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## MANAGERIAL CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN MULTINATIONAL CORPORATION IN NIGERIA: A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

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**ABSTRACT:** *The phenomenon of conflict and its implications for the overall functionality and continuity of organizations has been a subject of much debate and currently dominates research interest in certain academic spheres. This is primarily as a result of the development and build-up in the theories which assess conflict as an integral and deeply rooted feature of organizations, given their social attributes. This study offers a varied approach towards the management and resolution of conflict especially within multinational corporations in Nigeria. The study identifies cultural diversity and the cross-cultural settings prevalent amongst major multinational corporations in Nigeria as being a significant basis for conflict and therefore argues that through the apparent display and expressions of managerial cultural intelligence, organizations can design and implement effective conflict management systems which can be considered as appropriate in coping and dealing with conflict resulting from or premised on cultural differences. The review of related literature offered strong support for the assumptions of relationships between the dimensions of managerial cultural intelligence (cognition, motivation and behaviour) and effective conflict management systems, thus enhancing practices such as open door policies, ombudsmen and peer review panels. In view of this outcome it was concluded that managerial cultural intelligence is vital and imperative to the design and implementation of effective conflict management systems and, on this basis recommendations in line with systems flexibility, and transparency were proffered.*

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**Keywords:** Managerial cultural intelligence, conflict management systems, cognition, motivation, behaviour, peer review panel, ombudsmen, open door policy.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Multinational corporations today carry out their businesses in turbulent, multiculturally diverse and dynamic environments and are constantly looking out for measures which can be used in enhancing workplace relationships and resolving conflict issues. These they pursue vigorously through the design and implementation of systems for the effective management of behaviour and workplace interactions. Conflict within the organization can be destabilizing and can degenerate into a crises situation if not adequately attended to. It is generally regarded as the occurrence of disagreement with regards to interests or opinions on work specific or personal issues from different people which pushes them to argue, compete or contend at any given moment of interaction, thus creating a disjoint in processes or operations (Certo, 2013; Slabbert, 2004).

In organizations, conflict is regarded as the presence of discord which occurs as a result of the incompatibility of the interests or values of different individuals or groups and which further results in the frustration of each individual or groups attempt to achieve their objectives. It is considered an inevitable part of organizational life given the fact that the goals of various stakeholders such as managers and staff most often incompatible. However, it has also been qualified as an ever present and integral aspect in the process in human relations. That is why organizations are constantly adapting and evolving their approaches towards conflict and developing systems which can enable them to effectively manage their conflict situations (Slabbert, 2004; Oparanma, Hamilton & Ohaka, 2009).

Conflicts most often take place when workers interact in organizations and compete for positions or other forms of value. Conflicts can be considered as containing both negative and positive outcomes to the workers as well as the organization itself. Studies indicate that most Multinational Corporations in Nigeria are constantly affected and their decisions influenced by conflict and even crises based outcomes, this is given the nature of the Nigerian socio-economic context and its highly volatile and politically charged social and workplace relations ((Okoro, 2013, Grace, 2012; Ango, 2012). Hence, the effective management and resolution of conflict is considered a significant and highly appreciated attribute of any successful manager. This is as most managers are considered as the source of conflict in many organizations. Just like in the social life, when conflicts take place between family members, it is expected that the head or father of the house manages them. Same scenario applies to organizations, when conflicts occur, it is expected that managers are conscious and heedful of the antecedents and thus able to manage them through the effective implementation of policies and systems which would address and treat the related issues, thereby sustaining organizational survival and performance (Bernardine, 2003).

