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RESEARCH ARTICLE

African Enterprise Management Paradigm: A Multinational Perspective

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ABSTRACT:

This work is on multinational enterprise management with particular reference to Africa. In doing this, the work looked at the meaning, cultural perspective of the human practices management resources and went further to examine the Francophone and Anglophone nations' cultural influences as it relates to human resources management practices. Furthermore, the work examined the managerial implications of cultural influence on nations, especially, Sub-Sahara African countries. The research is exploratory in nature. Therefore, it was concluded that though separating African from their culture might be somehow difficult but then the study recommended that when it comes to multinational enterprises management, the cross-vergence way should be embraced especially in the human resources management practices of their organisation in other nation in order to encourage foreign experts and guide against culture myopia among citizens of the host nations.

KEYWORDS: Multinational, Culture, Cross-Vergence, One-way convergence, Two-way convergence.

INTRODUCTION:

Organisation is said to be an artificial being in existence around the world but survive as a result of human interrelationship in and around it. Human element is the basic things that require complex management as such require some skills, abilities and knowledge of certain elements to be successful. It must be noted that management principles are universal and the same, be it in locally based, nationally based as well as internationally based (multinational or transnational).

The same method used in operating any equipment in any Africa country will be the same way it will be operated in Asia, Japan, Sweden, America, Britain, France and other countries. But the human element differs because the concern is on human element as a result of the cultural influence on them.

This culture had really dealt a great blow to the psychic of fast majority of Africans as such the management of organisations that are multinational in nature require a great deal of cultural background of the people. Ahiauzu (1999) while talking about the nature and strength of African culture and communities on Africans to emphasis the future of industrialization in Africa quoted Kerr, et al. (1973:106-107) as saying that:

The cultural patterns of industrialization may move in rapidly, advance shortly, or be sealed off in a particular society. They may penetrate deeply or shallowly, depending upon the nature and strength of pre-existing culture.

Therefore, in order to be able to manage any African multinational organisations, there is need to understand in details the culture and in understanding any culture of the people, one must know how the people perceive and view events and situations around them. Otite (1978:2) as cited in Ahiauzu (1999) said that "the behaviour of a people cannot be fully understood unless one knows their systems of thought" and also Cole (1913:vii) in Ahiauzu (1999) argued that "the form in which they behave, is the result of the habits of thought and action

which they find around them". This goes a long way to establish that most Africans and their organisations cannot really be culturally flexible (cross-vergence). It was revealed in Eketu and Nwakaego (2008) quoting Jackson (2002) asserted that "multinational model is built on the premise that it is necessary to understand cultural differences, rather than trying to smooth them over or override them".

AFRICAN MANAGEMENT MODEL:

Although, there are some high-level of similarities among the region but investigation had revealed that *Africa comprises of range of distinct investment destinations, flaws, cultural differences and business practices* Wikipedia. The implication of this statement is that there is cultural difference among the Africans but similarity on being highly influenced by their culture. Having established that Africans are strongly influenced by their culture, there is also the need to distinguish between the Francophone and Anglophone Africans. The Francophone countries are those countries colonized by France and are purely French speaking countries while the Anglophone are those colonized by the British and other English speaking nations.

Francophone Countries Management Culture:

The Francophone countries include Benin Republic, Togo, Cameroun, Senegal, Mali and other nation with French language as their official language in Africa. They tends to majorly imbibe some of the French culture and as such their management culture are likely to be similar to that of the French people which according to Eketu and Nwakaego (2008) are characterized with much ethnocentric. Ethnocentric because of their much conviction of "the superiority of its own ethnic group or culture" Eketu and Nwakaego (2008:58). According to Dubin (1970), Harris and Morn (1989) and Jackson (2002) as quoted in the same Eketu and Nwakaego (2008) the French culture are dominantly influenced by "Catholicism, honour system, centralization and the feeling of its cultural superiority".

Apart from ethnocentric, another consequence of French management culture is the much reliance on education systems which make graduates to be at the higher post at younger age (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939 as cited in Eketu and Nwakaego, 2008).

Some of the reasons for the ethnocentric staffing policy of the French management culture are the believe of the organisation that there is no qualified person in the host nation that can be used to fill any higher management positions, the need to have and maintain what was described as *unified corporate culture* and the policy of using your nationals in the foreign countries to transfer the core competencies from the home nation to host nations. In the same vein, Eketu and Nwakaego (2008)

the ethnocentric staffing policy was said to be waning because "an ethnocentric staffing policy limits advancement opportunities for host country nationals" and that "an ethnocentric policy can lead to cultural myopia".

Anglophone Countries Management Culture:

Just like the Francophone countries, Anglophone countries are those countries colonized by the British and other English speaking countries before giving them independence. The countries include Nigeria, Ghana, Gambia, Liberia, Sierra Leone and other countries that use English language as their official language in Africa. Just like the management culture of the Francophone nations had some resemblance with that of their colonial master (France), the Anglophone nations practice similar management culture of learning like the British. The British management culture was said by Eketu and Nwakaego (2008) citing Jackson (2002) to be learning organisation model and have "a low measure of power distance; high on individualism; low on uncertainty avoidance; and has a short-term orientation". Many of the Anglophone nations like Nigeria can be seen from the perspective of cross-cultural in management culture based on the assumption that there should be teamwork, participative decision making as well as people empowerment increment. Jackson and Back's (1998) as cited in Eketu and Nwakaego (2008) identified two learning style in the cross-cultural which are analysis and action orientation which differentiate between that of British, India and African managers. With cross-cultural training will be highly needed for "readiness for future change and specific competences of individual in relation to needs of the organisation" Eketu and Nwakaego (2008).

British learning management culture just like those from the Anglophone nations had elements like "personal and psychological privacy; friendliness and sincerity; orderliness; defined status and roles; little mobility; love of humor; politeness and modesty; pragmatism; formality; preference for well-defined job function; importance for meetings; individualism; love for work; and social control.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION:

From the above discourse, it can be noted that African are married to their culture and separating them might be somehow difficult. Ahiauzu (1999) while establishing the strength of cultural characteristics identified in ordinary African people just like a worker describing his first day on job experience to her wife at home describing the machines and equipment as "the white-man's witchcraft" or taking industrial dispute to a traditional ruler (the Emir) rather than the Industrial Tribunal and the Emir was able to tackle the matter

effectively. Lubeck (1975:146) quoted in Ahiauzu (1999) said that:

Stress must be placed upon the significance of Muslim culture among workers in Northern Nigeria. Although the grievances might be identical to those in non-Muslim situations, they are likely to be interpreted as violations of Muslim practice.

Again, Sule and Ugoji (2013) quoting Ocho (1984:35) asserted that part of what made the Ibo tribe of South-East Nigeria had poor attitude to paid job was the notion of *Olu Oyibo* (white man's work) and their former notion on self-employment job *Olu Obodo* (community work).

It can, therefore, be recommended that when it comes to multinational enterprises management, the cross-vergence way should be embraced especially in the human resources practices management of their organisation in other nation in order to encourage foreign experts and guide against culture phobia among citizens of the host nations.

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