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MASTER RESEARCH THESIS

TITLE:

CROSS-CULTURAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS: A NIGERIA-UK COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Abbreviations	Full Meaning
COL	Collectivism (vs Individualism)
CVSCALE	Cultural Value Scale
DANS	Refers to Nigeria participants in the thematic analysis section.
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment.
FOS	Refers to United Kingdom participants in the thematic analysis section.
ICO	Information Commissioner's Office.
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations.
MNCs	Multinational Corporations.
MNEs	Multinational Enterprises.
MNOs	Multinational Organisations (used as a broader, overarching term for multinational entities).
PD	Power Distance.
PDI	Power Distance Index.
PID	Participant Identifiers.
TKI	Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument.
TNC	Transnational Corporation.
UA	Uncertainty Avoidance.
UK	United Kingdom.
UK GDPR	UK General Data Protection Regulation.
VSM	Values Survey Module.

ABSTRACT

This study explores how national culture shapes the way managers handle conflict in multinational organisations operating in Nigeria and the United Kingdom. Unresolved conflict undermines collaboration, and generic approaches rarely work in cross-cultural contexts. By focusing on these two countries, the research fills a geographical gap in the literature and addresses a common methodological issue: the ecological fallacy, where national averages are wrongly assumed to reflect individual cultural orientations.

The research set out to compare the dominant conflict resolution strategies used by managers in both countries, examine how cultural dimensions such as Power Distance, Individualism versus Collectivism, and Uncertainty Avoidance influence those choices, and assess how managers judge the effectiveness of different approaches in light of their cultural values.

A comparative, cross-sectional, mixed-methods design was used. Twenty managers, ten from each country, completed the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument to assess their conflict styles and the Cultural Value Scale to measure their individual cultural orientations. Their experiences and views were also captured through open-ended questions.

The findings highlight clear cultural differences. Nigerian managers leaned strongly towards Compromising, with frequent use of Avoiding and Accommodating, shaped by higher levels of Collectivism and Power Distance. For them, effectiveness often meant preserving relationships and maintaining group harmony. UK managers also favoured Compromising, but were more likely to choose Competing, reflecting lower Power Distance and higher Individualism. In their context, effectiveness was linked to fairness, directness, and transparency. Strikingly, both groups recorded almost identical scores for Uncertainty Avoidance, challenging Hofstede's national-level results and offering strong evidence against the ecological fallacy. This suggests that globalised work settings may be driving convergence in some cultural dimensions.

Overall, the research shows that culture shapes not only how conflict is viewed but also what counts as a successful resolution. It strengthens Hofstede's model with fresh qualitative insights while providing rare empirical evidence against the ecological fallacy. For practice, it points to the need for culturally responsive training, HR policies that recognise cultural differences, and leadership development that adapts to varied contexts.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Problem

Multinational organisations comprise individuals from different cultures who interact together to achieve the organisation's goals. In the course of these interactions, conflict often arises. Left unresolved, conflict can disintegrate collaboration within the organisation and negatively impact the achievement of organisational goals (Budd et al., 2020). Within a multinational corporation, conflict may be caused by several factors such as lack of communication, culture clash, fatigue and can range from relational conflict to task-based conflict and cross-cultural conflict (Budd et al., 2020). Unlike domestic companies, Multinational organisations must navigate the complexities of operating across diverse cultural environments while maintaining organisational coherence and effectiveness (Meyer & Peng, 2016). This makes cross-cultural conflicts a common phenomenon in Multinational organisations. Cross-cultural conflicts refer to conflicts between social groups or individuals from different cultures (Avruch, 2009). Individuals from different cultural backgrounds interpret reality, process information, and construct meaning from their different experiences (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012). While these cultural differences affect how conflict is framed, they also influence how conflict is resolved. In other words, a person's culture affects their approach to conflict resolution. In their Harvard article on how to argue across cultures, Brett et al. (2013) noted that while individuals from an East Asia culture prefer to resolve conflicts through third parties, individuals from North America or Western Europe prefer confrontation when resolving conflicts. Findings from the study by Ristic et al. (2020) among multinationals in Serbia revealed that German managers approach conflict resolution differently compared to Serbian managers, revealing how conflict resolution styles differ across national cultures. Ma (2010) also highlighted that the cultural background of Turkish managers influenced their conflict resolution approach.

