"The Effects of Multiculturalism and Diversity on Project Performance within the UAE Construction Industry"

"آثار التعددية الثقافية والتنوع في أداء المشروع ضمن مجال الإنشاءات في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة"

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Abstract

Multiculturalism in workplace is the co-existence of workers or employees with diverse backgrounds, religions, and cultures. This paper aimed to investigate the effects of multiculturalism, and diversity on project performance within the U.A.E construction industry, and the challenges associated with it. Multiculturalism has a lot of pros and cons which contribute vitally the project performance. In construction industry, multiculturalism is majorly affecting the overall project performance, and by managing these cultural differences, and empowering all the individuals, this can increase their effectiveness and eliminate its effect. This paper was analyzed using the qualitative approach. Interviews were conducted to collect data from different respondents in the U.A.E. The population sample includes 20 respondents comprising of high-profile consultants, project management and contractors from UAE construction companies. It's been noticed that most of the interviewees were aware of the importance of having a diverse workforce, and acknowledge their effect on the project performance. This study intends to explore the challenges associated with having such diverse workforce, and propose recommendations to manage, and take advantage of having multiculturalism and diversity in construction industry, which can improve the project performance massively.

ملخص

التعددية الثقافية في مكان العمل هو التعايش بين العمال أو الموظفين من ذوي الخلفيات المتنوعة والأديان والثقافات. هذه الدراسة تهدف إلى التحقق من آثار التعددية الثقافية والتنوع في أداء المشروع في مجال الإنشاءات في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة، والتحديات المرتبطة بها. التعددية الثقافية لديها الكثير من الايجابيات والسلبيات التي تسهم بشكل حيوي في أداء المشروع. في مجال البناء والتشييد، التعددية الثقافية تؤثر بشكل رئيسي على الأداء العام للمشروع، وإدارة هذه الاختلافات الثقافية، وتمكين جميع الأفراد، وهذا يضمن زيادة فعالية التعددية والقضاء على أثره الضار. تم تحليل هذا البحث باستخدام نهج نوعي. وأجريت مقابلات لجمع البيانات من أفراد مختلفة في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة. العينة تتألف من 20 مشترك يعملون لدى شركات رفيعة المستوى من المستشارين ، وإدارة المشاريع والمقاولين من شركات المقاولات في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة. لقد لوحظ أن معظم المشتركين كانوا على بينة من أهمية وجود قوة عمل متنوعة، والاعتراف بتأثيرها على أداء المشروع. وتعتزم هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف التحديات المرتبطة مع وجود مثل هذه القوة العاملة المتنوعة، واقتراح التوصيات لإدارة، والاستفادة من وجود التعددية الثقافية والتنوع في مجال البناء والتشييد، والتي يمكن أن تساهم في تحسين أداء المشروع على نطاق واسع.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1   Introduction

The background information has been described in chapter one to have insight into the topic of effects of diversity and multiculturalism on project performance. The purpose of the study was then presented and the aim, research questions outlined. A number of other sections have been Chapter one ends mainly with the dissertations structure.

1.1   Background

Reports by Kolesnikov-Jessop (2012) notes that the construction sector is very important to economic development. In UAE, the construction sector plays a vital role in economic growth and creates employment since the construction projects require a number of workers. In 2008, the construction sector in UAE accounted for 10.6% of GDP and by 2011, the sector accounted for 10.3% of GDP. Moreover, the contributions of construction sector to the UAE GDP are forecast 11.5% and 11.1% for 2021 and 2015 respectively (Dubai Chamber 2015). By end of 2015, UAE population was forecast by IMF to increase by 1m with an increase in number of expatriates which is over 80% of UAE population. The expatriates also form the majority of construction project team leading to multicultural and diverse project teams. This population increase has resulted in increased demand for commercial and residential property thus creating the need for more construction projects. Besides, UAE reported the highest value in construction projects reaching US$319.1bn which is over 51.1% of total value of construction projects in the top 100 construction projects undertaken in GCC (Dubai Chamber 2015).

The project success occurs when it is completed according to scheduled time, within allocated budget and in compliance with quality, legal and environmental specifications to the satisfaction of the client (Puck et al. 2010; Minkov and Hofstede 2010). Hence, quality, time and

cost are traditional basic criteria for attaining project success. Lauring and Selmer (2011) examined success of project based on the benefit to customers and client satisfaction. Nonetheless, project success criteria may differ among projects. Project success is the ultimate desire for clients and the project managers alike. Nonetheless, indications of Klein et al. (2011) were that there are a number of factors which may impede the performance of projects and hence affect success rate. Various literatures on management of projects have looked into these factors to enable improvements in performance and success of projects (Herdman and McMillan-Capehart 2010).

Also, Garrison et al. (2011) notes that some of the reasons for poor performance and success of projects include the poor relations among project teams which result in numerous problems during project execution. Such poor relations among project teams arise due to the problems associated with diversity and multiculturalism. According to Chirico and Nordqvist (2010) the execution of the construction operations normally involves various technologies in order to ensure collaboration and teamwork due to the higher number of workforce involved in projects.

1.2   Definition of culture, multiculturalism and diversity

According to Amanda (2010), culture defined as the perception of individuals about 'practices' in their own country while values are the perception of individuals about how to do things or the preferred 'practices'. Stahl et al. (2010a) noted that multiculturalism can be defined as having individuals in an organization with various different cultures. Hence, the cultural diversity is fostered deliberately and coexistence among different cultures encouraged in a single society or organization. On the other hand, diversity is simply defined as any characteristic that can be used to differentiate individuals from each other. Study by Stahl et al. (2010b) noted that

traditionally, diversity was conceptualised based on visible attributes like race, gender and age. However, Murphy, Gibson and Greenwood (2010) revealed that individuals are also different in terms of invisible attributes like religious affiliation, citizenship, ideology or perspectives, experience, tenure, education level and functional backgrounds. Such invisible attributes can only be recognised after occurrence of interactions between people.

The construction firms which expand their operation overseas address differences due to diversity and multiculturalism through changing how they organize their construction projects. Nonetheless Roberge and Dick (2010) provided that managing diverse and multicultural project teams on construction projects are challenging and extremely complex. It has been shown that over 40 percent of global construction projects have poor performance (Bell et al. 2011). It has been argued by Yang et al. (2011) that diversity and multicultural differences may be attributable to these poor performances since they are a major problem for the project managers. Maznevski et al. (2010) affirmed that diversity and multiculturalism among teams can be a hindrance to the knowledge transfer which is a complex process and thus impact the contractual relations with other firms as well as development of trust. Hence diversity and multiculturalism are critical risk factors in construction projects globally.

1.2.1   Diversity and multiculturalism in projects

In terms of the composition of construction workforce, individuals of diverse backgrounds and cultures form the project teams and work together towards successful project completion. Pitts et al. (2010) claimed that the reasons for diversity in the workforce and the multiculturalism concerns are associated with increased globalization which triggers high interactions among individuals from different backgrounds and cultures than before. Some observers reveal that project managers face challenging opportunities since the world is a 'global

village' where changes in one region can impact firms globally (Owoyemi et al. 2011). In project workforce today, interaction between workers from different regions, cultures and countries is inevitable. Reports by Ostergaard et al. (2011) considered that the development and management of project teams in construction firms undertaking projects require the consideration of these problems.

Within construction projects, managers must appreciate their global context and understand the issues arising from varied cultural perspectives. It was identified by Dainty et al. (2007) that one of the critical challenges that construction firms internationalizing face is to develop practices that balance multinational flexibility, international learning ability and global competitiveness. It was also indicated by Ochieng (2008) that the construction firms must develop sensitivity towards diversity and multiculturalism and the ability to build and manage future capabilities in order to attain this balance.

Comu (2011) wrote that diversity and multiculturalism increases occurrence of different insights, perspectives, knowledge and styles which are brought by the team. Hence team integration requires valuing multicultural teamwork, adapting and using the multicultural teamwork to attain improvement in performance of the project and effectiveness of the team. Nevertheless, linking different cultures of individual team members to the outcome of the project is controversial. Studies on understanding behavioural changes of multicultural teams reveal that the multicultural team can bring necessary conditions, and likely performance implications (Inmyxai and Takahashi 2010).

In the opdinion of Govindarajan and Gupta (2001), diversity in construction projects generates more insights and ideas through brainstorming tasks. In essence, the teams that are diverse teams perform better in terms of identifying problems in projects and generating

effective solutions compared to the homogenous teams. Hence construction firms that utilize diverse teams realize significant benefits with regards to productivity. For instance, Singh (2004) found that project teams that are diverse reported high financial profitability levels compared to their counterparts that were culturally homogenous.

Diversity may present a problem or a solution in projects. Therefore, the challenge is to employ diversity tactically in order to influence project performance positively. A number of studies on diversity and project performance relationships have yielded mixed results. Interestingly, some studies did not find consistent major impacts of diversity in project performance. For example, the study by Javernick-Will and Levitt (2010) reported that there was no significant impact of gender diversity or racial diversity on the project performance although gender diversity affected project performance positively than racial diversity.

Diversity is adopted by most construction firms in order to be more open to any changes and enhance their creativity. Diversity thus constitutes uniqueness that allows for evaluation of unconventional problems, deriving of approaches and new solutions to problems, and constructive disagreement. According to Moore and Rees (2008), diversity drives creativity, and increases the capabilities of critical thinking in projects which is vital for overall commitment and satisfaction among project team. Improving and increasing team diversity has increased in many construction firms due to growing competition and globalization. In essence, globalization necessitate project workforce that is composed of various individuals from varied nationalities, different knowledge and experience in order to maximize the competitiveness of the construction firms.

According to Kolesnikov-Jessop (2012), project team with diverse expertise and experience perform better compared to homogenous groups. In essence, when there is not much

variation in experience, education and knowledge among individuals in projects, then it leads to an understandable environment and constructive discussions which saves time and thus influence the team performance positively. Age difference was found by Chirico and Nordqvist (2010) to impact the performance of project team positively if the variation in age was not much. Evidence by Puck, Neyer and Dennerlein (2010) also suggests that project team diversity is beneficial strategically to construction firms since it increases innovation and also creativity which can impact positively on the performance.

In construction projects, multiculturalism afford opportunities to increase productivity, maximise profits, maintain competitiveness, increase efficiency and gain effectiveness in an economic environment that is highly competitive. Minkov and Hofstede (2010) noted that multiculturalism is necessary and critical for effective implementation of project deliverables since understanding and recognizing of cultural diversity and how diversity interfaces is essential for increased project performance. Reports by Lauring and Selmer (2011) pointed that there is an increasing focus on multiculturalism in construction industry due to the highly diverse workforce in construction projects. Consequently, multiculturalism can enhance project success since the problems related to diversity are minimized through multiculturalism.

Moore (2008) posits that conflicts created by diverse and multicultural teams in construction projects may be offset by various benefits such as positive returns with regards to quality, cost or schedule in a multicultural environment workplace. The benefits of diversity and multiculturalism in the long run may include better ability to solve problems, greater creativity and more comprehensiveness in solving problems. Consequently, Klein et al. (2011) view was that this may be the reason why some global construction firms are successful despite the challenges associated with diversity and multiculturalism in global construction projects.

Nonetheless, Di Marco, Taylor and Alin (2010) reported negative relationship between performance and diversity. Reasons for this negative effect were that the team cohesiveness is decreased by diversity and thus can lead to low performance in firms. In addition, they noted that racial diversity affects the team performance due to the interpersonal conflicts which occurs rather than logical reasoning. Garrison et al. (2010) also opined that age difference of over 10 years among project team can affect the performance of individuals negatively due to the difference in understanding levels and communication gap associate with age. Team performance can be affected negatively when experience and knowledge difference among the individuals due to the associated excessive conflicts when undertaking tasks (disagreement about the subject of task performed).

