Synergistic Approach and Workplace Conflict in Major Multinational Oil Companies in Nigeria

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to examine the extent to which synergistic approach is a predictor variable to workplace conflict in major multinational oil companies in Nigeria, using these companies in Rivers state and Delta state as a representation of all in the federation. A review of theoretical and empirical studies carried out with reference to synergistic approach characterized in specific variables like interpersonal conflict, intergroup conflict, intrapersonal conflict, and intragroup conflict. The study adopted the correlational research design and a total of 35 administrative management staff were sampled using the stratified sampling technique. The spearman correlation statistic was used in testing the hypotheses formulated. A total of 7 major multinational oil companies were investigated. The study revealed that synergistic approach of diversity management negatively and significantly influences interpersonal, intrapersonal, intergroup, and intragroup conflicts respectively. Following the findings, the study concluded that synergistic approach negatively and significantly impacts on workplace conflict in multinational oil industry. These findings gave the following recommendations, that; the multinational oil companies in Rivers and Delta states, Nigeria must allow workers participation through every form of synergy for effective and efficient workplace conflict eradication. The multination oil companies are advised to use interactive and inclusive procedures to appear synergistic in the eyes of the workers so as to enable them to become compatible both to tasks and social ethics as this reduces interpersonal conflict.

Keywords: Synergistic Approach, Workplace Conflict, Multinational Oil Companies, interpersonal conflict, intergroup conflict, intrapersonal conflict

Introduction

Human relationships are generally produced through an exchange between two or more parties, where communication is a fundamental factor for these relationships to achieve their main objective. From the psychological and social point of view, synergy is considered a product of exchange process and it does not exist if there is no interaction between the components of a system or group of people which is part an organizational dimension. Synergistic process, attitude plays a fundamental role since behaviors that generate synergies are generous, flexible, cooperative that allow the flow of information (Muafi, 2011). The generations of ideas that allow constructive, effective communication and conflict resolution where emotional intelligence of the members of the group of people involved is of the utmost importance so that the understanding flows and with the objectives set are achieved. This is the joining action of people or organizations to increase each other's effectiveness and is perhaps the most successful type of conflict management. This style emphasizes on, and uses integration of values, needs and communicative collaboration. It encourages a mutual search for a creative alternative which resolves the conflict and is mutually rewarding to both individuals/parties involved in the conflict (Mukoro, 2013). It does not necessarily include the process of giving and getting as involved in compromise. It is rather based on the good faith that both parties sincerely desire a positive alternative to their present state of conflict. Conflict at work is commonly associated with numerous outcomes. As noted, most commonly, conflict at work manifests itself in petty arguments, spreading rumors, and gossiping (Spector & Jex, 1998).The omnipresent nature of conflict has led Tjosvold (2008) to argue that, "to work in an organization is to be in conflict" and as such, to take advantage of joint work requires conflict management. Although conflict is ubiquitous in nature and embedded within the structure of organizations, the formal process of dealing with conflict in workplaces is prescribed by statute and workplace policies and procedures. It is central for every organization to strive and create a balance so as to be and remain a healthy organization, even in the face of conflict. Conflict is the interactionist perspective, which believes that conflict is a positive force and necessary for effective performance. This approach encourages a minimum level of conflict within the group to encourage self-criticism, change and innovation, and to help prevent apathy or too great a tolerance for harmony and the status quo. Townsend (2007) opined that conflict as a sign of a healthy organization – up to a point. Conflict, *per se*, is not necessarily