Extant literature reveals a growing number of studies with interest in the management of conflict especially given its implications on the overall functioning of the organization. In their study, Olson-Buchanan and Boswell (2007) examined existing organizational dispute resolution systems and the effectiveness of these systems in curbing and managing supervisory and interdepartmental issues particularly as it applied to selected service organizations in the UK. However, the focus of their study was delimited to observed discrepancies and the poor

levels of cohesion between organizational units and structures which affected the operations and overall functioning of the organization. Another study, Kazimoto (2013) reviewed literature on the role of leadership styles in addressing and quelling conflict within organizations. The findings of his study reiterate the observations of Azamos (2004) study of industrial conflict in Nigerian tertiary institutions, which also emphasized on the role of leadership styles in dealing with conflict situations especially those emanating from union activities and issues. His findings revealed the role of leadership style as being significantly imperative to the effective management of conflict and crises within tertiary institutions in Nigeria. These studies however emphasized rather on leadership styles and the structuring of systems to accommodate operational differences within the organizations and institutions with little or no recourse to the possible interplay of multicultural workplaces and the role of culturally intelligent managers in the management of such workplaces through effective conflict management systems.

Given this observed lag in literature on the role of managerial cultural intelligence in the actualization of effective conflict management systems, this study therefore departs from previous studies as it examines through a discourse of literature, the role of managerial cultural intelligence in the design and implementation of effective conflict management systems in addressing dispute occurrences in organizations, especially multinational corporations in Nigeria given their diverse multicultural features and globalized functionalities. This is as Earley and Ang (2003) observe that when faced with diverse cultural situations it is imperative that managers seek to identify familiar signs and signals that can assist in harmonizing units and making relationships efficient. Under this circumstance, it is important that managers create a common cognitive conflict management framework or system given the current information and level of interaction (MacNab, 2012).

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between managerial cultural intelligence and effective conflict management systems, particularly as it applies to multinational corporations in Nigeria. This is to be accomplished through a review of literature which is aimed at the following objectives:

- i. To examine the relationship between cognition and conflict management systems
- ii. To examine the relationship between motivation and conflict management systems
- iii. To examine the relationship between behaviour and conflict management systems

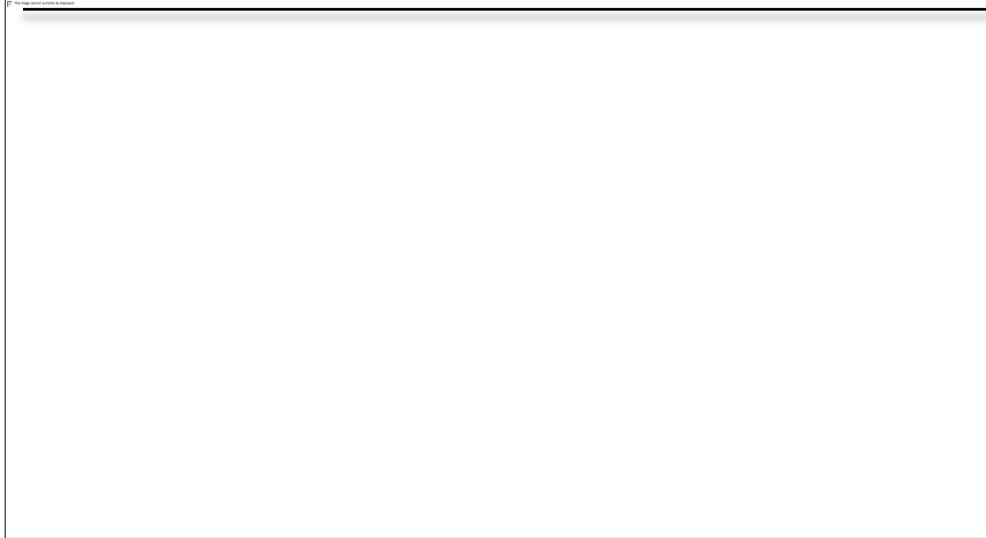


Figure 1: The Conceptual framework depicting the relationship between managerial cultural intelligence and conflict management systems

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Framework

In assessing the relationship between managerial cultural intelligence and effective conflict management systems, one finds strong evidence of theoretical support for the argument in the institutional theory. This is as the regulation and management of relationships and organizational behavioural outcomes are most often considered a function of recognized and institutionalized processes or systems encapsulated in rules and policies aimed at streamlining members' actions and interactions within and even outside the organization. The traditional concern of the institutional theory is with how various individuals, units, groups and organizations better secure their views, positions as well as legitimacy by conforming to the norms, rules and policies of the institutional environment (Meyer & Rowan, 1991; Scott, 2007).

