of three and a ninety-five percent significance level, the value of $p < 0.05$ was deemed to be significant with the values of $p > 0.05$ were deemed as not significant. From the table it can be confirmed that it was only one variable which failed the significant test and it was, I want to have all issues openly discussed. It can be realised from our culture that Ghanaians are a little

preserved and they wouldn't want their issues to be discussed in the open for everybody to take a bite at it.

Since culture is an intangible concept that can only be seen through people's behaviours, it is necessary to develop a means of making it more concrete. Culture can be identified in terms of constructs referred to as culture dimensions. Culture dimensions map culture differences in terms of values and practices embraced by the organization (Liu et al. 2006; Ankrah and Langford 2005). Defining certain cultural dimensions for a nation does not indicate that every individual in this culture falls under this exact same dimension, yet it is an average pattern to the beliefs and values of the whole nation (Hofstede 1983). Among such beliefs are the ideas of what people are interested in because these come together to form the cultural characteristics of a certain group. The first ranked which is I am interested in what others can contribute to the achievement of a common goal, the second and the third which are I respect the status of other people and as long as problems are solved and goals achieved, it does not matter who got the solution are some of the beliefs and characteristics that forms the cultural background or characteristics of the people.

4.4 CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES ON CONSTRUCTION SITES

To answer the second objective, there was a review of related literature which identified some conflict management styles that project managers often use on construction projects. Using the same Likert scale, the questionnaire was designed for the project managers to rate from one to five the type of conflict management styles the mostly used on the site. To confirm this assertion, the data analytical tool used was the one sample t test and mean scoring ranking. The results are discussed below.

Table 4.3: Conflict Management Styles on Construction Sites in Ghana

Conflict Management Styles	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Rank
Third-Party Help	4.200	0.700	12.124	49	0.000**	1
Collaborating	4.040	0.781	9.411	49	0.000**	2
Accommodating	3.940	0.913	7.282	49	0.000**	3
Emotional Expression	3.160	1.543	0.733	49	0.467	4
Avoiding	2.920	1.259	-0.449	49	0.655	5
Compromising	2.840	1.299	-0.871	49	0.388	6
Neglect	2.300	1.233	-4.014	49	0.000**	7
Dominating	2.000	1.278	-5.534	49	0.000**	8

**Significant

Source: Field survey (2018)

The table above contains conflict management styles used by project managers which has been ranked from first to the last. From the views of the project managers, they almost always sought third-party help which is ranked first with a mean of 4.200 and a standard deviation of 0.700. When it comes to collaborating on the site, it was also frequently used as it ranked second having a mean value of 4.040 and a standard deviation of 0.781. The project managers also made us understand that they were very accommodating to all the workers devoid of tribe which ranked third with a mean of 3.940 and a standard deviation of 0.913. Even though emotional expression, avoiding and compromising were not significant they were still ranked fourth to six having a mean value of 3.160, 2.920, 2.840 and a standard deviation of 1.543, 1.259, 1.299 respectively. Neglecting and dominating the conflict ranked last as seventh and eighth having a mean of 2.300, 2.000 and a standard deviation of 1.233, 1.278

respectively even though they were significant when the one sample t test was used. The show that even though the project managers do not want to neglect or dominating on conflict issues it is done ones in a while. To run the one sample t test analysis, the confidence level was set to 95% having a test value of three. The results revealed that, Emotional Expression, Avoiding and Compromising were not significant factors meaning these conflict styles are rarely used by Ghanaian project managers on construction projects. The others were all significant, even though neglect and dominating are also rarely used by these project managers.