Cultural diversity can have a negative effect on the performance of the project team because the various individuals may have different perceptions regarding a certain issue. According to Pitts et al. (2010), cultural diversity can influence the individual team members in various ways. In the first place, some individuals may be more comfortable when working with certain people with similar attitudes, values and beliefs. It was also reported by Owoyemi et al. (2011) that individuals may belong to certain groups that have certain values thus prefer to work with individuals who belong to such groups, hence individuals who don't value their category are regarded as 'others'.

Ostergaard et al. (2011) hypothesized that cultural diversity can lead to decreased performance in construction projects. In essence, they opine that the individuals with diverse culture will have unique and different norms, values and beliefs. It is also argued by Anyanwu (2013) that such cultural diversity leads to higher transactional costs in terms of efficiency and monetary terms. Furthermore, such individuals with diverse backgrounds and diverse culture in

construction project team may not be proficient in various language modes. For instance, Inmyxai and Takahashi (2010) noted that some may be proficient in reading skills, listening and writing but not proficient in speaking. Hence, having poor pronunciation can be a major hindrance in effective communication between project team members. The pronunciation differences affect effective communication thus leading to misunderstanding and conflicts thus making advantages of diverse skill in multicultural projects to be impossible or difficult to realise. Indications by Murphy, Gibson and Greenwood (2010) were that problematic communication in projects raises concerns on how project teams can overcome the cultural and structural constraints and conditions.

1.3   Managing diversity and multiculturalism

Successful management of cultural differences in construction projects such as creating a culturally inclusive context where all individuals are empowered can promote project effectiveness and give the construction firms a competitive advantage. However, affirmation by Roberge and Dick (2010) was that failure to effectively manage the cultural differences in multicultural projects can lead to serious problems like decrease in performance and delay of the project. According to Bell et al. (2011), project managers must ensure a work environment where diversity is respected and recognized all individuals through valuing and acknowledging the cultural and social differences of other team members. Hence, all individuals in the project are treated with compassion and courtesy with the endeavour to ensure their social worth, integrity, value and dignity are safeguarded. Furthermore, Yang et al. (2011) posited that managing diversity and multiculturalism in projects encompasses acknowledging importance of contributions and cultural expressions of different individuals.

In addition, Maznevski et al. (2010) wrote that for good performance of construction projects, managing and understanding diversity and multiculturalism in construction projects has increasingly become an important issue mainly in global construction firms involving project team with different backgrounds. Management of diversity and multiculturalism in projects can also involve systemic integration where all processes are considered. In regards to Moore and Rees (2008)'s viewpoints was that firms that are committed to cultural and structural transformation and learning process across their value chain realize the sustainable positive impacts of diversity and multiculturalism.

Managing diversity however does not only include eliminating faulty processes rather, it aims at attaining the advantages associated with diverse and multicultural group by bringing new perspectives, limitless innovation opportunities, learning and extra talent. Singh (2004) also indicates how diversity and multiculturalism can be managed by mentioning that teams can be made effective through diversity when differences in the team are recognized, and there is equal power, mutual respect and external feedback embraced. Comu et al. (2011) advice that in diverse teams, clear communication must be practiced, the milestones and task in the projects must be made clear, setting realistic goals and pace, training and avoiding stereotypes in assigning role. Understanding of Ochieng (2008) was that managing problems related to multiculturalism and diversity can be understood as encompassing three things. For instance providing conducive environment, allowing individuals with different cultures to develop, and promoting cultural intelligence.

1.4   Research questions

The research questions below were addressed

   i.   What are the challenges associated with multiculturalism and workforce diversity in construction project?

  ii.   What strategies can be adopted to eliminate such challenges to prevent defects and delays in projects?

 iii.   What are the benefits associated with diversification of workforce and multiculturalism in construction project?

 iv.   How does multiculturalism and workforce diversity affect project processes and performance?

1.5   Aim

To identify the effect of multiculturalism and diversity among project team on performance of construction project

1.5.1   Objectives

The objectives below were examined

   i.   To explore the challenges associated with multiculturalism and workforce diversity in construction project

  ii.   To identify the strategies that can be adopted to prevent such challenges to prevent defects and delays in projects

 iii.   To determine the benefits associated with diversification of workforce and multiculturalism in construction project

 iv.   To examine how multiculturalism and workforce diversity affect project processes and performance

1.6   Problem statement

Project performance can be improved through having successful project teams composed of members who act together and have a shared vision towards creating the desired outcomes (Dainty, Green and Bagilhole 2007). Evidence also indicates that team integration is essential in enhancing delivery of projects in the construction sector. However, differences among individuals arising from multicultural and diverse team result into barriers which hinder team productivity and project performance. A number of studies on how project performance is affected by diversity and multiculturalism are largely inconclusive due to the conflicting findings (Anyanwu 2013). For instance, some studies report a positive and significant link between project performance and multicultural team (Maznevski et al. 2010). Others found that the relationship between project performance and diverse team was negative. Complicating the issue was that there are some studies that found no link between project performance and multicultural team (Murphy, Gibson and Greenwood 2010).

Hence, such disagreement and inconsistency in these researches raises concerns on the nature and extent of the problem and how it can be investigated. The gap in findings calls for increased research in determining what influence and contribution do workforce diversification and cultural aspects have on project failure or success. Furthermore, few studies indicate the ways in which problems associated with diversity and multiculturalism in project teams can be managed (Ostergaard et al. 2011). Hence there is need for understanding how best such issues associated with multiculturalism and workplace diversity can be eliminated effectively in projects.

Specifically, this study explores effects of project team diversity and multiculturalism on project performance in the construction sector. In essence, perception of practitioners with

different nationalities about diversity and multiculturalism was sought to identify the pros and cons of these factors in construction projects. The focus was to present the opportunities and address challenges regarding project team diversity and multiculturalism to help project managers to maximize productivity and thus project performance. Hence rationale for conducting this study was that it will contribute to overcoming the cultural and diversity constraints faced by project.

1.6.1   Study purpose

The study purpose was to explore the influence and the contribution that workforce diversification and cultural aspects have on project failure or success. In this regards, conducting the study was vital in understanding how best such issues associated with multiculturalism and workplace diversity can be eliminated effectively in projects.

1.7   Dissertation structure

The study structure involves five chapters. Introduction chapter presented the aim of the study and outlined the background. After chapter one, a literature review has been provided to comprehensively discuss the issues related to multiculturalism as well as diversity in workplace. Furthermore, theoretical literature has been indicated which were vital in comparing the study results to those of past literature. Then, methodology was explained and justification for certain techniques adopted outlined. In the methodology, research approach and instruments for obtaining data have been indicated including the target population. The last chapters involve the presentation of results based on the performed analysis and the conclusion chapter presented. In addition, conclusion chapter involves various recommendations, study limitations as well as the suggestions for improvement in future studies.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1   Introduction

Increasing workforce diversity and internationalization of construction firm's demands that project managers must have communicative competencies and cultural sensitivity. According to Modood (2010), there are more project teams consisting of diverse teams from different backgrounds and cultures. With the increasing globalization, construction firms have become more international with increasing cross-border activities. Hence, it is common to find multicultural teams working together in the same project despite the cultural differences and low team integration. Similarly, Schwartz et al. (2010) reported that diverse teams in a project have recently become common and the existing literature has pointed out that multicultural teams may pose a challenge to projects if not well managed.

There are certain studies that have reported positive impacts associated with team diversity, for instance, Vertovec (2010) noted that in culturally diverse teams are being embraced since they are considered to be better than monoculture teams in terms of performance, especially when multiple judgment and skills are required to achieve good performance. Nonetheless, little research has been conducted with regards to construction specific diverse and multicultural teams, and a number of construction firms, although internationalizing their operations globally, have not appreciated the effects of diverse and multicultural teams and are unable in most cases to react to the cultural factors which influence the productivity of project teams. In this regards, there is an increasing focus on studying the impact of diversity and multiculturalism on firms in the construction sector.

2.2   Literature review

Construction projects begin with the inception stage where the client realizes that a construction project is necessary. Then various participants are needed in order to take part in the realization of the required construction product. Ostergaard et al. (2011) posited that the construction process is hence a project activity. Generally, a project can be considered as an undertaken that involves bringing various resources together in order to accomplish a certain objective in a short time. In addition, Owoyemi et al. (2011) felt that a project may be understood as the activity that has a defined time limit, goals and various resources.

 Project is also defined by Yang et al. (2011) as a coalition of interested groups and powerful individuals, such coalition is essential due to the extensive specialization and fragmentation within construction. The coalition may be a supply chain which is represents various labour, specialisations and other essential resources for the project implementation. Since organizations are made up of people working together and or cooperating to attain a specific goal or objective which is impossible for a single individual to attain, hence construction supply chain is also an organization or a multiorganization.   Hence, indication of Stahl et al. (2010b) was that all prerequisites required for effective organizational function also apply to construction, including the appropriate culture and organizational goal. Moreover, it can also be considered as a project organization since activities have specific timeframe for their accomplishment.

Indeed, a number of studies have pointed that differences in culture in the construction sector arises from the national differences which affect the delivery of the project (Joo et al. 2012; Wise 2014). The eastern and western values can shape the culture in the organizations and the management practices. In addition, different culture pose different challenges to the expatriate staff in construction projects in UAE and the support and training given to them by the

construction firms. Study by Hood et al. (2011) noted that cultural dimensions are important factors that have impacts which cannot be quantified easily but indisputable, consequently, inadequate strategies are adopted to deal with such dimensions by construction firms. Hou-ming and Bo (2011) conducted the study on culture and how impacts of the national differences can be addressed in multicultural teams. Their study involved bureaucratic orientation among western managers and eastern managers in project based firms and the non-project firms. Despite the fact that bureaucracy is a cultural aspect, it is just one of the various dimensions and differences that exist.

Another study by Di Marco et al. (2010) focused on collectivist and individualistic orientation of western and Chinese senior managers and how these cultural orientations affect the organizational differences as well as group discrimination and favouritism. Culture was found to influence implementation of practices and philosophies of management significantly, and this was because the management practices and philosophies were embedded with the values, norms and beliefs of culture and cultural assumptions. Dainty et al. (2007) demonstrated that cultural diversity affects the projects in multicultural teams and noted that managers must be trained on addressing problems arising from workforce diversity.