good or bad but an inevitable feature of organizational life and should be judged in terms of its effects on performance (Mullins, 2002). As multinationals have workforces composed of people from different geographical, religious, linguistic, and political backgrounds- in short, from different cultures - cultural differences are more prominent than homogeneity and similarities. Multinationals therefore need to take these differences into consideration in their managerial activities. In a multinational where cultural differences are ignored, they can lead to an unfruitful organizational climate and culture, whereas in organizations where such differences are considered important and effectively managed, they can contribute to a culture of synergy (Aksu, 2008). However, for the multinational companies, the capability of managing socio-cultural diversity is vital, to be able to realize gains from its specialized resources. It is a common occurrence in the multinational companies today to see virtually the same kind of conflict situations, ranging and having its roots in socio-cultural diversity. Considering this line of argument, it becomes exceedingly difficult for such organizations to survive without effectively and efficiently handling those situations that will hinder organizational growth. This study examined the effect of synergistic approach in conflict resolution of multination oil and gas firms in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) describes the interactions between person and their situation (Mischel, 1973). This theory focuses on how individuals interpret and respond to various situations. According to Davis and Powell (1992), individual and their environment are said to influence each other. SCT explains a triadic relationship where the individual psychological factor, their environment, and the behavior they engage in are determinants that influence each other given but not simultaneously (Bandura, 1977a). It was also determined that employees might behave based on their observation of others which then leads to self-corrective judgments and improvement in self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977b). Thus, the present study aims to fill in the gap by using the social cognitive theoretical lens as a baseline in analyzing the relationship between socio-cultural diversity management and workplace conflict. Many researchers emphasize that workplace conflict is a result of unequal treatment among employees, which is supported by the equity theory (Adams, 1965). When employees compare their outcomes (i.e. pay, promotions) to inputs (i.e. education, effort, skills) with that of their co-workers and experience inequality, then they are said to be involved in conflict (Appelbaum, Iaconi & Matousek, 2007; Henle, 2005). This concept is related to "perception of fairness and just treatment on the job" (Fox, Spector & Miles, 2001, 33). The evaluation of an individual's organizational fairness is based on outcomes, procedures, and personal interactions (Forbes Insight, 2011). The perception of an unfair work environment would develop negative attitudes like job dissatisfaction and mistrust which would lead to conflict against the organization (Farasat & Ziaaddini, 2013). Employees are expected to exhibit positive behaviours when their perception of fairness is to their satisfaction (Yildiz, Alpkan, Ates & Sezen, 2015).The effects of fairness on workplace conflicts are known to be influenced by avariety of organizational, contextual and personality characteristics. These have been researched from three different perspectives. The first is the instrumental perspective where unfair treatment motivates an individual to take action against the organization so that it could improve the compensation for their input. The relational perspective emphasizes the fact that a fair treatment within a group environment would affirm an individual's identity in that group. Finally, the moral virtue perspective, which determines the organizational adherence to moral standards (Folger, Cropanzano & Goldman, 2005) and violation of these moral principles would trigger deonticanger, which may lead to irrational retaliatory behaviours (Folger et al., 2005).

Synergistic Approach

Synergy is cooperative or combined action that can occur when diverse or disparate groups of people with varying viewpoints work together. The objective is to increase effectiveness by sharing perceptions, insights, and knowledge. But synergy is more than simply working together toward the mutual achievement of certain goals. The power of synergy rests in the reality that "when solving problems, groups are often smarter than the smartest people within them" (Surowiecki, 2004).

Consequently, when ordinary people using available resources can freely exchange opinions and argue points of view, extraordinary results can occur. Synergy is also vital in solving complex international business problems. Synergistic approach assumes cultural contingency- that the best way depends on the particular cultures of the people involved. This approach recognizes both the similarities and differences among the cultures that compose a global organization and suggests that we neither ignore nor minimize cultural diversity, but rather view it as a resource in designing and developing organizational systems (Adler, 1980). As pointed out by Adler, every organization that is global, innovative and a learning organization, its key resource to manage diversity is cultural synergy.Adler (2002) identified four steps in creating cultural synergy; 1. Describe the situation by determining underlying cultural assumptions, 2. Access cultural overlaps, 3. Create culturally synergistic overlaps, 4. Select one created alternative. Furthermore, Adler (2002) also identified five strategies for managing cultural diversity cultural dominance, cultural avoidance, cultural accommodation, cultural synergy and cultural compromise. The most desirable one is cultural synergy which can be obtained by valuing other culture while upholding self-culture. Organizations try to maintain cultural synergy by putting difference in the marketplace, workplace and community. By working with people who have a different frame of reference, one can learn to look at problems from different point of view, learn new ways of solving problems and thus can create cultural synergy (Holladay & Quinones, 2005). Diversity training programs in organizations are part of cultural synergistic approach undertaken by organizations, and it has three fundamental goals (Holladay & Quinones, 2005), which roughly parallel Cox and Beale's (1997) characterization of the diversity management change process from awareness to understanding to action: The first goal is to create awareness of discrimination and bias in an organization and use this awareness to improve the work environment for employees. The second goal looks toward having employees acknowledge their biases and prejudices and then learn skills such as conflict management to address these biases to improve the organization's work relationships. The third goal focuses on recognizing and capitalizing on diversity as an asset that can improve individual and organizational performance.