Based on Hofstede's Six Cultural Dimensions, countries have different cultural profiles, which are: Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism-Collectivism, Masculinity vs. Femininity, Long-Term vs. Short-Term Orientation, and Indulgence-Restraint (Poulova et al., 2024). These cultural dimensions have been found to influence the selection of a conflict resolution

style by employees and managers. For instance, when resolving conflict, employees from individualistic cultures have been found to lean towards avoidance, while employees from collectivistic societies favour compromising and obliging styles (Rachwal-Mueller, 2023). The authors also associated high power distance cultures with a tendency to avoid conflict (Rachwal-Mueller, 2023).

This implies that generic, one-size-fits-all conflict resolution strategies are insufficient in cross-cultural settings. Instead, culturally tailored approaches become essential for leveraging diversity rather than being hindered by it. A manager's approach to conflict resolution, profoundly influenced by their own cultural background, can either facilitate a constructive outcome or inadvertently aggravate the conflict. Therefore, in multinational organisations, the effectiveness of conflict resolution hinges not merely on addressing conflict, but on adopting strategies that are specifically sensitive to and adaptable to diverse cultural contexts.

1.2 Problem Statement

While there have been several cross-cultural studies showing that conflict resolution strategies vary across countries, most have been conducted with less focus on Africa (e.g Ristic et al. (2020) Serbia; Kim and Srisuphaolarn (2020) Thailand; Backlund and Kullman (2024) Sweden), there is limited research comparatively examining the cross-cultural analysis of conflict resolution strategies of multinationals in the UK and Nigeria. Based on the Hofstede's cultural dimensions, both countries have different cultural profiles, and presents valuable opportunities for further testing and refining the theoretical links between cultural dimensions and conflict resolution, thereby contributing to a richer understanding of cross-cultural dynamics in Multinational organisations.

In addition to the identified shortcomings of existing literature, the majority of existing studies have used cultural dimension scores by Hofstede to assign cultural values to individuals rather than having to measure cultural dimensions directly. Adopting this approach assumes that an individual's cultural orientation to a national culture is similar to the national culture, which according to Gunkel et al. (2016) is problematic. This is because people are diverse, and their actual cultural orientations should be measured directly, not assumed based on nationality.

1.3 Research Objectives

This research aims to address the existing gaps in the literature by comparatively investigating the conflict resolution strategies employed by managers in multinational organisations with significant operations in both Nigeria and the United Kingdom and how these strategies are influenced by their national culture. In order to achieve this, the study will be guided by the following research objectives:

i. To identify and compare the dominant managerial conflict resolution strategies in multinational organisations operating in the UK and Nigeria.
ii. To analyse how the cultural dimensions of Power Distance, Individualism-Collectivism, and Uncertainty Avoidance influence managers' choice of conflict resolution strategies in these two countries.
iii. To examine differences in the perceived effectiveness of conflict resolution strategies among UK and Nigerian managers, and how these perceptions are shaped by their cultural orientations.

Ultimately, this research seeks to provide insights that can enhance cross-cultural communication, improve organisational effectiveness, and contribute to developing more sophisticated approaches to conflict resolution in multinational settings operating within Nigeria and the UK.

1.4 Research Questions

i. **RQ1**: What are the main conflict resolution strategies used by managers in UK and Nigerian multinational organisations?
ii. **RQ2**: How do Hofstede's cultural dimensions affect conflict resolution strategies in UK and Nigerian multinational organisations?
iii. **RQ3**: How does cultural background shape UK and Nigerian managers' perceptions of conflict resolution effectiveness?

1.5 Significance of the Study

By addressing the identified gaps in literature, this research holds significant theoretical and practical implications for the understanding and management of cross-cultural conflict in multinational organisations.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the body of knowledge on cross-cultural management and conflict resolution by addressing a notable geographical gap in the literature by providing a specific comparative analysis of managerial conflict strategies within the under-researched context of Nigeria and the UK.

Nowadays, there has been a lot of emphasis on cross-cultural diversity and the benefits it offers to organisations (Thapliyal et al., 2022). However, cross-cultural diversity may end up becoming a bane if not handled properly (Thapliyal et al., 2022). The findings of this research are expected to provide valuable insights for managers, human resource professionals, and organisations operating in or interacting with both Nigeria and the UK on how to better resolve intercultural tensions. The identification of preferred conflict resolution styles in each cultural context can also assist in the development of tailored cross-cultural training programs. Such programs can significantly enhance managers' abilities to navigate conflicts effectively, leading to improved cross-cultural communication, reduced misunderstandings, and ultimately, enhanced organisational effectiveness and cohesion within multinational teams. The emphasis on understanding individual cultural orientations and their link to perceived effectiveness is particularly important here.