According to North (1990), the concept of "institution" generally refers to the formal rule sets, less formal shared interaction sequences, ex ante agreements, and even more often for- granted assumptions or expectations that organizations and workers within such organizations are expected to imbibe and follow (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Within these institutions are the structures and policy frameworks which define the relationships within the organization and also provide the platform for the settlement or negotiation of disputes or conflicts within the organization. These institutions create the platforms or systems that determine appropriate actions for organizations and also dictate procedures to be adopted in addressing issues relating to work. They further provide the logic by which laws, rules, and organizational policies appear natural and binding upon members or constituents (Meyer & Rowan, 1991).

The Institutional theory adopts a stance which places premium on the role of instituted systems and structures considered as capable and adequate in the definition of what can be considered as appropriate in an objective sense, and thus render other actions unacceptable or even beyond consideration within the organization (DiMaggio & Powell, 1993). It is therefore concerned with the regulatory, social, as well as cultural influences that promote the survival, legitimacy of claims and also continuity of the organization rather than focusing solely on efficiency seeking behaviour and profit maximization (Roy, 1997). These institutional forces can also be observed or identified in multiple studies from sociology, organizational theory, political science, and as well as economics. Thus indicating the universality of the theory which apart from regulating behaviour and relationships within the workplace, holds a substantial place in the affairs of Government, and the socio-economic activities of the populace of any given social context.

Managerial cultural intelligence managers are considered as the touch bearers of the organization and provide the yardsticks upon which organizational standards are based. Managers can be effective within one situational context and in another, may be seen as highly ineffective (Avery, 2004). One major situational factor which determines the effectiveness of managers is that of culture. Given the dynamic forces inherent within a cross-cultural context, managers are increasingly confronted with the need to influence their workers and to harmonize relationships from other cultures. Success in management and leadership entails a great deal of the understanding of appreciation of cultural differences.

It is imperative that managers understand how people from different cultures view themselves, perceive others considered as out-groups and interpret actions from these out-groups (Yukl, 2002). Managers themselves are a product of different cultural systems, and their behaviours and approach to problem solving may differ across various socio-cultural contexts (House et al., 2004). This is as Miroshinik (2002) observed that the first major contributor to problems and failures of business abroad can be tied to the disjoint and difference between the manager's cultural orientation and the predominant cultural system of the social context of the organization. Dickson, Den Hartog, and Mitchelson (2003) argued that different cultural settings require different managerial approaches.

This is because the methods and approaches which could be considered as effective or appropriate in one cultural setting may lead to failure in another. Likewise Schein (1997) noted that organizational culture and leadership can be considered as two sides of the same coin, hence, it is important that cultural difference is treated as a crucial situational factor in managerial effectiveness in relation to cross-cultural contact such as is applicable within Multinational Corporations.

Managerial cultural intelligence (CQ) can be described as a manager's capability for successful adaptation to new or varied cultural settings, or context, which can be considered as unfamiliar as well as the managers appreciation of this variety in culture (Earley & Ang, 2003). This description introduces the dynamic nature of the concept of managerial cultural intelligence as being significantly constituted by the manager's difference and characteristics, and the cultural environment supposed to be effectively adapted to as being unfamiliar to the individual. However, it is important to emphasize that managerial cultural intelligence does not

dwell only on the cultural difference between managers and their environment but also captures the cultural differences between managers and their subordinates.

This observation is in line with the identification of three cultural intelligence dimensions by Earley and Ang (2003), these dimensions include:

First, the cognitive component which refers to the manager's specific knowledge to perceive and learn about a new culture based on the observation of various kinds of cultural cues; Second, motivational component which refers to the manager's self-drive and dedication to adapt and adjust to a new culture environment and set of relationships; and Third, the behavioural component which refers to the capability of a manager to generate the actions required to appropriately reflect cognition and motivation (the first two dimensions).