Workplace Conflict

Workplace conflict has been defined in several ways by many authors. Obi (2012) defined workplace conflict as an act of discontentment and contention which either the workers or employers of labour utilize to put excessive pressure against each other so as to get their demands. This view is consistent with Henry (2009); Ikeda, Veludo and Campomar (2005); Azamoza (2004) and Ajala and Oghenekohwo (2002) descriptions of workplace conflict as a dispute that occurs when interests, goals or values of different individuals or groups are incompatible with each other in organizations. On this premise, workplace conflict within the context of employment relationship can be regarded as an inevitable clash of interests and resulting disputes of varying intensity between and within any or all of the active actors in organizations. Thus, in the absence of common values in organizations, conflict is bound to occur. The popular conception of workplace conflict is that a normal harmonious state is disturbed, and something is wrong. Consequently, conflict is something to be avoided and must be resolved or at least managed (Schulz-Hardt, Mojzisch & Volgelgesang, 2008; De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). Tjosvold (2006) challenges this conceptualisation, arguing that the problem with conflict is the inadequacy of its definition. He argues that limited scrutiny of the definition of conflict has contributed to the way it is characterised as destructive, and the widespread belief that "conflict escalation just happens without human choice" (Tjosvold, 2006, p.88). The prevailing definition has typically reflected the assumption that conflict arises from both opposing interests and incompatible goals (Mack & Snyder, 1957; Pondy, 1967; Schmidt & Kochan, 1972). Rubin, Pruitt and Kim (1994, p.5) argue that conflict was "a perceived divergence of interests or a belief that the parties' current aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously. This approach is supported by Lewicki, Saunders and Minton (1997) who define conflict as "the interaction of independent people who perceived incompatible goals and interference from each other in achieving those goals". Consistent with this theme of opposing interests and incompatible goals De Dreu, Harinck and Van Vianen (1999) conclude that conflict involves "the tension an individual or group experiences because of perceived differences between him or herself and another individual or group", and Jehn and Bendersky (2003) define conflict as "perceived incompatibilities or discrepant views among the parties involved.

Conflict is a social phenomenon that occurs across species, time and cultures. Conflict has been frequently studied among bees, ants, other insect communities, among crayfish and chimpanzees (De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008). The evidence of conflict among humans' dates to the appearance of humankind itself (Keeley, 1996). The easiest way to understand the term conflict is to divide theories of conflict in functional, situational, and interactive. Conflict is viewed as natural due to life's uncertainty. Conflict is good and necessary because a conflict can stimulate innovative thinking when it is managed in the right way. Lacking conflict, thoughts and actions are performed because they are habitual. Conflict allows an examination of the necessity of these thoughts and actions. The third assumption points out that people find it easier to live with unresolved misunderstanding than facing the fact that fundamental differences do exist, they demand recognition and appropriate management (Ramsay, 2001). Conflict is an integral part of human life in all aspects. Robbins (1998) found the following definition a process that begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affect, something that the first party cares about. Flannes and Levin's define conflict as "a dispute, disagreement, or contention between two or more entities (e.g., people, teams, various stakeholders) (2001). Solansky, Singh, & Huang, (2014) investigated the effect of task and relationship conflict on individuals' perceptions of group efficacy and group mind. Individual perceptions of group efficacy and group mind were significantly higher when they perceived non-occurrence of conflict as compared to frequent conflict episodes. When the conflict types were decoupled, the perceived efficacy and mind score were found to be significantly higher in case of task conflict than when both types of conflict co-occurred. Review of the relevant literature shows that research has yet to reach a consensus on the relationship between task conflict and performance at work, and accounting for this inconsistency is crucial for theoretical and practical reasons. Since most of research on task conflict deals with group level studies (Lu et al., 2011), this study measures the conflict perceptions at individual level and its impact on task performance, contextual performance and turnover intentions of employees. Moreover, the findings of these studies suggest that task conflict and work behaviors may have an explanatory mechanism through which task conflict leads to positive outcomes. It is predicted that different indicators of workplace subjective well-being i.e., work engagement, and job satisfaction may explain the intervening mechanism in this relationship. In this way, the present study also tries to add something to existing knowledge regarding the contribution of these different types of conflicts in organizational setting in context of different forms of employees' subjective wellbeing and work behaviors.