The findings go with Ting-Toomey et al. (2000) assertion that many would typically go through a third party to settle our conflict. This type of conflict resolution is used by many managers as the results is accepted by all the parties involved. Accommodating allow point of view of everyone and synthesises to have an agreement and allegiance of the parties involved in conflict, which always produce a long-lasting term solution (Ogunbayo, 2013). With these factors ranked as first, it goes to say that, the Ghanaian project manager when confronted by these situations will settle it through these conflict management styles. The last ranked which was dominating agrees with the findings that say dominating is the enforcement of one's own interests, even at the expense of those of the other party. High concern with personal goals but low concern with relationship, approach is identified with win-lose intention or with forcing behaviour to win one's position (Mehr, 2012). Ultimately, the dominating style of conflict has very little potential to generate positive conflict outcomes; rather there is a high probability that the conflict will rapidly, uncontrollably, and destructively escalate (Vu and Carmichael, 2009)

4.5 KEY EFFECT OF CULTURE ON THE MANAGEMENT OF CONFLICT

The last object was to identify the key effect of culture on the management of conflict in the Ghanaian Construction Industry. Several factors were revealed by literature which was put to the test. Using a range of one to five on a Likert scale, the respondents shared their opinion on these identified effects. To rank these effects, relative importance index was used to analysed the data. The discussion of the results is shown below.

Table 4.4: Key Effect of Culture on the Management of Conflict

No	Effects	Mean	(ΣW)	RII= $\Sigma W/(5*N)$	Rank
1	Predicting the outcome of the conflict	3.62	181	0.724	1
2	Communication problems	3.54	177	0.708	2
3	Concern for self	3.40	170	0.680	3
4	Prejudice in solving cases	3.38	169	0.676	4
5	Decrease in productivity	3.08	154	0.616	5
6	Comprising values to resolve issues	2.88	144	0.576	6
7	Change in behavioural norms	2.84	142	0.568	7

Source: Field survey (2018)

According to the table above, the first ranked effect is predicting the outcome of the conflict with a mean value of 3.62 and an RII value of 0.724. the second ranked effect is communication problems with a mean value of 3.54 and an RII value of 0.708. The third ranked effect is concern for self with a mean value of 3.40 and an RII value of 0.680. The forth ranked effect is prejudice in solving cases with a mean value of 3.38 and an RII value of 0.676. The fifth ranked effect is decrease in

productivity with a mean value of 3.08 and an RII value of 0.616. The sixth ranked effect is comprising values to resolve issues with a mean value of 2.88 and an RII value of 0.576 and the last ranked effect is change in behavioural norms with a mean value of 2.84 and an RII value of 0.568.

According to Tjhuis (2002), conflict and cultures are inter-related in a way that cultural traits are used for partial prediction of conflict behaviour while culture is learnt through conflict situations. There is also the problem that, since language is the most important medium of communication and is often used to distinguish one culture from another (Walker et al. 2003), differences in language can be a major source of communication problems. Thomas and Kilmann (2007) also asserts that, there is the desire to satisfy other's concerns and the party's desire to satisfy its own concerns. All these effects are also a challenge in the Ghanaian construction industry as it also affects project managers on construction sites. Behaviours begin to change when conflict begins. If however conflict has already become manifest, on the other hand, then culturally acceptable ways of managing conflict can exacerbate the original conflict and lead to its escalation or the emergence of a new secondary conflict. Both of these situations are not ideal (Bercovitch and Foulkes, 2012).

4.6 MEASURES TO IMPROVE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Using an open-ended questionnaire, the respondents were asked to voice their opinions on the measures that can be put in place to improve conflict management in the mist of different cultures. Their views are expressed here. They explained being accommodating to the views of all workers, giving each party an equal opportunity to raise their concerns, laws, establishing a conflict management or resolution module to serve as a guide to address all conflicts regardless of culture, avoid

stigmatisation, encourage people to speak out, trying to find a common ground unto which all parties can understand each other well, create a very friendly working environment, tolerance, effective and good communication, open discussions, collaboration, creating an enabling and peaceful working environment, organize social events and seminars for staff, writing or weekly reports ensures that workers are more focused on the task ahead since they're supposed to work as a team most of the time, promoting teamwork, peace and stability at the workplace were some of the measures that can aid in the improvement of conflict management in the construction industry.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter five of this study concludes the research and makes the necessary recommendation to academia and practice. The summary of the objectives is first reviewed, the findings are then discussed to make a final conclusion on the research. The recommendations from the studies are then stated with a look at the limitations that came with it. The final discussion is in the recommendation for further research.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY OBJECTIVES

The study was aimed at assessing the influence of Culture on Conflict Management in the Ghanaian Construction Industry from the perspective of the project manager. To achieve this aim, the following objectives aided in the realisation of the aim; to explore the cultural characteristics on construction projects in Ghana, to identify the conflict management styles on construction sites in Ghana and to identify the key effect of culture on the management of conflict in the Ghanaian Construction Industry. Below is a review of the research objectives.

