



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Cross-Cultural Conflict

Sukh Dev

Assistant Professor

Department of English

Government College Amb (HP), India

Abstract: A competition has been set up due to globalization and the entry of the new markets has been made possible with the opening of the markets. Issues of cross-cultural conflicts have also arisen in this new vogue due to professionals of the different nationalities working collectively. An analysis of the various research articles shows that the prior knowledge of the existing cultural influence and impact on the cordial relations of the projects must be looked into steps like the training on acquiring the skills in working and in managing the groups in the multicultural conditions. Conceptual framework, research theme and methodological approaches have been discussed.

Keywords: Globalization, Cross-cultural Conflicts, Multiculturalism, Conflict, Culture.

I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays due to globalization, it is very important for everyone to observe the entry of the professionals in the other countries in varying disciplines to work on the projects. This is evidently observed in the construction of the projects of software development and engineering projects as well. It is currently not out of place to see projects being made up of participants from different countries and expectations of the outcomes are being standardized globally. Nevertheless, domestic projects could also have cross-cultural issues as there are distinctly different ethnic or cultural differences among citizens.

Culture plays a vital role in the determination of the success of the transnational projects because cultures of various types have the difference in notions. It is a general ideology that opinions about the world differ in the people of different cultures and they hold varying assumptions about the life. The cultural or national cultural differences cannot be overemphasized because globalization drive has become advantageous at international level in most of the parts in the last decades. It is necessary for the companies to consider the cultural concepts in their routine business to operate it successfully in the global marketplace. Value, attitude or perception and behavioral customs influence the environments that have distinct varieties across the individuals in the teams or at the workplaces. This results into conflicts due to misreading and misinterpreting the signs & symbols of other cultures.

Inevitably, conflicts might be obvious to occur as it is a challenge for the preparation of cross-cultural working conditions due to the context-based problems and most of the cultural knowledge is not formally referenced, indexed, and filed; rather Extant literature have shown that these conflicts could emerge due to perspectives of personal construct –individual perspective; organizational culture perspectives and national cultural viewpoints. Most of these studies have delved into one level of analysis at a time; interpersonal, inter-organizational and international; however there is a need to look at them as together as they interact with each other.

In further deliberations, researchers have delved into the issues by which conflicts could emerge; styles of leadership in the multicultural teams; training and communication being a form of solution to curtail the level of the conflicts in the cross-cultural team. However, how the various level of cultural influence conflicts, its resolution have been scarce. Expectedly, few studies have shown the increasing level of

expatriate failure due to lack of knowledge in the area of cross-cultural skills. Inability to adapt the cross-cultural had to do with the variations in culture and language, working cordially with colleagues from the different cultural backgrounds. Apart from costs overruns due to such failures, the dented reputation of the companies of the expatriates could be detrimental to any future engagements with the agencies of the host country or businesses. Additionally, the “One Belt and One Road “global development strategy adopted by the Chinese government, has geared towards the developmental infrastructure and investments bring to the fore the issue of cross-cultural relations .This agenda which is to be carried out in continents like Asia, Africa and the others would not be devoid of having to work with professionals from the countries with varying cultural exposure. It is therefore mandatory to review the literature for the evaluation of the knowledge gap on the studies conducted regarding the cross-cultural conflicts management specifically with Asia. The insights derived intend to help set an agenda for researchers, practitioners and aid in policy direction in greater extent.

The overall aim of this paper is to provide a review of the literature concerning the cross-cultural conflict management in the trans-national projects and by so doing to examine the conceptual approaches, evaluate methodologies, discuss findings and identify gaps which would set a scope for further research studies.

Subsequently Section II covers framing and methodology for review.

Section III and IV entails the presentation and discussion of facts.

Research gaps, further research and conclusion are covered in Section V.

II. FRAMING AND METHODOLOGY FOR REVIEW

A. Culture and Conflicts

There hasn't been any consensual definition of culture over the years however varying definitions have sprang up decades past with some focusing on context whilst others give a general view of the concept. Tylor explained culture as a very complex and holistic concept which encompasses all the habits and capabilities that a man acquires being a part of society, which include beliefs, knowledge, morals, art, customs, law and attitudes in 1871. Laroche defines it generally as culture consists in patterned ways of thinking, feeling, and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of the human groups. Culture, in the context of an organization, is viewed as a set of values, beliefs, behaviors, habits and attitudes that helps the members to understand the organization, for what the organization stands, how it works and what is considered as important”. The same culture which is upheld by a group can be deemed as a monoculture environment. However, in situations where there are differences in values, behaviors and beliefs of the people who come from different cultures which result in Multiculturalism. This condition is prompted by changes in team members or employees having different nationality especially.

In any set up which involves the human interactions in achieving a particular objective, be it, a project, organization, committee among others, there is bound to be the occurrence of the conflicts both in monoculture environment or multiculturalism sect. Conflict is conceived as perceived incompatibility of interests or differences in the objectives or disagreement in goals where the disagreement could be with individuals, groups, companies, societies or even nations.