Measures of Workplace Conflict

Interpersonal conflict

This is also known as dyadic conflict (Rahim, 2001). It refers to conflict between two or more organizational members of the same or different hierarchical levels or units. Conflict threatens self-esteem and impacts negatively upon all physiological systems in ways like accelerated heartbeat and increased muscle tensions (Riaz & Junaid, 2011). However, interpersonal conflict with colleagues is significantly related to personal outcomes (self-esteem, general well-being, emotional exhaustion), while interpersonal conflicts with superiors is significantly related to organizational outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intentions and real turnover (Riaz & Junaid, 2011). De Deru & Gelfand, (2008), see workplace as an antecedent to interpersonal conflict, affecting well-being negatively and employees with low well-being which may trigger conflict with colleagues who are more prone to such conflict due to poor performance. Interpersonal conflicts arise from social identity issues like intolerance towards an out group, feeling of superiority, and hidden inclination of serving in-group at the expense of out-groups (De Dreu and Gelfand, 2008). Interpersonal conflict at work can manifest itself in several ways and can range in severity from spreading rumors to physical assault. Conflict at work can consist of covert behaviors that are indirect and less identifiable, or overt behaviors with very direct and obvious intentions (Spector & Jex, 1998). While a wide variation of interpersonal conflict may be found across and within organizations, most interpersonal conflicts include petty arguments and gossip, and not actual physical attacks (Schat, Frone, & Kelloway, 2006). Regardless of the interpersonal conflict manifestation, can

elicit anger and frustration in employees who encounter it (Keenan & Newton, 1985). As a result, employees who encounter interpersonal conflict at work may have difficulties disengaging from thoughts of the conflict and may ruminate about the experience even after leaving the workplace at the end of the day. They may also be less engaged in their work out of fear of future conflicts. Over time, these continued thoughts of the experienced conflict may lead to detrimental outcomes for employees, such as higher levels of anxiety, frustration, and burnout (De Dreu, Dierendonck, & Dijkstra, 2004).

Intra-personal conflict

An individual encounters frustration when a certain obstacle stands in the way of him/her achieving his/her goal, thereby creating what is called frustration (Luthans, 2008). This, in turn, may create a kind of defensive reaction such as justification, withdrawal, aggressive behaviour, inertia or the acceptance of a compromise or an alternative (Elmagri, 2002). The negative consequences of frustration affect the morale of individuals and their satisfaction with the work (Luthans, 2008). However, frustration can also have positive results such as continuous and hard work to reach a goal and thus to improve the performance and productivity of the individual; however, this all depends on the individual's personality. Intrapersonal conflict because of the individual's incompatible goals: This type of conflict relates to the goals of an individual. Therefore, it can be distinguished here between frustration and clashing or incompatible goals. In the case of frustration, an individual seeks to achieve a particular goal but there is an obstacle(s) that impedes/impede this achievement. In the case of incompatible goals, an individual has two or more goals that clash with each other. An individual can be faced with three types of incompatible goals (Luthans, 2008; Maher, 2004). Positive conflicting goals: In this scenario there are two or more positive goals. However, achieving one goal prevents the achievement of others. An example is the presence of more than one job opportunity for an individual and thus the individual finds themselves in the position of having to make a choice; Negative conflicting goals: Here the individual is faced with two or more goals; all of them are negative and the individual must choose one of them. Usually in this case, the individual chooses the least harmful goal. Conflict between achieving and not achieving the goal: This type of conflict takes place when an individual has one goal and, at the same time, achieving this goal leads to both negative results and positive ones. Here, the individual is in a state of confusion as to whether or not to achieve this goal. Maher (2004) states that, in this case, the culture of the individual and his/her education and experience play a large role in his/her decision. Nelson and Quick (2006) argue that intrapersonal conflict can be managed by careful self-analysis and diagnosis of the situation.

Intergroup conflict

This is also known as interdepartmental conflict. It refers to conflict between two or more units or groups within an organization. Conflicts between manager and staff, production and marketing, headquarters and field staff are examples of this type of conflict. One special type of intergroup conflict is between labor and management. For example, one group of employees can unite against another group. Such conflicts can arise from the differences in status and contradicting goals of the groups. Intergroup conflict usually leads to miscommunication or even to no communication, affecting an organization's ability to function. The manager can try to resolve the problem through problem solving tactics or following an internal dispute resolution process. Sometimes a facilitator can be useful to help discuss issues of conflict and related concerns. Such types of conflicts should be solved quickly but if the problem continues it can destroy the organization (Bankovskaya, 2012). Conflict between different groups or teams can become a threat to organizational competitiveness (Bankovskaya, 2012). One of the main seeds of Intergroup Conflict can be cohesiveness, but a certain amount of it can make a smooth-running team, but too much of it can be harmful. The study of in-groups has revealed such changes connected with increased group cohesiveness: Firstly, members of in-groups view themselves as unique individuals, but they stereotype members of other groups as all alike. Secondly, In-group members see themselves positively as people with high moral standards, as opposite to viewing