2.3   Cultural Iceberg

Reports by Vertovec and Wessendorf (2010) notes that cultural difference in a project team results in different expectations of the team purpose and how the team operates, especially in areas like decision making, conflict management, team building and the structure of activities or tasks. Culture can be best described using an iceberg metaphore which consists mainly of two regions; one part is the iceberg tip which is above the water. The second part is the bottom part which is under the water (Bonner et al. 2011).
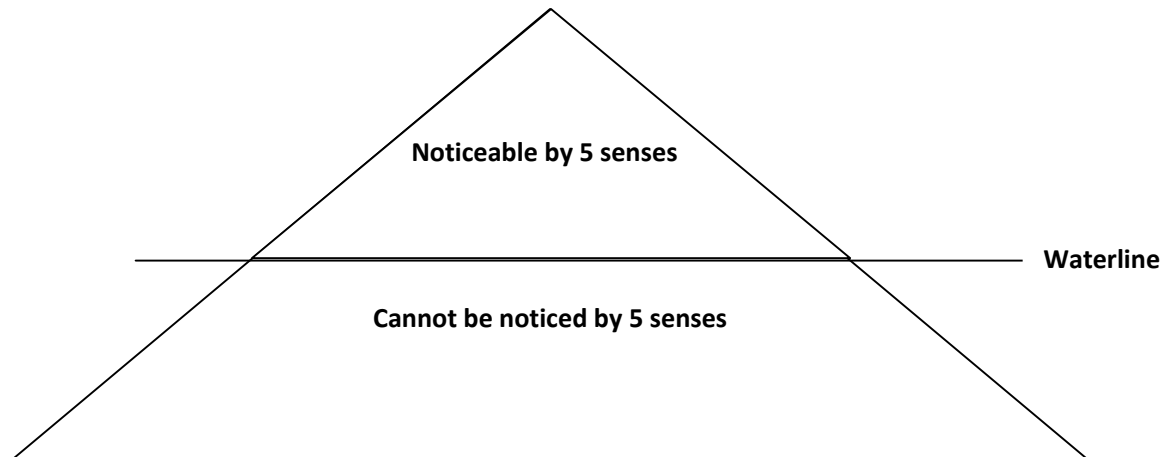
Figure 1: Cultural iceberg

Source: Bonner et al. (2011)

The iceberg tip of culture consists of what other people can notice with their 5 senses such as the spoken language, emotional display, eye contact or gestures. Hence, it how individuals from certain culture behave as well as the general practices in their culture (Hopkins and Blackwood 2011). On the other hand, bottom part which is under the water involves the philosophies, convictions, opinions, values and attitudes which individuals from certain culture share but cannot be noticeable by other people using 5 senses.

2.3.1 National cultures

Minkov and Hofstede (2010)'s framework reveals that countries have cultural differences according to the 5 dimensions of femininity versus masculinity, long term orientation, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and collectivism versus individualism. These dimensions were defined as follows:

Femininity versus masculinity- this index defines the extent to which 'feminine' values like quality of life and relationship building are valued compared to 'masculine' values like wealth acquisition and competitiveness.

Long term orientation- this index defines how much the society values the long-standing compared to short-term values and traditions.

Power distance- this index defines the extent to which culture values respect for people in authority and the hierarchical relationships or not.

Uncertainty avoidance- this index measures the preference by the culture or country for strict regulations and laws over risk and ambiguity.

Collectivism versus individualism- this index defines the extent to which an individual's right are emphasized by culture over the rights of a group.

Based on Hofstede's framework, individuals from different countries differ in terms of their culture, for example, individuals from US tend to be individualistic thus they are different from individuals from Korea who tend to be more collectivist (Minkov and Hofstede 2010). Moreover, rewarding the individual initiatives tends to be preferred in US unlike in Korea where reward is mainly given for working collectively rather than individuals. Hence, US prefer a system that is individualistic while a collective system is preferred in Korea.

2.4   Culture within construction firms

Culture plays a vital role in construction firms, and it's considered as one of the major aspects behind the success of many organizations. Organizational culture is the foundation to a successful business. In construction sector, culture is a critical issue due to the nature of joint venturing, contracting, and procurement internationalisation as well as the implementation and transfer of philosophies and innovative practices (Vertovec 2010). These practices include

quality management, partnering, supply management and IT management from other successful sectors like retail and manufacturing sector. According to Markova and Perry (2014) culture in construction firms is a major determinant of the firm performance. In addition, it also influences the level of openness and participation, decision making, working relationships and communication quality. However culture can render managers and firms frustrated or ineffective when not managed properly in multicultural teams.

In essence, Costa et al. (2014) revealed that construction firms that desire to conduct or manage a project in other countries successfully must clearly understand the host country's culture. In projects, quality of integration among project participants determines the performance of the project and the performance of the individual participants. Moreover, culture influences how the foreign parties are chosen in joint ventures.

Hence culture is very important and presence of cultural difference influences the performance of the project if the project management is not adapted to the complex situations and outcomes associated with culture. In this regards, Klotz et al. (2014) affirmed that project leadership can be critical in minimizing the outcomes of cultural difference and contribute to the project success by ensuring all the team in the project are working harmoniously towards project goals.

2.4.1   Associated challenges

Wise (2014) noted that culture can be a major source of stereotyping and categorization hence the effects of multiculturalism tend to be greater than other diversity sources such as gender, function or age. It is difficult to attain project success even when the workforce is close to the project environment while it is even more complex for project teams that are multicultural and separated geographically due to the different regional and organizational cultures.

Consequently, division of project teams geographically poses communication challenges given that individuals have different culture and diversity. Understanding of Costa et al. (2014) was that for transfer of factual data to take place, various communication problems must be addressed effectively and this may involve using telecommunication and information systems. Nonetheless, since the project team is multicultural, there are many issues which remain uncertain such as inability to communicate face to face which may result in loss of body language and eye contact (nonverbal signs) and misunderstandings (Klotz et al. 2014).

According to Auh et al. (2014) communication challenges in geographically diverse multicultural team can subsequently result in difficulty in attaining confidence and mutual trust. In addition, it also becomes difficult to supervise and manage the multicultural teams without having a face to face interaction or develop relations or confer. Study by Lee et al. (2014) reported that the major distinctive challenges which face project managers in multicultural construction projects are maintaining effective communication, developing cohesiveness in the multicultural teams, dealing with control and coordination issues, team dispersion, managing the diversity and different cultures, managing conflicts and addressing differences among workforce, and handling issues arising from geographical distances.

2.5   Project teams

Project teams traditionally involved individuals who come from various functional disciplines. However, Hodgetts et al. (2010) claimed that today, the project team is not only diverse but also involving members from different cultures and different countries, thus each individual have their own perception of the acceptable 'values' and 'practices'. Also, Kymlicka (2010) notes that, the development and management of project teams in construction firms

unavoidably requires consideration of multiculturalism and diversity and their related challenges on project performance.

Reports by Graetz et al. (2014) considered that the multicultural teams possess different cultures as their set of beliefs and shared values yet they work interdependently to attain project tasks which form part of the goals of the project in general. The five elements which create the differences in culture include language, economics, politics, education and religion which impact on the performance of the project team. Markova and Perry (2014) view was that these factors must be considered to promote a tradition of accepting and promoting the practices and choices of individual team members who have different cultures and come from varied backgrounds or countries.

2.6   Project performance

Performance is an evaluation of the work by individuals or organization or a group of people in pursuit of a predetermined objective to determine how well they have done. Perspective of Roberge and Dick (2010) was that in the construction sector, there are many participants who participate towards attaining the desired outcome thus performance is considered as the contribution of the participant (contractor, architect, client, project team) towards the execution of project task to accomplish the construction project.

On the other hand, Singh (2004) revealed that failure in project occurs when the project is behind schedule, failed to attain the needs of the users when completed, and exceed planned budget by millions of cash. Hence project management for the past decades has focused on successful project performance with understanding of variables which are key to project success. Arguments of Pitts et al. (2010) was that the best performance of project can only be attained

when all members of the project team are integrated fully and aligned with objectives of the project.

There are a number of dimensions of construction project performance such as process performance and production performance. Sentiments of Puck et al. (2010) were that team performance hence can be considered in terms of efficiency, timeliness, effectiveness and productivity. In addition, Amponsah (2012) wrote that efficiency is determined by the ration between input and output while effectiveness is determined by quality of the produced work. With regards to the project workforce, efficiency is the subjective evaluation of the operations of the team as well as the adherence of the team to the resources that are allocated. On the other hand, effectiveness of a construction project team is determined by quality of the work that they have produced and how they interact with non-team members.

Nonetheless, in regards to Mello and Rentsch (2014)'s viewpoints using productivity as a measure of project performance is inadequate based on the fact that projects are both knowledge and labour intensive. Furthermore, performance measurement in the construction projects is also very complex and is task talented and multidimensional.

In this regards, the team performance may be analyzed using three ways which include output, group process and the input which are group performance measures. In this approach, skill improvement of the members, production efficiency as well as the satisfaction with the job is used in measuring the performance of the team (Berry 2011). Other ways of determining performance of project involve cost and schedule control aspects according to Howarth (2011). Performance can also be observed using two ways, which are product and the process. The process performance measures how the process was well undertaken while product performance determines the actual product which has been delivered.

Reports by Gillespie et al. (2012) notes that given that the construction projects require expertise and are labour intensive, teamwork is believed to be a crucial element for successful accomplishment of construction projects. However, all construction projects face an issue with the composition of the team, consequently, this affects project to a great extent. The successful team performance was quantified based on personal characteristics, interactions among participants and interpersonal relationships.

2.7   Team performance and cultural differences

Cultural differences must be managed properly otherwise it may result in divergent practices in the construction projects which can lead to poor attainment of the project deliverables or goals. In addition, Fung (2014) confirmed that cultural differences are also associated with increased tension among project team in their work or routine practices. Moreover, Yang (2014) adds that low cultural tolerance and awareness can be linked to leadership failure, unnecessary conflicts, and delays and even stereotyping. When there is an engagement of a global team in a construction project, performance of the project can be affected negatively by conflicts. There is also a high likelihood that misinterpretations and misunderstandings occur in diverse and multicultural teams. Joo et al. (2012) believed that the miscommunication across different cultures is considered as the most important contributor to problems associated with different cultures in multicultural teams. In the multicultural and diverse teams, poor performance can be addressed through team integration and managing the communication problems and emerging cultural differences. Evidence by Wei and Wu (2013) also show that integration of the team is the basic effort towards ensuring the product delivery in construction sector is achieved.

Generally, the performance of multicultural teams are affected because of the presence of tensions, difficulties in resolving conflict, differences in the process of decision making, problem solving approaches, trust and communication methods.

Differences in techniques of problem solving- Different countries have difference techniques of solving problems hence this affects the multicultural teams (Rupprecht et al. 2010)

Differences in the process of decision making- the process of making decisions has a major impact of multiculturalism in the performance of project team. Similarly, different countries vary in their preferences of how decisions are made (Hood et al. 2011)

difficulties in resolving conflict- another challenge which is presence in multicultural teams is how they can cope with emerging conflicts which result from the cultural differences (Kotukus 2011). Consequently, conflicts can result in the poor project performance. Lehmann-Willenbrock et al. (2011) emphasized that the multicultural teams generally suffer from emotional conflicts compared to people who have the same culture given that the members of multicultural teams have a high probability of disagreeing among themselves with people having different values and believes.

Tension- Project teams which are composed of individuals from different cultures report high level of tensions due to the different perspectives and worldviews in the workforce. Hence tensions are caused by the fact that there are different approaches because of how tasks are done and the cultural beliefs (Di Marco et al. 2010; Javernick-Will and Levitt 2010).

differences in communication methods- Hou-ming and Bo (2011) indicated that attaining efficient communication in multicultural project teams is a major challenge facing construction projects and is also believed to be the cause of such a challenge since the multicultural teams have different styles of communication. For instance, some individuals may often communicate

informally while others are more informal communication. indications of Korzaan and Gambill (2011) was that given that English is considered globally as the main language of communication in organizations, one challenge when communicating is the difference accents that team members use when talking in English.

Another issue in communication is the different English proficiency levels which also limit how they can freely express themselves. Consequently, Ford et al. (2014) established that the problem of communication among multicultural teams raises concerns over how clients and project managers can overcome such cultural and structural constraints. These conditions influence the project operations, so as to develop an infrastructure which can enhance a more successful communication among teams in the construction projects (Greer 2012).