Cross-Cultural Conflict Management

It is undoubtedly a fact that managing a multicultural environment is more challenging than that of monoculture because the former is exposed to more barriers that prevent effective corporation. Barriers could include language; mistrust based on the cultural influence hence leading to prejudices and stereotyping. Other barriers include but not limited to communication, inadequate planning of career for employees and their development and ethnocentrism where approval of their own social group with disapproval to another simultaneously. There have been models proposed in terms of managing conflicts in multicultural environment. Thomas and Kilmann proposed competing, compromising, collaborating, accommodating, and avoiding to manage the conflicts. These approaches are well represented in literature.

B. Classification of Literature

The overall aim of the study as mentioned earlier is best featured as scoping or mapping study. As such, it aims at summarizing evidences from studies, examine the scope and nature of the research activities, identifying gaps and set the agenda for the research in future. Webster and Watson recommend that such reviews should be conceptually structured and based on a guiding theory. Extant literature has shown that discussion on conflicts have bordered on five levels; Personal conflict which is within the person involved (inner pressures) that arise due to other colleagues running against one's beliefs and values. The next level is interpersonal conflict where there is conflict between individuals; then intergroup conflicts, inter-organizational conflicts and inter-national conflicts. This study has sought to know the conflicts in the transnational projects.

Methodology for Review

Papers retrieved for the study were centered on both academic sources (peer-reviewed, working papers, conference papers) and practitioner sources (non-peer reviewed consultant reports, technical reports). Google scholar was, therefore, the source from which the papers were retrieved as it contains academic and practitioner papers.

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Geographical representation –Asia the publications that showed professionals from the Asian continents had Japanese as more represented than the other nationals from China, Malaysia and Thailand. In view of the One Belt and One Road initiative, extensive studies need to be undertaken especially by Chinese researches in order to ensure success in ventures undertaken in different continents earmarked for the initiative.

Research Themes

Interpersonal conflicts: Articles with tag numbers; 2, 7 and 13 took a look at how individuals in cross-cultural teams tend to be exposed by barriers towards cordial relationship with fellow colleagues. Kiviak et al (2010) have found that as part of technical expertise, personality traits are needful in choosing the team members for a transnational project that involve especially cross-cultural professionals. This was realized to help with adjustment and adaptation. Rahim (1983) on the other hand has showed the various forms of handling interpersonal conflicts and went further to develop scales in measuring for the mode of styles. The styles include integration, avoiding, dominating and integrating. Montesino (2011) has showed the differences exhibited even among the same nationals like Malaysian due to ethnicity differences. Nonetheless, Malays and other Bumiputra majority groups have eventually realized that they need to share their ancestral motherland with other immigrants. Inter-organizational conflicts and resolution: Ayed et al (2017) has found that cultural background does have an impact on adoption of the agile approach to the software engineering. Glinkowska (2016) has pointed out that a prerequisite initiative for managing the multicultural teams is early identification of the differences between cultures that already exist and the desired culture to be worked towards.

Inter-national conflicts and resolution: Pauliene et al (2019) have showed that those who have disparities in the values can be regarded as culturally linked hence can cause misunderstandings which lead to the misinterpretation and misperception. Corey et al (2014) on the other hand have discovered that the cultural influence determines the choice of style handling the conflict. For example, the US professionals were significantly more likely to choose the accommodating style of conflict resolution as Compared to the Puerto Rico professionals.

Research Frameworks

The dominant model that seemed to spring up in most of the reviewed articles was Hofstede's cultural dimension and that of Hall's cultural dimension. Rhein (2013) and Ayed et al (2017) have extensively used Hofstede's cultural dimension of Power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, feminism as theoretical underpinnings for their work. Xiao and Boyd (2008) however have used the personal constructs theory as its theoretical underpinnings. Research methodology: Qualitative

research seeks to comprehend the situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Quantitative research determines the extent of a problem or existence of a relationship (Boateng, 2016). Usually as qualitative research seek to explore phenomenon which should be tested in using quantitative methodology. Studies that were conducted solely using the qualitative research are bound to have a void in the body of knowledge. Validation would be needed to ensure a holistic cover in knowledge as portrayed by Ayed et al(2017). A mixed form of methodology is highly commendable as both approaches are carried out in one study in bringing some level of finality in the nature of the study.

V. RESEARCH GAP AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This research has identified the Contextual, Theoretical and Methodological gaps.

Contextual gaps

It was mentioned earlier, there are many studies conducted by the Asian researchers for cross-cultural conflicts management within the continent and then extended to that of other continents where Asians are undertaking the development projects for infrastructure. The success of the practitioners of these projects would depend on the body of knowledge presented by the researchers.

Theoretical Gaps

Although Hofstede's cultural dimension has been used extensively and is in use still. There is a need to develop such frameworks that would be more inclined towards the cultural dimension on the interpersonal level, especially contributing to the Personal Construct theory.