members of other groups negatively and as immoral people. Thirdly, outsiders are viewed as a threat to the group and fourthly, In-group members exaggerate differences between their group and other groups. Lastly, In-group thinking is an inseparable part of organizational life, which is why it guarantees a conflict. Managers cannot eliminate in-group thinking, but they should not ignore it (Bankovskaya, 2012). Intergroup conflict is the perceived incompatibility of goals or values between two or more individuals, which emerges because these individuals classify themselves as members of different social groups. Several scholars have suggested distinguishing between different types of conflict. For instance, conflicts have various sources. They can arise over (scarce) economic resources (e.g., money, territory), values (e.g., what is 'right' and 'wrong'), power (e.g., influence on the other party' behaviors or outcomes), or a combination of these (Katz, 1965). Moreover, conflicts can be located on a scale ranging from tractable to intractable conflicts (Bar-Tal, 2011). Tractable conflicts concern goals of low importance that are partially compatible and partially incompatible between the involved parties ('mixed-motive' situations).

Intra-group conflict

This is also known as intradepartmental conflict. It refers to conflict among members of a group or between two or more subgroups within a group in connection with its goals, tasks, procedures, behavior and attitude (Riaz & Junaid, 2011). Such a conflict may also occur as a result of incompatibilities or disagreements between some or all the members of a group and its leaders. Harmony with the departments of the company is essential. It helps to maintain productivity and workplace morale, among other things, such as good relationship and productivity. When two or more people do not get along together, that personal conflict can affect everyone around them. Intra-group conflict may relate to ethnic, religious or gender prejudice, and also various personality differences. Depending on how strong the conflict is, a manager may need outside help to resolve the issues for effective running of the organization. Intra-group conflict describes a situation in which group members hold discrepant views (have different opinions, attitudes, knowledge) or has interpersonal incompatibilities with each other (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). Several sources and types of disagreements and tensions were reported in the literature, starting with the scarcity of resources, affective states (stress and tensions) or cognitive states (difference in perceptions, opinions and attitudes. These qualitative differences in the nature of conflict were identified rather long ago, yet it was in the 1990s when the literature on conflict frames of reference (Pinkley, 1990) and intra-group conflict (De dreu & Weingart, 2003) made a clear distinction between task (or cognitive) and relational (or emotional) conflict.

Methodology

This study adopted correlational research design to examine the effect of synergistic approach in workplace conflict in major multinational oil companies in Nigeria. The population of the study was seven multinational oil companies in Nigeria. The sample size was 35 administrative staff which were sampled from the seven (7) major multinational oil companies in Port Harcourt and Warri, with each company, five (5) administrative department workers whom were at the management level were selected each. The primary data collection methods used for this study were retrieving the questionnaire group scores for each company from the strata and collecting responses to the workplace conflict inventory and the socio-cultural diversity management. Questionnaire was structured in a simple and direct method, and also, complex questions were avoided. The variables of the study, both predictors and criterion variables, are measured using the 5-point Likert scale (where, 5 = very high extent, 4 = high extent, 3 = moderate extent, 2 = low extent, 1 = very low extent). The Spearman rank order correlation coefficient was used to test the hypotheses raised through the use of the social science statistical package (SPSS), version 22. The reason for choosing the Spearman rank order correlation coefficient as a statistical tool is because the research questions were formulated in ordinal form.

Results and Discussions

The tables below give details on the effect of synergistic approach on workplace conflict in major multinational oil companies in Nigeria.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Synergistic Approach

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
My company helps us understand the mission, vision, objectives and cultural differences and also demonstrates planning toward its attainment	35	1.00	5.00	4.3810	.74001
My company ensures that changes in plans are communicated prior to implementation and members interact primarily to share ideas	35	1.00	5.00	4.1429	.65465
Each member believes what other members are saying and appear to collaborate and cooperate with each other	35	1.00	5.00	4.4286	.59761
I accept feedback from each other and separate individual's ideas from feelings about that person	35	1.00	5.00	4.5238	.60159
We genuinely appreciate and accommodate each other's accomplishments	35	1.00	5.00	4.6667	.65828
My company encourages us to recognize and appreciate complimentary role functions	35	1.00	5.00	4.5241	.59986
I don't usually find it difficult to talk to people who do not share my views	35	1.00	5.00	4.4328	.61458
Valid N (listwise)	35				