With regards to the methods of communication, language as a tool can be a powerful way to include or even exclude certain team members in the construction projects and hence, language barrier influences information sharing in the construction project with multicultural teams. On the other hand, Puck and Pregernig (2014) maintained that improper language use can also result in misunderstandings in the project. The global projects use English as the working language, however, not all the workforce in projects are fluent in communicating in English. In essence, most of team members who have experience with multicultural teams may not have developed the skills for coping up with a project environment that faces a communication challenge (Tekleab and Quigley 2014).

Trust levels in the project team- Building confidence and trust in the multicultural teams is more difficult than in project teams with the same cultural background. Moreover, Picazo et al. (2014) believes that loss of face to face interaction in multicultural teams makes it even difficult for confidence and trust to be build among the project members. Consequently, when the project

team is dispersed, then creating interpersonal bonds between the team and the project manager or among the workforce becomes more difficult. Consequently, this implies that managing multicultural teams becomes more difficult with the increase of distance (Stahl et al. 2010).

Therefore, trust in project teams that are multicultural has been considered as an essential factor that impacts the performance of teams and projects alike. In addition, trust is also considered as a determinant that can be used to attain a good relationship among project participants since trust can enhance the flow of communication for the project teams hence making the objectives of other team members to be easily understood. Besides, Liang et al. (2012) provided that high degree of trust has been found to be a contributing factor to project success. The control mechanisms and trust are mutually inclusive hence the project manager must motivate and balance them.

2.8   Strategies that can be adopted to prevent the challenges

Increasing research in determining the influential factors which impact the multicultural teams suggest that promoting team integration is one of the most important efforts than can be made towards increasing construction project delivery. Hence, managing the differences associated with cultures and the conflicts in multicultural teams is a common challenge in construction projects. Nonetheless, indications of Lenfle and Loch (2010) were that knowing how cultural differences effectively can be managed is one thing while acknowledging them in the project team is another thing.

Revelation by Blomquist and Lundin (2010) was that managing projects effectively in diverse and multicultural team involves applying tools, skills, techniques and knowledge to the activities of the project and meeting the requirements of the project. Hence, it is essential for managers of multicultural teams to develop the strategic direction as the measure towards

attaining good management. Study by Lau and Cobb (2010) notes that a number of the issues that have been reported to affect the performance of multicultural and diverse teams include and deal with building trust in the project team, gathering appropriate information, communications and planning. Hence, strategic management of the multicultural and divers team can improve the level of performance in the project participants.

Discussion

Discussion

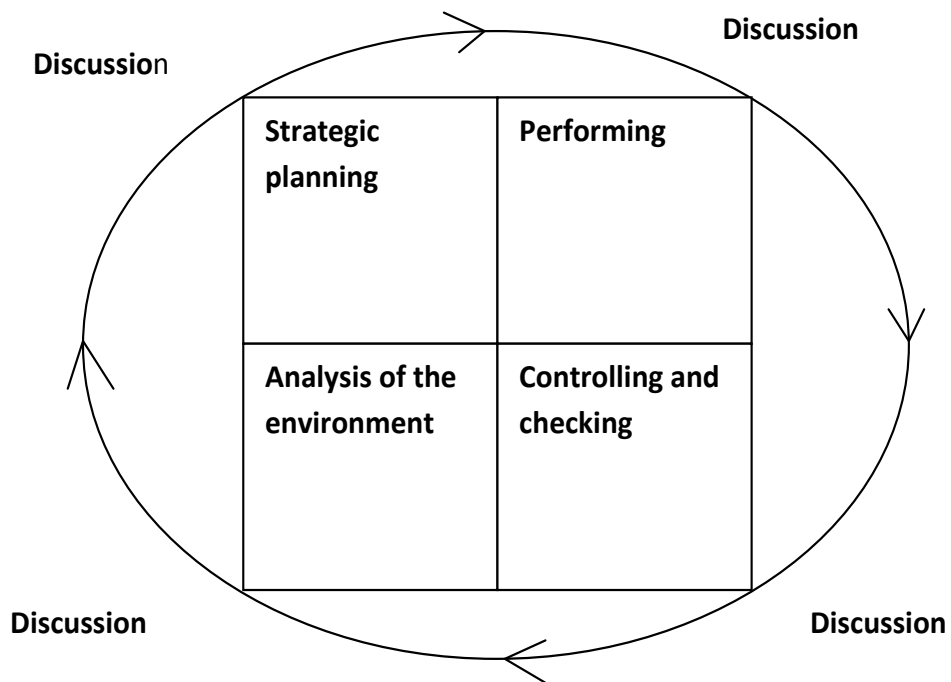| Strategic planning	Performing
Analysis of the environment	Controlling and checking

Discussion

Discussion

Discussion

Figure 2: Processes in the strategic management of multicultural project

Source: Lau and Cobb (2010)

The main processes in the strategic management of multicultural projects are identified in the figure and these strategies are vital in maximizing the project team abilities

2.8.1   Analysis of the environment

Effective leaders recognise the implicit and explicit cultural values present in the team thus develop the adaptations required to draw out the best in all project participants. Moreover, study by Anyanwu (2013) noted that the use of cultural intelligence needs to be considered with regards to communication and focus the project participants on creation of values, providing dialogue opportunities for team members to address their differences and borrow from each other. In addition, Bell et al. (2011) considered that the team must be supported by promoting the development of a common cultural infrastructure in the project where the conventions and norms are shared. Hence it is necessary for training sessions on different cultures to be initiated to shorten the time required for learning the different cultures in a targeted and timely fashion.

2.8.2   Strategic planning

Chirico and Nordqvist (2010) affirmed that the strategic planning must be developed with objectives for attaining high performance in the multicultural team within the planned budget and time. Consequently, the process of planning is critical to keep the project team informed and communicate the project aspects which are essential for them. The project managers are also responsible for conveying information at the right place and time to the appropriate groups or individuals according to the predetermined strategy. Explanation by Comu et al. (2011) was that a regular communication rhythm must also be established by the project managers and they must work with all team members to develop the shared operating procedures for the vital activities like decision making, reporting, and information sharing, coordinating, handling conflict and communicating.

During the development of strategic planning, planning tools such as Gantt chart, CMM (communication management matrix) and WBS (work breakdown structure) can be used by the project manager. In essence, Di Marco et al. (2010) confirmed that CMM refers to the plan for communication management to manage the communication through the performance of the multicultural team. On the other hand, Garrison et al. (2010) noted that WBS can enhance the performance of multicultural teams by helping in defining the clear responsibilities and goals for the diverse project participants. The important outcome of using WBS is the project structure which facilitates the required staffing, delegation, resource allocation and other related control and command needs of the construction project.

Herdman and McMillan-Capehart (2010) posited that Gantt chart can also be useful in enhancing team performance by defining the responsibilities and the roles of the members. Hence Gantt chart illustrates the various tasks in the project as bars which are placed across a calendar with specific dates when they are to be started or finished and the preceding tasks. Such tools can be useful in confirming the structure of the project, assigning and negotiating a specific participant, organizational and team roles, developing trust in the multicultural team, and providing and encouraging continuous communication and feedback.

2.8.3   Trust

Performance of individuals in the multicultural teams is dependent highly on trust. Consequently, Inmyxai and Takahashi (2010) noted that the building of trust in the project team is an effective way of saving time and even trouble or conflicts by relying on the promises that the team has made. Face to face interaction is essential in building trust among project team and can be initiated through a formal session for team building where the facilitator encourage

relationship by defining the ways in which the project team can work together (Javernick-Will and Levitt 2010).

Informal contact such as spending time together during breaks has also been found to help in development of trust among multicultural teams. revelations by Klein et al. (2011) was that knowing other members of the project team can also lead to greater efficiency which makes solving of problems easier when individuals in the project team know other members. Email network can also be used to speed up the level of communication and also enable easy sharing or reviewing and editing large information received.

View of Kolesnikov-Jessop (2012) was that increased use of certain information technology such as video conferencing in geographically diverse project team is negatively and significantly associated with team performance given that it does not enhance quick response to the problems encountered by the team. However, according to Lauring and Selmer (2011) face to face interaction in multicultural team tends to have faster solutions to problems and their identification.

2.8.4   Controlling and checking

Controlling and checking are necessary in multicultural projects to facilitate meaningful participation. The individual members of multicultural teams in construction projects must develop a tradition of realistic and meaningful participation. However, some members may not be willing to share information due to cultural reasons. Hence project managers must encourage all members to share information and monitor their actions.

2.9   Opportunities in multicultural teams

Although there are various challenges that multicultural teams face due to diversity and cultural differences which impact on their performance in the project, Maznevski et al. (2010)

revealed that there are also positive effects that can be attained from multicultural teams. Furthermore, these positive effects can supersede the negative impacts but they can only be achieved when the team is managed properly. Minkov and Hofstede (2010) affirmed that a number of resources and positive outcomes are also associated with diverse and multicultural teams such as high productivity, creativity and adaptability. In addition, there is a highly likelihood of project success in multicultural teams that have high degree of collaboration.

The strengths of diverse and multicultural teams arise from the fact that the team members have different experiences, methods of problem solving, information process, mental models and varied perceptions. Reports by Moore and Rees (2008) pointed that such differences create positive synergies which causes the positive effects. Working in the projects with multicultural and diverse teams enhance fulfilment of members' need for workplace variety, and this may contribute to the improvement in the knowledge and skills of the team members given that they receive and share ideas with their colleagues from other cultural backgrounds (Murphy et al. 2010). Task conflicts which occurs often in projects undertaken by diverse teams with different cultures can also be considered as beneficial in that the different perspectives and diversity creates a unique skill and knowledge in the team. For instance, affirmation by Ochieng (2008) was that ideas can continue to be challenged in multicultural and diverse teams throughout the implementation of the project because of the different perspectives of members and such environment provides input which last longer compared to the monocultural team.

2.10   Diverse teams

Team diversity leads to a paradox since it was demonstrated by Herdman and McMillan-Capehart (2010) that such diverse workforce perform better, on the other hand, Moore and Rees (2008) noted that diversity can increase the likelihood of conflicts. Demographic attributes such

as gender, race or age have been reported to be surface difference given that they are apparent to other people. The non-visible or non-demographic characteristics are the deep differences such as attitudes, tenure, beliefs, knowledge, education level and values.

It was also identified that information exchange can be a mediating factor which can change the individual perceptions through frequent contact or interactions. Yang et al. (2011) revealed that interpersonal exchanges which occur among group members are vital in developing more accurate attitude towards other group members over time. Similarly, indications of Pitts et al. (2010) were that collaborations and frequent contacts can also reduce the impacts of the demographic differences or the surface differences and hence improve the learning in the project team. For example, in the project teams where the non-visible characteristics were higher, there was also higher team learning. These findings indicate that time is essential for the development of friendship among team members.

The individual diversity groups such as informational diversity, value diversity and social category diversity were found to influence the performance of workgroup and were also responsible for the variations in the differences among individual members. In essence, reports by Javernick-Will and Levitt (2010) pointed that information diversity are associated with educational differences and knowledge differences between team members while social category differences corresponds to gender and race diversity. On the other hand, value diversity relates to the goals, mission and task of the workgroup.

According to the reports by Lau and Cobb (2010), value diversity in the project team can cause conflicts in the team and stifle creativity of individuals and the effectiveness of the team. In addition, raining on how to approach different social class was reported to result in decreased prejudice. Besides, Javernick-Will and Levitt (2010) provided that cultural differences also lie

within the social diversity which exists at individual, national or group level. The national culture was found to be a major factor which warrants attention in global projects based on the fact that construction projects that are globalized face the challenge of fostering the development of relationship among workforce from different national cultures.