### **Dimension of Managerial Cultural Intelligence**

Early and Ang's (2003) cultural intelligence model reveals the interactive linkage of the three dimensions (cognition, motivation and behavioural). Cultural intelligence requires that the manager perceives, understands, obliges, and acts to adjust and effectively adapt to a new cultural setting or relationship. Managers with high levels of cultural intelligence are capable of continuing to integrate into and learn from new cultural settings and associations. Thus the interest of the managers is in dealing with new cultural systems and environment. Cultural intelligence requires actual behavioural adaptation to a new culture, not just one's wishes and desires to adapt. Similarly, Thomas and Inkson (2004) showed that cultural intelligence comprises of several factors, namely: knowledge and understanding of the basics of the intercultural interaction; mindfulness and the development of a mindful approach towards intercultural interactions; and behavioural skills which is concerned with the building of adaptive skills and a range of attitudes and actions so that one is effective in different intercultural situations.

**Motivation:** According to Ang and Dyne (2008), motivation is a reflection of the capability to direct focus and energy toward acquiring knowledge about and functioning in situations characterized by cultural differences. Managerial cultural intelligence motivation can be considered as the most essential aspect or dimension amongst all three dimensions. This is because managers first need to be motivated in order to adjust and cope with the manifestations of cultural diversity and to be more effective in such a culturally diverse environment.

This is based on the fact that if a manager's motivation fails prior to engaging in a culturally diverse setting, the goals that are intended to be accomplished will not be achieved. The expression of reluctance to communicate and relate with others from diverse cultural backgrounds, as well as the unwillingness to learn and adapt to the new cultural system may affect relationships and workplace interactions negatively.

Dyne, Ang and Koh (2008) conceptualize the manager's cultural intelligence motivation as a form of intrinsic drive which enhances their sense of self-efficacy. They argue that motivation contributes significantly to cultural intelligence because dealing with diverse cultures requires strong levels of self-confidence and interest in such diversity. Mg and Inkpen (2008) further

noted that the cultural intelligence motivation served as a source of drive given the fact that it produces direct effort, enthusiasm and energy in diverse cultural settings.

**Cognition:** Ang and Inkpen (2008) opined that cognitive cultural intelligence refers to a manager's knowledge and appreciation of the norms, practices, and conventions observed in different cultures which has been acquired as a result of educational and personal experiences. This particular dimension of cultural intelligence emphasizes on the capability to observe and acquire knowledge about the cultures where managers function. Dyne et al., (2012) assert that cognitive cultural intelligence refers to the manager's knowledge structures about existing cultural institutions, norms, practices and conventions in different cultural environments. Knowledge is concerned with being conscious and aware of the similarities and differences in cultural backgrounds and settings (MacNab, 2012) while the acquisition of more information helps to deploy the blur and biases over cultural differences.

Cultural intelligence knowledge (cognition) can be viewed as the total knowledge and experience concerning the cultural adaptation of an individual stored in memory. Consequently, the understanding, observing and acquaintance with different and diverse cultures enable managers to better relate to and appreciate the work environments that shape, define and generate specific patterns of social interactions within a culture setting (Ang & Dyne, 2008). Leaders who have high CQ knowledge/cognition are very successful in interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds.

**Behaviour:** Ang and Van Dyne (2008) described the cultural intelligence dimension of behaviour as referring to the manager's capability at the action level to express or exhibit a wide repertoire of required as well as appropriate verbal and nonverbal actions when relating and interacting with workers or individuals from different cultural backgrounds. The earlier two dimensions, the motivation (drive), cognition (knowledge), are best considered as mental states or capabilities which occur in the mind of the manager (Ang et al., 2007). Dyne, Ang and Koh (2008) clarify that behaviour is a critical component of cultural intelligence because behaviour is the actual manifestation and observable characteristic of social interaction. Behaviour contributes significantly to the success of managers in international managerial context. Through intercultural contact, managers are able to acquire knowledge, enhance their cultural sensitivity, skills, and abilities so as to be able to effectively relate with and successfully function within a multicultural environment (Caligiuri & DiSanto, 2001).