From table 1 with regards to the minimum and maximum mean scores of the dimension synergistic approach, indicated that most of the respondents were on the response scale of high extent and very high extent as the least mean score value was 4.14 which is greater than 3.5, and the maximum mean score value was 4.67, which was greater than 4.5 mark.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Intrapersonal Conflict

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am actively attempting to become the best version of myself	35	1.00	5.00	3.4000	1.72378
My current self-view is the result of a great deal of reflection and thought	35	1.00	5.00	3.2667	1.43759
My identity or self-concept is primarily defined by external/social values	35	1.00	5.00	3.0667	1.53375
I like the task I perform relative to the tasks performed in my company	35	1.00	5.00	3.1333	1.45733
There is a good match between my needs and the needs of the company	35	1.00	5.00	3.2000	1.42428
My skills are fully utilized on the job	35	1.00	5.00	3.2667	1.43759
My job is challenging	35	1.00	5.00	3.2000	1.42428
Valid N (listwise)	35				

Table 2 with regards to the minimum and maximum mean scores of the measure intrapersonal conflict, indicated that most of the respondents were on the response scale of moderate extent as the least mean score value was 3.06and the maximum mean score was 3.40 which are both greater than 2.5 but lesser than 3.5.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Intergroup Conflict

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
There is lack of mutual assistance between my group and other groups	35	1.00	5.00	3.3756	1.62375
There are personality clashes between my group and other groups	35	1.00	5.00	2.3663	1.43759
Other groups create problems for my group	35	1.00	5.00	3.0667	1.53375
There is much competition between our department and other departments in our company	35	1.00	5.00	3.1647	1.33481
There is lack of cooperation between my group and other groups	35	1.00	5.00	2.1133	1.47886
The other groups withhold information necessary for the attainment of our group tasks	35	1.00	5.00	3.3903	1.72221
The relationship between my department and the other departments is harmonious in attaining the overall company's objectives	35	1.00	5.00	2.2315	1.39733
Valid N (listwise)	35				

From table 3, with regards to the minimum and maximum mean scores of the measure intergroup conflict, indicated that most of the respondents were on the response scale of low extent and moderate extent as the least mean score value was 2.23 which is greater than 1.5 but lesser than 2.5, whereas the maximum mean score was 3.39 which is greater than the 2.5 but lesser than 3.5.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Intragroup Conflict

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
In our group, we have lots of bickering over who should do what job	35	1.00	5.00	3.4122	1.72178
There is difference of opinion among the members of my group	35	1.00	5.00	2.2634	1.43738
There is dissension in my group	35	1.00	5.00	3.0667	1.53375
When differences occurred, some tried to put themselves forward at the expense of others	35	1.00	5.00	3.1222	1.63452
There is much narrow-mindedness and envy within group members	35	1.00	5.00	2.2111	1.41186
While disagreeing on the subject matter, feelings were kept under control and one made an effort to argue in a logical and analytical manner	35	1.00	5.00	3.2448	1.37712
Criticism of some members of the group occurred, but in such a way that nobody became defensive	35	1.00	5.00	2.4122	1.49731
Valid N (listwise)	35				

From the table 4, with regards to the minimum and maximum scores of the measure intragroup conflict, indicated that most of the respondents were on the response scale of low extent and moderate extent as the least mean score value was 2.21 which is greater than 1.5 but lesser than 2.5, whereas the maximum mean score value was 3.41, which was greater than 2.5 but lesser than 3.5.

Bivariate Analysis (Correlation)

This will help us to analyze how one dimension relates to another measure. There was analysis of all the dimensions (synergistic approach, cultural competence and socialization) with each of the measures (interpersonal, intrapersonal, intergroup and intragroup) respectively.

Table 5: Synergistic Approach and Interpersonal Conflict

			Synergistic	Interpersonal
Spearman's rho	Synergistic	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.597[*]
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.019
		N	35	35
	Interpersonal	Correlation Coefficient	-.597[*]	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.019	.
		N	35	35

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Research Data, 2019

Table 5 shows a negative and significant relationship between synergistic approach of diversity management and interpersonal conflict with a rho value of -0.597. This indicates that there is a 59.7% explanation of the relationship between both variables, while 40.3% are explained by other variables not considered in this relationship. However, this statement is true as the level of significance of 0.019 is less than 0.05, therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and its alternative form accepted. This states that there is significant relationship between synergistic approach of diversity management and interpersonal conflict in the studied multinational oil companies in Nigeria.