Understanding of Tekleab and Quigley (2014) was that individuals often identify with their overall national cultures and values; however, they also express these values differently. Hence, the cultural values among individuals may be influenced by social identities which are driven by ethnicity, gender, race and age. Similarly, the climate of the region, population, geographic area and population where each team member resides can also influence their culture. Other associated attributes or individual characteristics like the religion, politics, family relationships and profession likewise influence an individual's cultural attitude (Puck and Pregernig 2014; Wei and Wu 2013).

According to Rupprecht et al. (2010), culture is the collective mental orientation which forms part of one's conditioning which they share with individuals from the same region, group or nation but not with individuals from other regions, groups or nations. Minkov and Hofstede (2010)'s reports identified that the 5 dimensions are stable differences between nationalities; however, they can also be applicable at organizational level and individual level. Furthermore, employees find it difficult to work in projects involving team members from other national cultures thus require time and even training to make personal adjustments faster.

In essence, Korzaan and Gambill (2011) established that difficulty in adjusting to a group composed of people with different nationalities arises due to the fact that cultural judgements regarding the appropriate behaviours and actions are different. Consequently, Greer (2012) maintained that appropriateness can be the mediator between conflict and diversity which exists

in multicultural and diverse groups. For example, cultural differences may exist on the acceptable personal actions. In addition, the assessment by an individual about the appropriate actions that are necessary, determines whether communication is disrupted within a project team.

On the other hand, Picazo et al. (2014) emphasized that when other team members consider certain behaviours to be inappropriate, then interactions becomes difficult in the group. Another cause of different perspectives in the teams is related mainly to the age diversity. Generally, Lehmann-Willenbrock et al. (2011) believes that categories of generations are described based on the time period when they were born hence they are influenced by economic times, societal attitudes as well as public policy and the collective attitudes world views, behaviours an values.

Team members who are younger possess different skills from those of the older workgroup members; hence, situations can arise where a younger person becomes the manager or supervisor of older persons in the group. Indication of Kurtulus (2011) was that the characteristic differences which influence communications styles and shape interactions between individuals of different generations can create a problem for the cohesion and development of the team is such differences are ignored or not recognised early.   For instance, Liang et al. (2012) felt that older team members may expect reward for their commitment such as promotions; on the other hand, younger generations expect immediate pay, promotions and recognition. In this regards, the characteristics differences make the different generations to develop attitudes towards each other which influence the interactions and team formation.

2.11   Team performance and team diversity

Studies that have examined the relationship between the performance of teams and diversity in the past decade have produced similar results and sometimes dissimilar results (Stahl

et al. 2010). The perspectives of team performance and diversity tend to focus on the individual characteristics based on the social identity, perspectives on information processing, social categorisation and similarity attraction. It was also suggested by Ford et al. (2014) that the factors which are not individual characteristics also need to be considered in the studies on diversity and its impacts on the performance and the team.

It was noted by Yang (2014) that performance improvement may be experienced by teams due to interventions associated with team learning or joint interaction sessions when non-visible differences occur. In essence, improved performance creates benefits which may emanate in teams which implement strategies of aligning values or overcoming relationship and task conflicts. On the other hand, Fung (2014) affirmed that the project teams which have not implemented the measures for aligning values or overcoming relationship and task conflicts experience an increase in the overall conflicts within the team which are detrimental to the performance of the team.

Also, revelation by Graetz et al. (2014) was that performance innovation can be associated positively with gender and individual education while the organizational working environment may improve when there is increased sharing of personal information. In terms of the personal perspectives, association training may be used to build the relationships with other team members and this decreases prejudice in the group. Furthermore, Kymlicka (2010) confirmed that individuals who are highly relational have a higher probability of cooperating with other team members. That is, better organizational working environment and increased innovation may be related to the improvement in performance of the organization while team relationship is improved by the decrease in prejudice.

According to Hodgetts et al. (2010), performance at organizational or group level is stifled by increasing conflicts. In essence, the performance of individuals may suffer when there is low trust among team members; hence the team becomes more liable. The individuals who find it difficult to bond with other team members in order to build a team identity may consider forming coalitions which are not aligned to the goals of the overall team and thus increase chances of conflicts. It was demonstrated by Hopkins and Blackwood (2011) that teams composed of diverse members tend to report low social integration and process losses when task conflict occurs.

Construction firms can counter the negative outcomes of team conflict on the team performance through the creation of a working atmosphere where diversity is respected and embraced. Although Bonner et al. (2011) reported that team performance was not significantly associated with diversity; team performance analysis in the study by Auh et al. (2014) found a significant but small effect size. The specific variables used to moderate the effects on the team performance included occupation and industry. It was found by Lee et al. (2014) that task focus and situational context in which the project workforce operated influence the performance of the team.

In this regards, it is vital for the context within a firm to be understood since it can answer how diversity appear in the project and impact performance. It is also believed that extended contract can improve the attitudes of individuals towards other team members. Similarly, Amanda (2010) considered that the beliefs of an individual about diversity in the project team can influence their perception about ethnic diversity in the project team. The early identification of a team member with other team members can increase positive perception about the team functioning according to the reports of Vertovec and Wessendorf (2010). Hence,

understanding that there are other factors which also influence the interactions among project teams and how other team members are perceived is vital. In essence, it can help the project managers to develop interventions that have greater specifications on how performance and relationships in the team can be improved.

The study by Amponsah (2012) focused on conflicts and individual perceptions and their roles in team performance. They found that attribution processes and social judgement were activated by individuals when conflicts increased. Cognitive conflicts were also reported to be related to the size of the team, functional diversity among the team and the turnover of team members. Arguments of Mello and Rentsch (2014) were that task conflict and cognitive conflict can cause positive influences which facilitate the process of making decision in projects. In essence, the increase in trust implies that greater conflicts can be handled by the team. The effects of these interactions include better decision quality, team commitment and greater understanding. Nonetheless, task conflict can create relational conflicts and this can be more destructive.

These studies reveal that conflicts emanate from interactions among team members at various stages. In addition, Berry (2011) posited that complex linkage between performances, teams and diversity exist. The individuals who have varying attributes, perspectives, characteristics and attitudes must interact with other team members in order for the overall performance to be enhanced. The improvement in performance can be also attained by the targeting of certain interventions to a group, firm, team or individuals.

According to Crisp (2010) management of differences due to culture and cultural conflicts appear to be a common challenge in multicultural project teams. Based on this fact, poor management of project teams must be addressed and cultural issues considered. In essence,

cultural issues in the multicultural teams can lead to poor performance, misunderstandings and conflicts. Bradley (2011) revealed that the managers of construction projects from different nations may respond and translate team tasks and strategic issues differently since they have different perceptions about the environmental threats and opportunities.

Although various studies have studied culture in the construction sector, understanding multiculturalism and diversity in projects is necessary (Gillespie et al. 2012). Moreover, construction sector is yet to respond sufficiently to the multicultural issues facing the project team. The construction projects involve multicultural teams with different cultural, political, economic and legal backgrounds. As changes take place rapidly and the environment also becomes complex, project teams that are multicultural and diverse must enhance their ability of dealing with external challenges impacting project performance (Howarth 2011).

Also Hermans and Agnieszka (2010) noted that sense of belongingness gives an individual team member the feeling of comfort and safety. Such feeling also given the project team more options on how to respond to the challenges arising during the implementation of the project and foster innovative measures.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1   Introduction

The methods adopted were considered most suitable to enable accurate findings to be obtained. Hence, for the study to be completed the designed and approaches used focused on generating the data required. Reasons for developing the methods carefully were to attain a high level of usefulness and accuracy of the data since methodology directly influences the process of gathering data and the type of data as well. In the sections that follow, the research approach, data collection, sample and data analysis have been described.

3.2   Study approach

Bolger and Laurenceau (2013) argue that there are two kinds of research strategies that can be employed while researching: qualitative and quantitative. The quantitative method seeks to gather data which is factual and also the research relationships between different facts. On the other hand, qualitative strategy seeks to gather insights and also comprehend participants' perception regarding a given phenomenon on the real world. Therefore, qualitative approach is by nature subjective since it emphasizes experiences, meaning and other things. This implies that the collection of data focused on the qualitative data where the respondents are allowed to respond to questions in their own words, based on their subjective perceptions and experience (Belk 2006). The methods of conducting qualitative research mainly include group discussions and interviews with respondents. This study is based on the qualitative approach. This study employs interviews to collect data from different respondents. Interviews usually present questions is a similar manner to all interviewees hence high chance of consistency and reliability. Other advantages of structured interviews include: high response rate, answers can be accurate

and can be explored in order to find out why certain answers were given (Bolger & Laurenceau, 2013).

The population sample includes 20 respondents comprising of high-profile consultants, project management and contractors from UAE construction companies. This decision was made since these individuals are very informed on the multiculturism and diversity within the construction industry of UAE. Sampling was employed in this study in order to represent the total sample size. Different contractors in UAE were obtained from the Contractors' Union and samples were selected from the entire stratum of the targeted population. Reason for adopting qualitative research was to have better understanding of how participants perceive the phenomena and derive meaning from interviews.

3.3   Target Population

Target population refer to the group of individuals, things or events that an investigator intends to study (Bogdan and Biklen 2006). In this study, the influence of multiculturalism and workforce diversity on performance of construction projects was examined. Hence the target population of the study was the diverse and multicultural project teams in a construction project.

3.3.1   Sample

The sample consisted of project practitioners working in a construction project. The study sample was from different nationalities including Germany, Philippines, India, Bangladesh, UAE, UK, Pakistan and USA and other Arab countries. In addition, the sample chosen had different backgrounds, experience, perspectives, religion, different cultures and diversity. Hence, the sample was appropriate for the study on multiculturalism and diversity and allowed the investigator to have an in-depth focus on their perception and experience on multiculturalism and

diversity. Furthermore, being practitioners working in a construction project implied that they were knowledgeable and understood how multiculturalism and diversity affect the performance of the construction projects.

3.3.2 Sampling technique

Sampling technique adopted was a non-probability sampling involving the judgemental sampling or purposive sampling (Bryman and Bell 2011). Justification for purposive sampling was that it can be applied to recruit only participants with certain knowledge or attribute. Hence, purposive sampling in this study ensured that the sample had different nationality and were diverse in order to attain valid data. In this regards, the study participants were the best placed to give accurate information that can satisfy and address the study objectives and research questions. Besides, the sample attained by purposive sampling enabled various perceptions, attitudes, experiences and understandings about multiculturalism and diversity impacts on performance to be attained.

3.3.3 Sample size

A total of 60 practitioners were recruited to provide information about multiculturalism and diversity to enable various issues associated with multiculturalism and diversity to be explored in the context of construction projects. A sample of 60 was vital to represent the multicultural and diverse workforce in projects. Although this number of respondents seemed to be small when compared to the actual workforce in the construction sector, it was considered representative due to the various nationalities and diversity of the sample.

3.3.4   Inclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria was designed to obtain study participants with different cultures and diversity hence the following criteria was used:

1) The participant must be a practitioner in construction projects

2) The participant must have experience of working in the multicultural and diverse teams

3) The participant must have minimum 3 years of experience in diverse teams

Reasons for developing these inclusion criteria were to find samples that have experienced the effects of multiculturalism and complexities associated with diversity in construction projects that involve multicultural teams. In addition, complexities associated with diversity and multiculturalism which impact performance of projects was a specific concern for the study.

3.4   Data collection

3.4.1   Primary data

Primary data can be simply considered as the data which is collected through interacting with the people through focus groups, meetings, face to face interviews and even surveys (Cohen and Manion 2000). Hence, primary data is new and has not been obtained before given that it is gathered from the field for the study at hand. In addition, primary data also refer to the data collected and assembled mainly for a specific current study. in this study, primary data was collected. Justification for primary data was that it enabled investigator to improve the insight into the study problem and conduct a direct examination of the study topic through gathering first hand data.