5.2.1 The first objective; To explore the cultural characteristics on construction projects in Ghana.

Literature was reviewed to collect existing literature on cultural characteristics on construction projects. A questionnaire was developed in a form of Likert scale rating from one to five. The analysis was done using one sample t test and mean score ranking. From the analysis, it was realised that “I want to have all issues openly discussed” was the only cultural characteristics that was not familiar to the project managers. It meant that all the other cultural characteristics one way or the other was

being practiced on the project site by the project managers. The relative importance index also revealed the rankings of these cultural characteristics from the first ranked to the last which was “I am more concerned about my personal achievement than the achievement of my company”. The outcome of the objective was the realization that, only one cultural characteristic was unfamiliar to project managers as that factor failed under the one sample t test. This factor was “I want to have all issues openly discussed was the only cultural characteristics”. It meant that all the other cultural characteristics one way or the other were familiar to the project managers and being practiced on a daily basis on the site.

5.2.2 The second objective; To identify the conflict management styles on construction sites in Ghana.

To achieve the objective stated above, existing literature on the conflict management styles of project managers were reviewed. A questionnaire was developed so as to collect data from respondents. After screening of the data, mean score ranking and one sample t test were conducted on the factors. It revealed that, emotional expression, avoiding and compromising were somehow not a good conflict management style used by project managers in Ghana. Notwithstanding, the relative importance proved that they were important as conflict management styles as they ranked from fourth to sixth on the table. It was also good to note that, neglect and dominating were the last ranked but was still significant revealing that, these styles are used somehow by the project managers.

5.2.3 The third objective; To identify the key effect of culture on the management of conflict in the Ghanaian Construction Industry.

The last objective was aimed at gathering information from the project managers on how they could aid the researcher in ranking some identified effects that culture has

on conflict management. With the use of a Likert scale questionnaire ranging from one to five, the effects were rated by the managers. To achieve our goal, the relative importance index was used to analyse these effects. The results showed that, the five most challenging effects were predicting the outcome of the conflict, communication problems, concern for self, prejudice in solving cases and decrease in productivity. The last two ranked were comprising values to resolve issues and change in behavioural norms which by all means does not make them unimportant.

5.3 CONCLUSION

Globalization has led to an increased emphasis on cultural diversity and its influence on personal, social, and organizational practices. As the world becomes a smaller place, the potential for conflict in our daily interactions is increasing. This led the researcher to assess the influence culture has on conflict management. Using a purposive methodology, project managers were identified to aid in the collection of data for the research. After analysing the data, it was revealed that, I want to have all issues openly discussed was the only cultural characteristics that was not familiar to Ghanaian project managers. It meant that all the other cultural characteristics one way or the other was familiar to them. Again, emotional expression, avoiding and compromising were somehow not a good conflict management style used by project managers in Ghana. Notwithstanding, the relative importance proved that they were important as conflict management styles as they ranked from fourth to sixth on the table. The study also identified five challenging effects which are predicting the outcome of the conflict, communication problems, concern for self, prejudice in solving cases and decrease in productivity.

5.4 RECOMMENDATION

The study adds to various literature on culture and conflict management in the construction industry which is a good information for researchers in academia to use. It is also recommended that; project managers treat every worker right devoid of the cultural background of the person. a recommendation also goes to project managers who dominate and neglect conflicts to desist from it as it does not bring any good results.

5.5 LIMITATION

The limitation to this research is the fact that, not many project managers were reached and also not every part of the country could also be reached. There was also difficulty in reaching these project managers and the fact that not many wanted to answer these questionnaires.