Table 6: Synergistic Approach and Intrapersonal Conflict

			Synergistic	Intrapersonal
Spearman's rho	Synergistic	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.553[*]
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.032
		N	35	35
	Intrapersonal	Correlation Coefficient	-.553[*]	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.032	.
		N	35	35

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Research Data, 2019

Table 6 shows a negative and significant relationship between synergistic approach of diversity management and intrapersonal conflict a rho value of -0.553. This indicates that there is a 55.3% explanation of the relationship between both variables, while 44.7% are explained by other variables not considered in this relationship. However, this statement is true as the level of significance of 0.032 is lesser than 0.05, therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and its alternative

form accepted. This states that there is significant relationship between synergistic approach and intrapersonal conflict in the studied multinational oil companies in Nigeria.

Table 7: Synergistic Approach and Intergroup Conflict

			Synergistic	Intergroup
Spearman's rho	Synergistic	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.591[*]
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.020
		N	35	35
	Intergroup	Correlation Coefficient	-.591[*]	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.020	.
		N	35	35

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
Source: Research Data, 2019

Table 7 shows a negative and significant relationship between synergistic approach of diversity management and intergroup conflict with a rho value of -0.591. This indicates that there is 59.1% explanation of the relationship between both variables, while 40.9% are explained by other variables not considered in this relationship. However, this statement is true as the level of significance of 0.020 is lesser than 0.05, therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and its alternative form accepted. This states that there is significant relationship between synergistic approach of diversity management and intergroup conflict in the studied multinational oil companies in Nigeria.

Table 8: Synergistic Approach and Intragroup Conflict

			Synergistic	Intragroup
Spearman's rho	Synergistic	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.626[*]
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.012
		N	35	35
	Intragroup	Correlation Coefficient	-.626[*]	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	.
		N	35	35

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
Source: Research Data, 2019

Table 8 shows a negative and significant relationship between synergistic approach of diversity management and intragroup conflict with a rho value of -0.626. This indicates that there is 62.6% explanation of the relationship between both variables, while 37.4% are explained by other variables not considered in this relationship. However, this statement is true as the level of significance of 0.012 is lesser than 0.05, therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and its alternative form accepted. This states that there is significant relationship between synergistic approach of diversity management and intragroup conflict in the studied multinational oil companies in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

Association between Synergistic Approach and Interpersonal Conflict

There was a negative and significant relationship between synergistic approach of diversity management and interpersonal conflict in multinational oil companies in Nigeria. De Dreu & Gelfand (2008) proposed that conflict is a process that begins when an individual or group perceives differences and opposition between itself and an individual or group about interests and resources, beliefs, values or practices that matter to them. This shows that conflict, work and organizations are so strongly intertwined that people have to conclude that organizations without conflict do not exist and conflict cannot exist without people being interdependent for their task achievement. Leung (2010) noted that conflict can affect everyone in a varying extent especially in workplace where people work together on a daily basis. Acosta, Salanova, & Llorens, 2012) suggest that organizational practices and a perceived match between expectations and practices play a significant role in increasing organizational trust. This implies that for workers to have an affectionate tie with their employing organization there must be some level of their dependence (reliability) in the organization's capability to do that which is expected. Synergistic approach recognizes both the similarities and differences among the cultures that compose a global organization and suggests that we neither ignore nor minimize cultural diversity, but rather view it as a resource in designing and developing organizational systems (Adler, 1980; Stewart & Johnson, 2009). As pointed out by Adler, every organization that is global, innovative and a learning organization, its key resource to manage diversity is cultural synergy. Adler (2002) identified four steps in creating cultural synergy; describe the situation by determining underlying cultural assumptions; access cultural overlaps; create culturally synergistic overlaps; and select one created alternative. Cultural synergy which can be obtained by valuing other culture while upholding self-culture. Organizations try to maintain cultural synergy by putting difference in the market place, workplace and community. By working with people who have a different frame of reference, one can learn to look at problems from different point of view, learn new ways of solving problems and thus can create cultural synergy (Holladay & Quinones, 2005). To develop the desired feelings of togetherness without undue interpersonal conflicts, an organization must be able to keep her own part of workers' expectations by creating platforms that will enable fairplay and eliminate every form of discrimination (Webster, 2014). Furthermore, he noted that reliable organizations synergistically create a workforce that seeks to be compatible with their colleagues, and also to the objectives and aspirations of the organization. This research concluded that;

i.   Cultural synergy on the part of an organization creates an inner burning desire in workers to align to the rules and objectives of the organization.
ii.   The alignment of workers to rules and objectives leads to reduced friction with others, helping each other and craving for improved goal attainment.
iii. Synergistic approach of diversity management reduces interpersonal conflict.
iv.