Collection of the data included using interview which was semi-structured in nature, that is, the interview questions contained both open ended questions and closed ended questions. Justification for semi-structured interviews for gathering data from participants was to attain a high flexibility when conducting the interviews. In particular, interviews were conducted face to face. Justification for conducting the interviews on a face to face basis was to enable the responses to be probable and explore in-depth what the interviewees said. This was done to ensure that all the interview respondents provide a full response or answer as much as possible.

Advantage of conducting interviews was that it allowed the investigator to elaborate the questions or points which were ambiguous or unclear to the interviewees. In this regards, the interview respondents responded to questions that they understand well thus provided accurate information. Conducting of the interviews was done in the workplace or the site of the construction project where attaining the participants was easy and the interview convenient to the respondents. Generally, each of the interviews conducted lasted for only 15 to 20 minutes. Taking a relatively short time and during the breaks was essential to avoid disrupting the productivity of the respondents or their work schedules.

3.4.2   Secondary data

Secondary data can be simply considered as the data which is obtained from existing sources hence the data is already available (Cresswell 2006). In this regards, secondary data can be obtained without accessing the respondents since they are historical data which have already been assembled. The advantage of using secondary includes ease of access in a short time and no major costs are involved. This implies that secondary data require less resources and are cheaper to obtain compared to primary data. The disadvantage of secondary data was that it may be

outdated and do not reflect information at hand and this may not meet the needs of the investigator since they existed or were gathered for other studies.

In this study, secondary data were useful for the literature review sections to give a general understanding of the issues associated with multiculturalism and diversity in project performance. Sources used for attaining secondary data included articles online, journals, books and academic databases like ebscohost. These different sources for literature review were considered since they provide different comments, arguments and views regarding multiculturalism and diversity since they have different academicians and authors (refer to the references).

3.5   Analysis

Data analysis refers to the use of tools, techniques, software or reasoning in order to interpret, understand and clear information or data which has been gathered (Flick 2006). In this study, qualitative methods of analysing data were employed where content analysis approach was used in analyzing data. The interview responses were written down or noted and the transcripts analyzed. The process of analysis using the content analysis approach involved reading through the interview transcripts and grouping similar responses together and interpreting the broad themes arising from the data.

Data analysis began during the fieldwork itself as the investigator understood their connections, thoughts, perceptions and responses. Content analysis enabled the data to be sought accordingly while allowing exploration of recurring phenomena and patterns. Consequently, the investigator was able to synthesise, compare and contrast the obtained responses. The obtained responses were also compared to findings from previous studies and these have been presented in results section using sections or categories to explain how diversity and multiculturalism impact

performance of projects. Where appropriate, findings in results section include quotations from the respondents as noted in the interview transcripts.

3.6   Pilot study

Pre-testing interview questions was conducted to ensure that questions were valid and understandable. In this regards, pilot-testing revealed that some interview questions need to be split to avoid complexity or ambiguity. In addition, the demographic profile section was included to understand the background of respondents. Refer to appendix for the final interview questions.

3.7   Validity/reliability

Validity refers to the extent that the data collection tool measures what it was intended for (Matthews and Ross 2010). To ensure validity, interview questions were varied and aligned to study objectives. Reliability refer to measurement consistency across respondents. To ensure reliability, same questions were asked throughout the interviews and interviews were all conducted using the same method, that is, face to face interview. Moreover, pilot testing was used to increase reliability and validity. In addition, selection of respondents from different nationalities increased the generalisation of the study since the sample was multicultural and diverse.

3.8   Ethics

Participants were respected in this study; therefore, permission was requested from them before their recruitment (Neuman 2006). In addition, participants were explained for about taking part in the study and their concerns answered by the investigator. In this regards, informed consent was attained in the study. Academic benefits associated with the study were explained since there were no direct compensations or rewards or incentives for taking part. Nonetheless,

the study had no harm on the respondents since measures were taken to ensure whatever they said was kept confidential. Also, anonymity was employed where their names were never revealed nor the particular name of project or construction firm in which they work.

3.9   Summary

Chapter three outlined study methodologies involved in the interpretation, analysis or collection of data from respondents. As noted, this study was qualitative where interviews were used in gathering data. Generally, content analysis was appropriate way of qualitative data analysis for the study. Primary data was the main data obtained from the construction project practitioners. The analyzed qualitative results are presented in chapter four.

Chapter 4: Results and discussion

4.1   Introduction

The study findings generally include the qualitative data obtained from the interviewees. In this regards, the presentation of the results are based on the major issues arising from the interview responses. Most importantly, interpretations of the qualitative data have been performed and further insights into the responses have been provided. The chapter mainly ends with the discussion of the results in order to effectively address the study objectives and the aim.

4.2   Results

According to the results, diverse and multicultural workforce has a number of important implications for the construction projects. Generally, almost all the interviewees ($n = 19$) had a positive perception about diversity and multiculturalism in construction projects. Consequently, this implies that diversity and multiculturalism can enhance performance in the construction projects if managed effectively. A number of the responses given were related to enhancement of competitiveness and survival of the construction firm given that it was able to recruit people who are knowledgeable, skilled and experienced.

In particular, diversity and multiculturalism enriches the project participants and can also be a source of encouragement since the project team involves people who have different perspectives. For instance, respondent 1 said

I believe diverse and multicultural workforce enriches project team. And I have personally experienced this enrichment

Similarly, respondent 2 posited that,

Working with multicultural and diverse teams is a source of encouragement since we have different perspectives

In terms of promoting productivity, respondent 15 and 20 argued that diversity is associated with overall commitment and satisfaction of project participants and that multiculturalism enables them to borrow from each other's culture thus become more dedicated project team. The interview respondents (n = 2) also related diversity and multiculturalism with enhancement of experience in the project team. In particular, respondent 11 said,

It gives project team the necessary experience in dealing with people from various religions and even gender

This indication was true given that the construction firm which embraces diversity is able to attract more skilled project team from all over the world since it is not restricted by any nationality concerns. Team integration also emerged in the responses and was based on the fact that the individual project participants make many friends in the firm since they are interested in knowing the culture of other team members and can tolerate each other and hence increase flexibility in the construction firm leading to harmony. Problem solving in the firm was also improved since project team was able to deal with construction problems by themselves. According to respondent 19,

We have people with different skills in this construction project and bringing us together despite the different nationalities implies greater success because we can brainstorm and finding solutions in tasks

Interviewees also revealed that diverse and multicultural workforce is vital for the strategic survival of the construction firm. This is because it enhances the firm's competiveness given that the project team is able to deal with clients of different backgrounds and have are

more knowledgeable as echoed by respondent 3, 4 and 8. In addition, the firm attracts people

from broader educational backgrounds which are essential for better performance,

innovativeness and general productivity of the project team. Moreover, multicultural workforce

enables the management to improve their experience in managing different cultures as noted by

respondent 14.

However, one interviewee (respondent 16) negatively perceived the importance of

diversity and multiculturalism in the construction projects and revealed that it creates a number

of conflicts which require time to resolve and some people may find it difficult to adjust.

To focus more on the linkage between multiculturalism and productivity, the

interviewees were asked to describe the effect of multiculturalism and workforce diversity on the

project processes and performance. In particular, the results found that multiculturalism and

workforce diversity impacts on the project processes and performance through improving the

abilities and capacities of the workforce. In addition, the results also pointed out that it enhances

efficiency in the project and effectiveness which improves the success rate. In general, a good

number of the interviewees (n = 16) indicated that multiculturalism and workforce diversity

directly increases the overall success of the project. However, the remaining interviewees (n = 4)

cautioned that multiculturalism and workforce diversity can result in poor project performance

and delays in the processes.

In particular, respondents 4, 1 and 2 noted that multiculturalism and workforce diversity

increases productivity of project team and the overall success of the project. This may be

attributed to the fact that multicultural and diverse project teams have different alternatives and

ideas to offer since people have different viewpoints. It was also posited by the project processes

and performance was improved by multiculturalism and workforce diversity due to the fact that

it improves the satisfaction level among project team and the project team is more inspired. For instance, respondent 3 said,

Since multiculturalism and workforce diversity improves the satisfaction level among project team it enhances performance

Another indication was by respondent 16 that,

Multiculturalism and workforce diversity creates expertise and knowledge in the team which enhances performance

In this regards, it can be understood that the ability to achieve better results it attained in projects based on the fact that multiculturalism and workforce diversity ensure adequate integration of expertise and provides the required mixture of experience in the project team to deliver the expected performance. In the part of respondents 6 and 7, multiculturalism and workforce diversity to bring about effectiveness and efficiency in the project processes. It was also explained by the interviewees (n = 2) that a focused teamwork with improved ability is realized in multicultural teams hence positively enhancing performance (respondent 9, 10 and 8). This could also be associated with available solutions to problems that can be offered by the project team.

Although multiculturalism and workforce diversity can contribute to improved performance, respondent 20, 19, 17 and 18 were careful in linking enhanced productivity and multiculturalism and workforce diversity. In essence, respondent 20 felt that diverse workforce is prone to frequent misunderstandings by mentioning that,

I believe there is a high likelihood that misunderstandings occurs which affect performance in diverse and multicultural teams

Similarly, there were concerns over unnecessary conflicts and poor attainment of the project deliverables or goals raised by respondents 19 and 17 due to leadership failures and lack of control. This means that problems associated with multiculturalism and workforce diversity can be detrimental to performance and tension if not managed.

Organizational barriers preventing the construction firm towards having a diverse and multicultural workforce in projects were explored. Basically, most respondents (n = 12) were of the opinion that there were no major barriers. For instance, respondent 14 said,

The recruitment policies have reflected a diverse and multicultural workforce as you can see we have a team from different nationalities

Similar indications were noted by respondent 15, 4, 2, 8, 7 and 6. There were also revelations that the construction firm was free from stereotyping and discrimination of any member of the workforce. This implies that there was generally a sense of responsibility which has been created as argued by respondent 12 and 11. It was also interesting to find that the construction firm promotes a leadership style which appreciates the uniqueness of culture. Moreover, results revealed that a diverse and multicultural workforce was a major part of the culture in this firm.

However, a considerable number of the interviewees (n = 8) felt that maintaining a diverse and multicultural workforce was being threatened by a number of factors. Of the 8 interview respondents who felt there were barriers, only three interviewees (respondent 3, 19 and 18) mentioned issues concerning management factors. In the first place, it was believed that management issues required reconsideration for benefits of multiculturalism to be realized. Respondent 18 suggested that,

Improvements in the general inclusiveness and involvement of all employees can be effective to reducing barriers to a diverse and multicultural workforce

Similar sentiments were echoed by respondent 19,

...some improvements can be made in leadership to enhance diversity and multiculturalism

On the other hand, the remaining 5 interviewees perceived the barriers emanating from the individual or personal factors. For instance, they mentioned culture shock and being home sick, difference in age, gender, experience and education level, and other individual factors. In addition, respondent 10 added that,

Some of the project participants feel that their culture is superior; this affects level of team integration

Hence, it was evident that individual participants had varied attitudes and perceptions thus behaved differently from others. This was mentioned mainly by respondent 9. The reason for this can be mainly cultural difference and diversity.

To understand the challenges associated with multiculturalism and workforce diversity in detail, the interviewees were asked to indicate the specific challenges in the organization arising due to multiculturalism and workforce diversity. Gathering this information was vital in order to find strategies or ways in which such issues could be addressed. According to the results, a number of challenges were identified and these mainly revolved around low trust levels, communication challenges, increasing tension and conflicts and lack of team integration.