### **Conflict Management Systems**

Conflict, according to Ting-Toomey (1994) can be described as the perceived or real incompatibility of values, expectations, processes or outcomes between one or more parties on practical or relational issues. Individuals are viewed as being in conflict when the actions of

someone else interferes, disrupts, blocks or, in any way, renders the behaviour of someone else less effective (Tjosvold, 1998). Given the obvious interconnectedness of human actions especially within the workplace, one finds that conflict is deeply embedded within the social fabrics of society as well as the organization; consequently there is the need for frameworks or systems which can be adopted and utilized in coping and managing conflict situations in and around the work environment (Cunha et al., 2005).

Conflict management system (CMS) refers to a comprehensive and detailed set of policies and protocols designed to manage workplace conflict situations (Lipsky & Seeber 2006). The concept of a 'system' in conflict studies was first adopted and utilized by conflict researchers and practitioners two decades ago (Slaikue & Hasson 1998). There is however no single or unified definition of conflict management systems; however, all the prevailing conflict management systems definitions are premised on the principles of the general systems theory and that of the institutional theory at least at varying degrees. For example, Constantino and Merchant (1996) noted some of the predominant features of conflict management systems: boundaries, purpose, inputs, transformation, outputs, and feedback. This is as Slaikue and Hasson (1998) also based their own conflict management systems (CMS) model on principles comprising directives and dictates on various issues such as the preferred path, detailed templates with internal and external system features, checkpoints as well as evaluations.

Literature (Lipsky & Seeber 2006) reveals a prevalence of shared basic characteristics in CMS which according to Bendersky (2003) often consists of three main types of conflict management alternatives, namely: the rights-based management processes, the interest-based management processes and the negotiated management processes. The rights-based management processes, which cover activities such as grievances and arbitration, involves third parties determining the outcome of a conflict based on established and recognized laws, contracts or standards of behaviour (Ury et al. 1989).

The interest-based management processes, which cover activities such as mediation and facilitation, involves third parties that help conflicting members reach agreements and conclusions without determining outcomes for them. Finally, the negotiated management processes cover all efforts by disputing members to resolve conflicts for themselves, without recourse to any third-party interventions (Bendersky 2003).

Although, there is a fourth outcome which is referred to as the power-based process which covers actions such as strikes and picketing; however, these are generally not included in organizational conflict management systems. Typically, most organizations tend to concentrate more on the rights-based management processes (Bendersky 2003). Lipsky and Seeber (2006), argue that a typical organization in most developed economies such as the United States waits

for conflicts to degenerate into litigation, and only at that point begin to manage conflict. In addition to the three types of conflict management system processes, conflict management system scholars emphasize the imperative for management and organizational support structures. This is as Gosline et al., (2001), emphasized on the integral nature of management support, and the need for appropriate cultural practices as well as training. They also placed emphasis on the concepts of equity, and the observation of due process in the design and operation of conflict management systems (Lipsky & Seeber 2006).

In examining the content and scope of conflict management system, one finds that it includes, but not limited to processes such as mediation and arbitration for the resolution of legal disputes outside the courtroom. An integrated conflict management system emphasizes on a systematic approach to identifying, preventing, managing, and resolving conflict which focuses primarily on the antecedents of conflict within the organization. Its functionality is in the following areas:

- i. Encouragement of workers and managers to voice opinions and constructive dissent early
- ii. The integration of a collaborative problem-solving approach into the culture
- iii. The provision of alternatives for all types of problems for all workers in the workplace
- iv. The coordination of a web of alternatives as well as structures facilitating problem solving
- v. The alignment of conflict management practices and functions with each other and with the mission, vision, and values of the entire organization
- vi. The flexibility and ease of understanding of the process and functionality of the systems

### **Measures of Conflict Management System**

In line with the above itemized functions, Lipsky and Seeber (2006) provide a set of conflict management systems which can be considered as applicable in varied workplace settings, these are as follows:

**The Open Door Policy:** The open door policy is considered as one of the most dominant conflict management systems in the workplace, although, in some Nationalities the concept has almost become stale. It is a system which allows for open dialogue between managers and their subordinates, thus encouraging them to contribute to towards the resolution of differences or issues that may arise. In order to be successful, the open door policy should be broadly disseminated and reinforced as a core element and culture of the organization.