Association between Synergistic Approach and Intrapersonal Conflict

There is a negative and significant relationship between synergistic approach of diversity management and intrapersonal conflict in the multinational companies in Nigeria. In the context of organizational predictors of workplace harmony in response to elimination or reduction of workplace conflict, perceived synergy has emerged as a powerful source (Cooper-Thomas and Anderson, 2006). Individuals evaluate not only how fair decisions and procedures are, but also the quality of the relationship between the decision-maker and those affected by the decision. Synergistic approach of diversity management puts into consideration all the stakeholders involved in the organization. Synergistic approach of diversity management by organizations if perceived by workers as not being present is argued to result in negative affective and emotional reactions, escalated levels of stress, and burnout. As argued in the norm of reciprocity, unmet expectations regarding

the decision making process and personal interactions lead individuals to feel increasingly higher levels of frustration and psychological distress (Tepper, 2001), which in turn result in workforce non-compatibility.

The sense of cultural synergy alleviates the detrimental effects of high job demands. Consistent with these premises, the literature also provides empirical evidence indicating that those employees perceiving organizational injustice are more likely to experience burnout (Van Yperen, Buunk, & Schaufeli, 1992; Van Horn et al., 1999) which results to intrapersonal conflict. Likewise, the existence of cultural synergy is found to be a valuable factor for coping with stress (Kroon, van de Voorde, & van Veldhoven, 2009) and preventing burnout (Noblet & Rodwell, 2009). Deriving from the aforementioned relationship, it might be assumed that workers' perception of cultural synergy regarding workplace outcomes or processes might have effects on their stress levels. Such that when workers evaluate their work practices as being fair, their tendency to feel compatible become prevalent. Thus:

i.   Synergistic approach of diversity management influences compatibility among the workforce with organizational goals and objectives.
ii.   Compatibility reduces intrapersonal conflicts.
iii. Synergistic approach of diversity management reduces intrapersonal conflicts.

Association between Synergistic Approach and Intergroup Conflict

There is a negative and significant relationship between synergistic approach of diversity management and intergroup conflict in the multinational companies in Nigeria. Calderia and Dhillon (2010) posited that cultural synergy as a diversity management strategy is related to a combination of skills and technologies. Capabilities related more to the strategies application of synergy to achieve organizational goals (Calderia & Dhillon, 2010). Freilhing and Fichtner (2010) stated that firms must manage the process of cultural synergy through learning process. Synergistic approach is an enabler of competence, communications, and openness so as to capture related to ambiguity, reality and views on human nature. This in turn will create both task compatibility and social compatibility points of view. These compatibilities have more of an interpersonal and intergroup interest (Ariely, 2014). Burlingame, Fuhriman, and Drescher (1984) proposed that workers that perceive cultural synergy are more likely to be compatible with the other workers and the organization, and as such decreases the level of intergroup conflict. Thus:

i.   Synergistic approach of socio-cultural diversity management eliminates intergroup conflict.

Conclusion

This study presented four conclusions depicting the research conceptualized and obtained from the main purpose of the study. Below are the various conclusions reached from the findings of the study:

- Synergistic approach of diversity management in the multinational oil companies in Nigeria has a negative and significant influence on interpersonal conflict.

- Synergistic approach of diversity management in the multinational oil companies in Nigeria has a negative and significant influence on intrapersonal conflict.

- Synergistic approach of diversity management in the multinational oil companies in Nigeria has a negative and significant influence on intergroup conflict.

- Synergistic approach of diversity management in the multinational oil companies in Nigeria has a negative and significant influence on intragroup conflict.

Recommendations

The following specific recommendations are made based on the findings of this study:

1. Organizations' are advised to use interactive and inclusive procedures to appear synergistic in the eyes of the workers so as to enable them become compatible both to tasks and social ethics as this reduces interpersonal conflict.

2. The multinational oil companies in Port Harcourt, Nigeria are advised to allow workers participation through every form of synergy for effective and efficient workforce intrapersonal conflict eradication.

3. The multinational oil companies in Nigeria are advised to make positive infractions into the current cultural synergistic system as this will decrease employees' intergroup conflict.

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