Specifically, respondent 4 revealed that there is a general feeling of impulsiveness when interacting with certain team members from other cultures which is not experienced with others from the same culture. Such tensions may have implications on trust levels and even contribute

to the conflicts in project activities. Moreover, the interview respondents (n = 5) noted that team

integration was still a problem. For instance, respondent 11 plainly said,

Integration is not yet perfect 100% as you know we are from different cultures

In this regards, the project leaders must monitor the behaviours of certain individuals to

identify any issues that hinder the team integration or lead to the conflicts reported. Moreover,

lack of team integration may be due to the fact that some project participants don't know how to

engage with others due to their attitude which could be related to the collectivist or

individualistic culture. However, it is known that individuals from collective cultures encourage

integration in the team and have more emotional attachment on the team. Similar indications

were given by respondent 9 who noted that the project participants need to understand each other

more for better integration. Another issue that needs to be addressed in the diverse and

multicultural workforce is personal interest. According to respondent 18,

We have people with individualistic interests rather than the goal of the team

A part from issues on integration, conflicts was also inevitable in the diverse and

multicultural teams. For instance, respondent 13 said that,

Conflicts may occur because we are different people with diverse educational level, experience

and expertise

This was not surprising given that different project participants have different perception

on how decisions should be made in the project which affects the overall process of decision

making and hence leading to conflicts. It was also interesting to find that some people do things

differently based on their expertise leading to conflicts in the project. Given that sometimes it is

difficult to work with certain project participants, there is need for evaluation of teams.

Trust levels were expected to be affected in the diverse and multicultural project teams. The trust level is sometimes low due to different cultures and nationalities. However, trust levels was also related to the professionals and social status. In the opinion of respondent 5,

The different professionals and social status create an erosion of trust to some extent

Generally, trust issues arise from lack of openness and also lack of honesty among the project participants. The reason why openness was a challenge is due to having people from different culture and diversity in the same project team. This was revealed by respondent 6 who said,

Some people are not honest in some instances and appear more individualistic

Another indication on trust was also by respondent 12,

For me I constantly ask for help from other project participants so that nothing goes wrong but some do not since they are not open

In terms of communication as a challenge, language barrier and different communication patters were mentioned by respondent 13, 18 and 2. In this regards, respondent 16 noted that,

We need to be explained for certain information on project activities in detail rather than simply passing the information

Dealing with cross cultural issues in multicultural project teams was explored. With regards to trust, it was found that all team members must embrace trust since it is an important factor in holding the diverse and multicultural workforce together. In addition, 7 out of the 20 interview respondents mentioned improvement of interpersonal relationship as an effective way of developing and creating trust in the diverse and multicultural project team. Furthermore, respondent 6 advised that,

Improving trust in diverse and multicultural workforce will require openness and acceptance to help others

The results also revealed that the project participants must understand one another for high level of trust to exist. This calls for putting the project team interests first before the individual interests. The different professional in the project team must also find a common ground on implementation of certain activities. Honesty also emerged as way of creating trust, respondent 5 said,

Once everybody is honest with one another then trust will be developed and created in the diverse and multicultural workforce

In this regards, the words and actions of team members must be have a level of certainty since project participants with acceptable behaviour and commitment in the team can be trusted more. Interviewees (n = 3) also revealed that mutual respect among team members was key to development of trust. Other ways in which trust could be created and maintained in the diverse and multicultural team included; building trust must begin at the start of the project implementation so that it can be carried on throughout the project phases. Respondent 9 in particular mentioned the need for training events aimed at team effectiveness and team integration. Similar indications were that the project needed continuous sessions on how one can develop trust and trusting expertise advice. According to respondent 19,

Everyone must be made accountable for their actions that is what constitutes trust building

However, achieving this accountability calls for a fair a playing ground hence all project participants must be supervised to maintain commitment and help in instigating and building trust.

Effective communication can be ensured in the construction project with diverse and multicultural workforce by breaking language barrier, explaining information, using the right communication channels and adopting technology. Generally, using simple language or communicating in a language that is easy to understand must be made a priority in addressing communication challenges. According to respondent 1,

Informing the project team is not effective communication rather information must be explained in detail

This could be due to varied education levels and different professionalism in the project team as hinted by respondent 8. Respondent 11, 4 and 19 also gave a similar indication. Adopting technology to address communication challenges could include communication gadgets. A simple solution was suggested by respondent 19,

Respondent 19

Effective communication in multicultural teams can involve having translators in the team

However, respondent 3 said,

It is the responsibility of senior managers to ensure the juniors are well informed

Although respondent 3 considered senior managers to ensure effective communication, respondent 10 said that the team should solve problems collectively rather than criticising other people. In addition, having clear responsibilities can improve communication. Others ways suggested for effective communication included promotion of respect and trust for junior project participants and also listening to them as suggested by respondent 2, 12 and 6.

Addressing conflicts would require that the supervisors must encourage behaviours which can lead to better results and project participants who get along well should be encouraged to

work in the same team to avoid conflicts. In addition, conflicts associated with diversity and

multiculturalism can be addressed by involving all team members through the participatory

approach as noted by respondent 7, 16, 17, 13, 20 and 14. For instance, respondent 20 mentioned

that,

All project team should find ways of addressing conflicts

The advantage of talk about the conflict together is that an effective solution will be

found and the conflicts resolved effectively to prevent the repeat of the conflict according to

respondent 2 and 19. This calls for accepting the diversity in the team and diving responsibilities

equally among the project team. In essence, this will achieve the required team spirit since

interest of the team will be at the forefront and there is no imposing of decisions on the project

team by single individuals.

Respondent 5 also noted that,

Everyone should access the resources provided to prevent conflicts

More planning to come up with mechanisms of addressing conflicts in the team was also

reported in the interview. Such strategies could include communicating the project objectives to

avoid conflicts of interests and allow project goals to be the main interest for all team members.

Respondent 5 felt that lack of communication is what leads to conflicts in the project tasks. in

addition, respondent 8 and 9 mentioned that people of different cultures must be respected and

heard and that individuals should integrate with team members from other cultures to understand

them and reduce conflicts.

Government influence on the projects undertaken in UAE was found to be perceived

positively by the interviewees. Indeed, it is the responsibility of the government to ensure that

the construction projects in UAE do not violate the safety regulations or impose a health risk to

the expatriates. In particular, 19 out of the 20 respondents were in support of the government for ensuring human rights are respected and all the project labourers are treated humanely. Moreover, it was revealed by respondent 9 and 10 that UAE government has been important in resolving conflicts and that strikes in construction firms have been controlled by the government interventions. The controlling of strikes may be attributed to the fact that the UAE government has been influential in encouraging good remunerations and better salaries. Coupled with the commitment to workers' rights and ensuring the construction firms provide good hygiene in construction camps lead to the praise of government involvement in the projects. For instance, respondent 17 said,

The government does not tolerate mistreatment in construction projects

Furthermore, respondent 15 posited that

Government regulations favour construction workers in UAE

In addition, issuance of visa may be an issue for certain countries and this may influence the hiring in the projects. Despite the contribution by the government, certain influence appeared to impact the operations of the construction projects such as adhering to all government regulations as noted by respondent 4 and 5. For instance, respondent 6 expounded that,

Labourers from certain countries are sometimes favoured by the government than other countries in order to help the economic growth in Middle East nations

Concerns over deportation were only indicated by 3 interviewees who believed deportation may be viewed by construction workers as a threat. However, 6 out of the 20 interviewees considered that it was not an issue to worry about. Interestingly, the remaining 11 interviewees actually perceived deportation as important in various ways. For instance, respondent 3 said,

It is justified to deport the expatriate workers who bring chaos in construction projects

Respondent 19 also said,

Deportation is OK for those engaging in violent activities

In this regards, they perceived deportation a positive measure towards bringing order in the construction labour such as in conflict resolution, reducing fights on site, mitigating illegal activities and preventing criminal activities.

4.3   Discussion

This study involved 20 project practitioners working in a construction project and they had different nationalities including Germany, Philippines, India, Bangladesh, UAE, UK, Pakistan and USA and other Arab countries. In essence, they had different backgrounds, experience, perspectives, religion, different cultures and diversity which were essential in understanding the effect of multiculturalism and diversity among project team on performance of construction project. The interview results highlighted issues which need to be addressed to attain integration in the diverse and multicultural team.

It was found in this study that diverse and multicultural workforce was perceived to be important in construction projects since it enhances competitiveness and survival of the construction firm. As noted in the results, diversity and multiculturalism enriches the project participants and can also be a source of encouragement since the project team involves people who have different perspectives. These findings of the study confirm to past study by Costa et al. (2014) that firms which manage diversity and project team multiculturalism attain high productivity levels compared to the firms which have no diverse workforce. Besides, Auh et al. (2014) also associated multicultural teams with innovativeness and creativity.

Moreover, diversity is associated with overall commitment and satisfaction of project participants and that multiculturalism enables them to borrow from each other's culture thus become more dedicated project team. This may be attributed to the fact that construction firm which embraces diversity is able to attract more skilled project team from all over the world since it is not restricted by any nationality concerns. As the results have noted, problem solving in the firm was also improved since project team was able to deal with construction problems by themselves. Furthermore, similar reports were given by Ford et al. (2014) in their study of workforce multiculturalism and they concluded that management of cultural diversity enhances competitiveness in firms with regards to cost management, marketing, social responsibility, problem solving and even creativity.

A number of reasons were linked to the improved competitiveness of the firm. For instance, the project team is able to deal with clients of different backgrounds and have are more knowledgeable. Moreover, people from broader educational backgrounds are essential for better performance, innovativeness and general productivity of the project team. In their reports, Herdman and McMillan-Capehart (2010) noted that team diversity has vital implications for enhancing positive changes in the organization given that the performance of the project and individuals in particular is facilitated.

It was also established in the findings that multiculturalism and workforce diversity impacts on the project processes and performance through improving the abilities and capacities of the workforce. In essence, multiculturalism and workforce diversity directly increases the overall success of the project since it improves the satisfaction level among project team and the project team is more inspired. Nonetheless, these positive impacts on project performance can be best attained when there is adequate integration of expertise and provision of required mixture of

experience in the project team to deliver the expected performance. A clear linkage between performance and multicultural team was also found by Lehmann-Willenbrock et al. (2011) hence the study findings are similar to their reports.

The implication therefore, is that workforce diversity and multiculturalism can offer a number of advantages to construction firms in terms of improving the performance of projects. This study therefore confirms to reports by Tekleab and Quigley (2014) that a diverse, all inclusive and multicultural construction firms give the project team a sense of safety and encouragement to be innovative. These inclusive environments in construction firms generally translate in higher levels of psychological and physical wellbeing and also financial strength and satisfaction of project participants.

Barriers towards attaining the integrated project team must be addressed including stereotyping and discrimination of any member of the project workforce. The leadership style in multicultural team must also be one that appreciates the uniqueness of culture. Individual team members must also adopt behaviours that promote team integration and effectiveness. As confirmed in the results, challenges associated with multiculturalism and workforce diversity in construction project were identified and these mainly revolved around low trust levels, communication challenges, increasing tension and conflicts and lack of team integration. It emerged that low trust levels arise from lack of openness and honesty among the project participants. It can also be recommended that lack of trust can be addressed by openness where project participants work jointly in assessing, managing, planning and identifying the cultural complexity.

Conflicts and poor communication are challenges facing diverse and multicultural workforce and can lead to the failure of projects or delays in the completion of projects in UAE.