The arguments and views with regards to open door policies are mixed, Some scholars argue that it is superfluous and unnecessarily overrated as an appropriate mechanism for conflict resolution given the fact that most managers and supervisors are not well experienced or trained to tackling problems with employees. Supervisors are too engrossed in their own issues to effectively manage conflict issues; and subordinates most often report instances of retaliation for utilizing the open door process. On the other hand, research (Lipsky, et al., 2003) however emphasizes that despite these observed challenges and obstacles of the open door policy, it is responsible for the resolution of about 90% of all conflict issues and complaints at the workplace.

**The Ombudsmen:** The second conflict management system option is that of the ombudsmen which is considered more appropriate for larger organizations. The ombudsman is viewed as an impartial official who is considered as being neutral and who facilitates informal and confidential assistance to workers in the management and treatment of work-related issues, and who may also make suggestions with regards to systemic organizational change processes and systems based on issues facing the organization. In order to be successful, the ombudsman's position should be located outside the usual line management structure. Evidence from research indicates that several large organizations have observed that the ombudsman process is cost-effective with regards to reduction of workers litigation and turnover (Lipsky, et al., 2003).

**Peer Review Boards:** The process of panel review boards is a dominant conflict management system in many blue collar manufacturing organizations, often for the avoidance of union-related problems and issues. Depending on how the process is structured, decisions of the peer panel review board could be termed final and binding on all conflicting members, or only advisory with regards to the activities of the management and employees. Generally, workers are pre-selected and trained by the appropriate bodies or professional consultants. The main premise of the peer review panel system is the idea that workplace disputes or conflicts should be resolved through the utilization of conditioned internal mechanisms, and not through litigation.

Another basic assumption is that conflict resolution by peers can be considered as being a more credible and generally acceptable process to parties involved. Although opponents of peer review board argue that as a result of the increased sensitivity and complexity of workplace conflict, such a system as the peer review board is no longer suitable. Nevertheless, evidence from research (Lipsky, et al., 2003) offers support as it remains a substantial conflict management system in various organizations and also serves as valid problem-solving model.

**Managerial Cultural Intelligence and Conflict Management Systems in Multinational Organizations in Nigeria**

As a result of the current globalization of markets, production, economies, as well as the rate of consumption, it has become more imperative that managers at all levels develop the required skills and knowledge with respect to intercultural negotiation and cross-cultural workplace interactions and relationships. Given the current dispensation and diversity of workplaces, especially as evidenced in Multinational corporations in Nigeria, it has become pertinent that managers imbibe attitudes and approaches towards conflict and workplace dispute resolution which not only addresses the manifestations distraught amongst the workers also able to identify with the interested parties and to appreciate obvious differences arising as a result of cultural backgrounds. Tsui (2007) notes that with the growing presence of multinational corporations in Nigeria, shaping strategic alliances, and also creating the joint ventures in various local host communities, it is imperative that concerned managers are well acquainted and adequately trained with respect to cross-cultural communication and relational competencies.

Tsui (2007) describes a multinational corporation as one which has its facilities and other assets in at least one country other than its home country. Such organizations have offices or factories in various countries and usually have a centralized head office where they coordinate global management. Examples of multinational corporations in Nigeria include the likes of Coca-Cola, Toshiba, Honda, Microsoft, BMW, SHELL, and AGIP amongst others. Okoro (2013) opined that based on statistics, there are hundreds of registered multinational corporations in Nigeria and a large number of the Nigerian populace as well as expatriates from other Nationalities are engaged as workers by them. Among these workers exist obvious diversity given the fact that some are from the United States of America, some from Britain, India, and from almost every corner of the world. Consequently, different Nationalities, races, belief systems, behaviours, and attitudes, therefore, are brought together by these Multinational corporations within the traditional Nigerian culture and societal belief system. Without doubt, this situation will surely give rise to a great number of challenges, disagreements, and conflicts. Thus the need for culturally intelligent managers who appreciate and recognize such diversity and in the design of conflict management systems, take cognizance of the sensitivity of issues and obvious differences in cultural backgrounds.