5.6 RECOMMENDATION TO FUTURE RESEARCH

Several aspects of culture can be looked at in case there is to be a research on culture in the construction industry. It is also advised that the research can be done on a larger scale considering other professionals in the industry.

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APPENDIX

**KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY,
KUMASI**

COLLEGE OF ART AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

FACULTY OF BUILT ENVIRONMENT

**DEPARTMENT OF CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY AND
MANAGEMENT**

(Master of Science in Project Management)

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

(This questionnaire has been designed to aid in collecting relevant information necessary for this research for the completion of Master of Science degree in Project Management in KNUST, Department of Building Technology. This questionnaire is to achieve the aim of assessing the influence of Culture on Conflict Management in the Ghanaian Construction Industry from the perspective of the project manager. I will be very grateful to you if you could give us part of your valuable time in responding to the following questions. Your opinions will only be used for this study only and as well kept confidential)

Research Topic:

***The Influence of Culture on Conflict Management in the Ghanaian
Construction Industry: The Project Managers Perspective***

By:

FRED AGYEI-BROBBEY

Tel.: 0263248892

Email: fagyeibrobbey@gmail.com

Please, kindly respond to the questions by ticking [√] in the appropriate box for each item.

A. DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

1. What is your educational level?

Diploma / Professional Certificate []

Bachelor's Degree []

Masters / Postgraduate Degree []

PhD []

Others, specify

2. How many years of working experience do you have in the field of construction?

1 – 5 years []

6 - 10 years []

10 – 15 years []

15 years and above []

3. What is your professional background?

Architect []

Civil/Structural Engineer []

Project Manager []

Quantity Surveyor []

Others, (please specify)

4. Which professional body are you affiliated to?

Ghana Institute of Architects []

Ghana Institutions of Surveyors []

Ghana Institutions of Engineers []

Project Management Professional []

Others (please specify)

B. CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS ON CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

1. Please rate the following objective of the cultural characteristics on construction projects by ticking once (✓) as appropriate for the following in order of degree of agreement. **KEY: 1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree**

Item	Cultural characteristics	Rankings				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	I am more concerned about my personal achievement than the achievement of my company.					
2	I want to have all issues openly discussed.					
3	I want my ideas and opinions recognised.					
4	I would like to play a major part in decision making.					
5	It is important for me to save my face.					
6	I am concerned about giving other people equal opportunities to raise their voices and opinions					
7	It is important for me to have a group consensus in any decision					
8	As long as problems are solved and goals achieved, it does not matter who got the solution					
9	I am concerned about people recognising my status					
10	I respect the status of other people					
11	It is important for me how much I can contribute to the group					
12	I am interested in what others can contribute to the achievement of a common goal					
13	I do not plan to leave the current company within the next 5 years					
14	A company's or organisation's rules should not be broken not even when the employee thinks it is in the company's best interest					

C. CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES ON CONSTRUCTION SITES

2. Please rate the following objective of conflict management styles used by project managers by ticking once (✓) as appropriate for the following in order of degree of agreement. **KEY: 1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree**

Item	Conflict Management Styles	Rankings				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	Dominating					
2	Collaborating					
3	Compromising					
4	Avoiding					
5	Accommodating					
6	Third-Party Help					
7	Neglect					
8	Emotional Expression					

D. KEY EFFECT OF CULTURE ON THE MANAGEMENT OF CONFLICT

3. Please rate the following objective of the key effects of culture on the management of conflict in the construction industry by ticking once (✓) as appropriate for the following in order of degree of agreement. **KEY: 1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree**

Item	Effects	Rankings				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	Change in behavioural norms					
2	Comprising values to resolve issues					
3	Predicting the outcome of the conflict					
4	Concern for self					
5	Communication problems					
6	Decrease in productivity					
7	Prejudice in solving cases					
Other, please specify						
8						
9						
10						

E. MEASURES TO IMPROVE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

1. What are some of the measures that can be put in place to improve conflict management in the mist of different cultures?

.....

.....

.....

.....

THANK YOU