These results are in line with Hopkins and Blackwood (2011) who indicated that effective communication in projects is more difficult to attain in multicultural teams although it must be ensured to management any misgiving, misconceptions and unrealistic expectation in multicultural teams. Besides, such factors were also reported by Mello and Rentsch (2014) to have detrimental impacts on projects by contributing to high occurrence of schedule and cost overruns. In this regards, addressing the issues of conflicts and poor communication in construction projects will result in completion of the project on schedule and also within the allocated budgets. Consequently, this will result in the client satisfaction and also high quality performance.

These challenges impact negatively on the project performance and need to be addressed. For instance, measures can involve improvement of interpersonal relationship as an effective way of developing and creating trust in the diverse and multicultural project team. In addition, building trust must begin at the start of the project implementation. It was also shown in the results that effective communication can be ensured by breaking language barrier, explaining information, using the right communication channels and adopting technology. It was evident in the findings that managing conflicts would require encouraging behaviours which can lead to better results and involving all team members through the participatory approach. Besides, communicating the project objectives to avoid conflicts of interests was also reported. Based on the findings, it can be seen that implementation of construction projects using a diverse and multicultural workforce was also being affected by a number of workplace, project management and human resource factors. In addition, adherence and acknowledgement of diversity and culture in the construction projects including creating personal relationships can contribute significantly towards project success.

It can be understood from these results that having workforce diversity and multiculturalism in construction projects enable the project team to think of different approaches on addressing the construction related problems. This results in creative solution and enhances the overall success. As revealed, multicultural projects are built through the development of trust and this is because trust is vital in team integration. Interestingly, this study has shown that project participants were more found of trusting individuals who they identify with. This only reveals that reports by Markova and Perry (2014) were validated since culture influences how people interact and whom they interact with.

Hence, it was indicated that development of trust will involve development of interpersonal relationships which could be easily obtained by mutual respect and joint activities. Besides that, the construction firms also need to understand that UAE is mainly composed of expatriate population who are from different nationalities. Hence the communication challenges must be given the priority it deserves. Hence, having the right project participants in a team from the early stages of the project is essential in establishing a project team with good working relationships, respect for other people's culture and diversity and this improves performance of the project to a great extent. The study participants generally acknowledge the importance of effective communication and how it can be attained through clear responsibilities and addressing team integration.

A number of insights on how project performance can be impacted by workforce diversity and multiculturalism have been provided in the findings. Hence, project managers in UAE construction firms must deal with diversity and multiculturalism challenges in their workplace. However, addressing such issues must involve the participation of all the project

team members and their perspectives considered in the development and implementation of the policies.

4.4   Summary

In summary, this chapter has shown that the main study aim of identifying the effect of multiculturalism and diversity among project team on performance of construction project has been attained. This is because, the results have included the perception of the project practitioners about the importance of diverse and multicultural workforce in construction projects as well as how it affects the project processes and performance. In addition, the four main objectives of the study have been addressed since various challenges associated with multiculturalism and workforce diversity have been highlighted in this chapter. Moreover, various ways of addressing the major challenges have been suggested. The next chapter provides the general conclusion of the study.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1   Introduction

Diversity and multiculturalism in project teams can be an asset to construction firms or a liability. This is because differences and other challenges among the project team are bound to happen in a multicultural and diverse team which can affect performance negatively. Therefore, when differences or challenges associated with diversity and multiculturalism are recognized, it is imperative to address the challenges and use the diversity and multiculturalism in project team to the advantage of the construction firms. Furthermore, when properly managed, diversity and multiculturalism leads to higher productivity in project team and better performance of the project. In essence, the concerned management must ensure that level of trust, decision making, effective communication and approaches in solving problems are maintained and developed as a measure to reduce the challenges of diversity and multiculturalism in project teams. Hence, this conclusion section of the dissertation outlines the general implications of the study as well as indications on how future studies can be improved.

5.2   Conclusion

Diversity and multiculturalism is important to project team by enhancing their productivity, experience and improving the team integration and ability to solve problems in the team. Besides that, it also emerged that diversity and multiculturalism not only influences the project team but also the firm and the project management. However, this conclusion must be considered with caution given that diversity and multiculturalism also brings about challenges to the project team which must be effectively addressed for the benefits on performance to be truly

achievable. It was also shown that UAE government has been important in resolving conflicts and that strikes in construction firms have been controlled by the government interventions.

When building project teams, team diversity attributes including associative differences, demographic and nationalities must be addressed to maximize team performance and reduce issues associated with multicultural teams. In addition, developing project teams may require self assessment and evaluations of other project participants. Once the teams with relatively similar status or identities are developed, then interrelationships are easily developed since respect is maintained and personal differences eliminated. Challenges of communication were also noted in findings. Moreover, Auh et al. (2014) noted communication and trust challenges in multicultural team. These challenges can result in difficulty in attaining confidence and mutual trust

Whether the challenges of multiculturalism and team diversity can be eliminated largely depends on how differences in the team are managed effectively and every individual in the project team valued and respected. Furthermore, conclusion by Anyanwu (2013) noted that the use of cultural intelligence needs to be considered .However, it is worth understanding that having no strategies for mitigating the conflicts and challenges of multiculturalism and team diversity in the project team can impact negatively on the performance. Nonetheless, implementing multiculturalism and team diversity can enhance performance as evident in the study results and also in the past studies.

The fact that multiculturalism and team diversity has positive influence on team productivity requires that project leaders must develop the strategies for eliciting these benefits such managing the conflicts. Furthermore, it has been emphasized in this study that team integration should include aspects like attitudes, core values, beliefs and maximizing diversity in skills, abilities and knowledge to produce effective and successful teams to enhance project

performance. In particular, teams which are able to address and overcome cultural barriers can communicate, dialogue, learn and attain a common goal. Consequently, impacts of workforce diversity and multiculturalism can be effectively utilized to enhance performance.

The strategies can only be effective when the team members and also the project leadership have mutual respect for the different cultures and backgrounds of the project participants. In addition, past study by Chirico and Nordqvist (2010) affirmed that the strategic planning must be developed with objectives for attaining high performance in the multicultural team. In this regards, project leaders must be understand and be sensitive to cultural differences so that they are able to recognise how the team performance can be enhanced through workforce diversity.

A simple strategy may involve cross-cultural education and training in the construction firms so that project performance is not hindered by issues associated with lack of respect of other cultures. Such cross-cultural education in projects must share necessary information about different cultures to all the members of project team instead of training only project leaders. This will also result in increased level of trust and reduce the complexities for the benefit of the construction firms.

5.3   Practical implications

This study offers a number of practical implications and recommendations for managing the issues in such environment and benefiting from the diversity and multiculturalism. First it can be recommended that diversity and multiculturalism in construction projects bring new approaches and new ideas for solving the problems encountered in project implementation. As explained in the study, diversity in knowledge, skills, experience, abilities and having people from various cultures with varied methods of problem solving, information process and varied

perceptions enhances project performance. Positive outcomes are also associated with diverse and multicultural teams such as high productivity, creativity and adaptability.

Nonetheless, there are also challenges associated with diversity and multiculturalism. For instance, having diverse team and multicultural workforce create tensions, conflicting interests, poor communication and low trust levels. Managing these challenges can result in gaining benefits of multiculturalism and workforce diversity. In essence, the construction firms must ensure interpersonal relationships are developed and conflicts avoided by rewarding team collectively. This initiative can enhance the trust levels in the team and instil the spirit of togetherness. The surface level conflicts should also be prevented through monitoring the actions and behaviours of team members to ensure greater cooperation is encouraged.

Besides, training interventions and sessions can be employed in enhancing interaction among the project team and eliminate the various challenges arising from lack of honesty, openness and respect. In this regards, team performance will be improved when complexities and uncertainties are eliminated. Likewise, the team members must understand others in order to reduce the prejudice and anxieties associated with working in multicultural teams.

Construction firms must also collaborate with the government by adhering to the regulations of UAE. Furthermore, strikes can be prevented in the construction projects by respecting human rights, paying competitive wages, providing a healthy workplace and accommodations. Application of such changes and recommendations can serve in attaining the project goals more effectively and efficiently.

5.4   Limitations

Some limitations encountered in this study have been identified. First, the study relied on interview respondents to provide honest and accurate information. Therefore, the study findings

have been presented based on their responses without introducing bias. Also, past studies were compared to the results.

Another limitation was the time constraint. This study was based on qualitative data gathered by conducting interviews hence interviews lasted for only a short time which may have limited the responses received from interviewees. However, the investigator was keen in ensuring that long interviews are avoided to prevent response bias or low response rate.

Recruitment of samples was also difficult since the inclusion criteria and sampling technique was mode demanding. In essence, the study used purposive sampling method.

Language barrier was also an issue with some interviewees who were not proficient in English. However, the interview questions were direct and understandable with no vocabularies. Semi-structured implied that the interview respondents were to provide the responses to questions without having a list to choose from like in questionnaires.

5.5   Research implications for future studies

Involving more diversified study sample will enable more aspects of culture to be attained in the future studies. This is justified because the subject of workforce diversity and multiculturalism in projects is increasing becoming more complicated as construction firms become globalized. The future studies on effects of multiculturalism and workforce diversity can consider examining whether certain attributes of diversity impact more on performance compared to others. This may involve using quantitative data to quantify the difference in effects. In this regards, it will allow exploration of more implications and benefits of multiculturalism and workforce diversity in construction projects.

This study focused only on gathering qualitative data using face to face interviews. Hence, future research can be encouraged to adopt other methodologies such as quantitative

research or combine both methodologies. Also, this study used qualitative data hence the sample size was relatively small; however, the sample may be expanded in the future researches that involve quantitative data to increase generalisation and accuracy of data.

It can also be recommended that mathematical models on impacts of multiculturalism and workforce diversity can be developed in future studies.

5.6   Summary

It can be stated that the study generally contributes to understanding the importance and effect of multiculturalism and workforce diversity on the project processes and performance. In addition, the various organizational barriers and challenges associated with multiculturalism and workforce diversity have been explored by the study. Involving of interviews in collection of data was also advantageous in attaining rich data that reflects the extent of the effect on projects. As revealed in the study results and findings, the construction firms can develop and create trust, ensure effective communication and address the conflicts in diverse and multicultural teams as a way of ensuring that benefits of diversity and multiculturalism on project performance are attained. Moreover, having project team with diverse knowledge, expertise, experience and different professionalism will ultimately result into performance improvement. Hence, multiculturalism and workforce diversity affects performance of the team positively when associated challenges are contained. Hence, the UAE government should continue to promote diversity and multiculturalism in UAE construction sector by allowing expatriates and experts from various countries to take part in the construction projects.

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Appendix

Interview questions

Demographic profile

1. Gender

2. Age

3. Nationality

4. Race

5. Education level

6. Religion

7. Experience in multicultural project in terms of years

8. Position in the construction project

9. Background profession

Multiculturalism and diversity in construction projects

10. What is your perception about the importance of diverse and multicultural workforce in construction projects?

11. Are there barriers facing the construction firm towards having a diverse and multicultural workforce in projects?

Effect of multiculturalism and diversity on performance

12. How would you describe the effect of multiculturalism and workforce diversity on the project processes and performance?

13. What are the challenges associated with multiculturalism and workforce diversity in construction project?

14. How can the construction firm develop and create trust in the diverse and multicultural workforce?

15. How can effective communication be ensured in the construction projects with diverse and multicultural workforce?

16. In what ways can the construction firm address conflicts associated with diversity and multiculturalism?

17. Is there government influence on the projects undertaken in UAE?

18. Are there concerns over deportation of expatriates by the UAE government?