Work within an organization where cultural diversity is a reality, requires astute awareness and attention to details especially since personal values differ; rules and policies should be designed first to align behaviours, and attitudes with overall organizational expectations. For systems to be effective they have to be consistent and clear such that it becomes able to communicate and interact effectively on the basis of established socio-structural frameworks and guidelines (Rocha, 1991). Thus, during a social interaction, it is

important that the manager is able to suspend the judgement and avoid any form of bias with regards to situations until the various clues of the context and its related manifestations can be interpreted (Triandis, 2006). Hence, situations of dispute or tension can be alleviated especially if the manager is aware and understands the cultural values, assumptions and behaviour of the other (Holt, 2000).

Given the defining features and components of cultural intelligence, and its application to a multicultural domestic setting such as is obtainable in a Multinational corporation, where all workers, although within the same workplace, have distinct cultural backgrounds, behaviours, values, beliefs, interests and goals, it is expected that managers with high levels of cultural intelligence will be able to organize, coordinate and manage their social behaviour and interaction with others, opting for more integrative systems and more transparent policies with regards to conflict resolution, as compared to those managers with lower levels of cultural intelligence (Imai & Gelfand, 2010). Managers with cultural intelligence are therefore more likely to persevere, even when negotiations become stressful and difficult, given their levels of cognition and motivation in different situations (Van Dyne et al., 2012).

The cognitive dimension of managerial cultural intelligence promotes an active thinking about people and situations, based on heightened awareness and understanding of the differences in values and backgrounds, thus unleashing a critical thinking about habits and beliefs which enables the manager to effectively make assessments and reviews of mind maps thereby, increasing the ability to comprehend and attend to obvious differences (Van Dyne et al., 2008). Managers with high levels of cognitive cultural intelligence have a deeper understanding of how people are influenced by the environment in the way of thinking and acting (Van Dyne et al., 2012). Likewise, high levels of behavioural cultural intelligence can be considered an essential component in conflict management systems. Managers with high levels of behavioural cultural intelligence have the potential of overcoming the natural human tendency to rely on habitual thinking and actions, consequently, such managers have the capacity for demonstrating a behavioural flexibility in different situations, including a change of systems code and an adjustment to the negotiating context or content (Molinsky, 2007).

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The intent of this paper was to examine the relationship between the identified dimensions of managerial cultural intelligence (cognition, motivation and behaviour) and the effectiveness of managerial conflict systems in Multinational corporations in Nigeria. This was as a result of the observed lag in literature which addressed the obvious differences in values, interests and belief systems due to diverse cultural backgrounds and the role of culturally intelligent managers in discerning and managing such situations through the design of conflict management systems which recognizes and is sensitive to such differences. The discourse

revealed strong arguments which support the outcomes of effective management systems as being hinged on the manager's cultural intelligence especially with regards to cognition, motivation and behaviour.

The review on the constructs further indicate the role of adequately and well-planned intercultural social frameworks and structures (such as offered in the conflict management system) in defining and guiding behaviour and relationships within the workplace.

With regards to its actual contribution to the knowledge gap in literature, this paper offers extended insight into the interplay of culture and workplace obligations in that it provides, first, considerable evidence of the role of workers cultural diversity as a mitigating factor on workflow and possible basis for tension and conflict within the workplace, an aspect neglected by previous studies; secondly, it presents managerial cultural intelligence as an antecedent and remedy to the problems and challenges associated with workplace diversity and multicultural settings wherein conflicts are most often as a result of intolerance, bias and prejudice towards out-groups and the inability or unwillingness to accommodate and appreciate differences and diversity.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In line with the observed relationship between managerial cultural intelligence and effective conflict management systems, the following recommendations are put forward:

- i. In the design and implementation of conflict management systems, management should adhere to principles of equity and procedural justice. Conflict management systems should thus be transparent and trustworthy.
- ii. Conflict management systems should be consistent in varied cases and at the same time be sensitive to changes in the nature of conflict, hence conflict management systems should be flexible and accommodating.
- iii. Managers in Nigerian organizations should be trained and offered development opportunities with regards to handling conflict situations especially with respect to those emanating as a result of multicultural settings and environments such as obtainable in Multinational corporations.

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