VI. CONCLUSION

The globalization wave is spreading its roots deeply each day and more markets or investors are trying to find the opportunity to exploit other markets or partake in projects in other countries in order to gain more in this quest. There is the inevitable issue of cross-cultural conflicts as a result of different professionals from varying countries coming together to work on the projects. In the wake of the One Belt and One Road initiative, there is a need to review the literature that covers the cross-cultural conflict management which could inform practitioners and even policy makers in taking decisions. For this paper, the various articles have been analyzed which are generally centered on the professionals with Asian descent and have been analyzed on three levels: interpersonal, inter-organizational and inter-national. It was found that the cultural influence cannot be underestimated in terms of conflicts and managing them. Hitherto, the technical expertise should not be the basis for the selection of the cross-cultural teams but the consideration of the personal traits, the training on communication and the adaptation of the cross-cultural skills. Contextual and theoretical gaps were identified which set the agenda for the studies in future to be undertaken by the researchers especially on the Asian continent.

REFERENCES

- [1] M.A. Rahim, A Measure of Styles of Handling Interpersonal Conflict. *Academy of Management Journal*, 26(2), 1983, pp. 368-376.
- [2] C.H. Liu and H.W. Lee, A Proposed Model of Expatriates in Multinational Corporations. *Cross Cultural Management*, 15(2), 2008, pp. 176-193.
- [3] L. Laroche, *Managing Cultural Diversity in Technical Professions*, Routledge, 2012.
- [4] R.L. Kahn, D.M. Wolfe, R.P. Quinn, J.D. Snoek and R.A. Rosenthal, *Organizational Stress: Studies in Role of Conflict and Ambiguity*, 1964.
- [5] S. Kivrak, A. Ross, G. Arslan, M. Tuncan and C. Egbu, Construction Professionals' Perspectives on Cross-cultural Training for International Construction Projects. In *Proceedings of 26th Annual ARCOM Conference*, Association of Researchers in Construction Management, Leeds (pp. 6-8), September, 2010.
- [6] M.U. Montesino, Cross-cultural Conflict and Affirmative Action: Inter-and Intra-ethnic Dilemmas of Malaysia's Heterogeneous Workplace. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 12(1), 2012, pp. 115-132.

- [7] H. Ayed, B. Vanderose and N. Habra, Agile Cultural Challenges in Europe and Asia: Insights from Practitioners. In 2017 IEEE/ACM 39th International Conference on Software Engineering: Software Engineering in Practice Track (ICSE-SEIP) (pp. 153-162), May, 2017.
- [8] B. Glinkowska, Managing Teams in the Multicultural Organizations; Journal of Intercultural Management, 8(2), 2016, pp. 55-70.
- [9] K.A. Jehn, A Qualitative Analysis of Conflict Types and Dimensions in Organizational Groups, Administrative Science Quarterly, 1997, pp. 530-557.
- [10] H.Xiao and D. Boyd, Analysing Cultural Problems in International Projects. In 24th Annual ARCOM Conference pp. 1-3, September 2008.
- [11] M.A. Rahim, A Measure of Styles of Handling Interpersonal Conflict. Academy of Management Journal, 26(2), 1983, pp. 368-376
- [12] A. Qamar, S. Muneer, A. Jusoh, and H. Idris, the Relationship between Organizational Conduct and National Culture. Journal of Economics and Behavioral Studies, 5(2), 2013, pp. 82.
- [13] R. Pauliene, D.Diskiene and E. Matuzeviciute, E., Complex Approach on Multicultural Teams Management & Leadership. Journal of Educational and Social Research, 2019, 9(2), pp. 8.
- [14] D. Rhein, The Workplace Challenge: Cross-Cultural Leadership in Thailand. International Studies in Educational Administration (Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration & Management (CCEAM)), 2013, 41(1).
- [15] C.M. Corey, L.Y. Fok and D.M. Payne, CROSS-CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN VALUES AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: A COMPARISON OF US AND PUERTO RICO. Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications & Conflict, 18(2), 2014.
- [16] M.K. Di Marco, J.E. Taylor and P. Alin, Emergence and Role of Cultural Boundary Spanners in Global Engineering Project Networks. Journal of Management in Engineering, 26(3), 2010, pp. 123-132.
- [17] R.A. Friedman, S.T. Tidd, S.C. Currall and J.C. Tsai, What Goes Around Comes Around: The Impact of Personal Conflict Style on Work Conflict and Stress. International Journal of Conflict Management, 11(1), 2000, pp. 32-55.
- [18] J.A. Wall Jr. and R. R. Callister, Conflict and Its Management. Journal of Management, 21(3), 1995, pp. 515-558.
- [19] M. R. Limaye and D. A. Victor, Cross-cultural Communication. Cross-cultural Management, 1995, pp. 217-237.
- [20] M.J. Herskovits, Cultural Anthropology, 1955.