This approach goes beyond simply identifying dominant styles to understanding why certain styles are preferred and deemed successful within specific cultural contexts. This deeper understanding enables the development of highly targeted and effective cross-cultural training and policies, fostering true cultural intelligence and adaptability within multinational organisations, which is a more advanced and impactful outcome than merely being aware of national differences.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study is geographically focused on multinational organisations operating with significant presence in both Nigeria and the United Kingdom, thereby addressing a critical gap in comparative cross-cultural research within these specific contexts. The organisational scope is specifically limited to multinational organisations, recognising their inherent complexity in managing diverse workforces and their pivotal role in fostering cross-cultural interactions and potential conflicts.

The participant scope is exclusively confined to managers within these selected multinational organisations, as they are directly involved in implementing conflict resolution strategies and are uniquely positioned to provide insights into their effectiveness. Thematic exploration centres on conflict resolution strategies as defined by the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI),

the influence of individual cultural dimensions (Power Distance, Individualism-Collectivism, and Uncertainty Avoidance as measured by the CVSCALE), and the perceived effectiveness of these strategies from the managers' perspectives. Methodologically, the research employs a comparative, cross-sectional, mixed-methods design, integrating quantitative data from surveys with qualitative insights from open-ended questions.

While this study aims for a comprehensive understanding within its defined boundaries, it is important to note its limitations. It does not encompass all cultural dimensions, nor does it explore every type of organisation or conflict. Furthermore, due to its cross-sectional nature, it establishes associations rather than direct causal relationships.

1.7 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis will be organised into six chapters.

i. **Chapter 1: Introduction** will set the foundational context of the study, outlining the background to the problem, the specific research objectives, the guiding research questions, and the overall significance of the research to both academic discourse and practical organizational management.

ii. **Chapter 2: Literature Review** will delve into an extensive review of existing scholarly work. This chapter will conceptualize culture within organizational contexts, critically examine Hofstede's National Culture Model (including a specific focus on the UK and Nigeria's cultural dimensions), define multinational organizations and common conflicts within them, differentiate conflict resolution from management, and explore various conflict resolution models and strategies, with particular attention to the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI). It will also analyse the interplay between culture and conflict resolution, including specific cultural dimensions such as Power Distance, Individualism-Collectivism, and Uncertainty Avoidance. The chapter will conclude with a critical empirical review of relevant studies and a clear identification of the geographical, methodological, and perceived effectiveness research gaps that the current study aims to address.

iii. **Chapter 3: Methodology** will detail the research design, justifying the chosen pragmatic research philosophy and the mixed-methods approach. It will outline the cross-sectional design, define the target population, elaborate on the purposive sampling strategy, and

specify the calculated sample size. Furthermore, this chapter will describe the data collection procedures, present the research instrument and discuss how the collected data will be analysed.

iv. **Chapter 4: Results and Findings** will present the empirical outcomes of the study.

v. **Chapter 5: Discussion** will interpret the findings presented in Chapter 4 in relation to the existing literature and the theoretical frameworks established in Chapter 2. This chapter will elaborate on how the results address each research question, discuss the theoretical and practical implications of the findings, acknowledge the limitations of the study, and suggest avenues for future research.

vi. **Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations** will provide a concise summary of the study's key contributions, reiterate the main findings, and offer actionable recommendations for managers, human resource professionals, and multinational organisations striving to enhance cross-cultural conflict resolution.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction and Conceptualisation

Understanding cross-cultural environments begins with grasping what culture itself entails. Broweays and Price (2019) argue that culture is fundamentally a learned phenomenon rather than an inherited trait. It encompasses the attitudes, norms, values, and thought patterns that are acquired within social settings. An individual's cultural identity is profoundly shaped by their region of origin and the societal structures they inhabit. Nations have shared values, way of life and beliefs, and this is referred to as national culture (Espig et al., 2021). A country's national culture encompasses the collective mental programming that shapes a society's institutions, behaviours, attitudes and norms (Espig et al., 2021). According to Yorio et al. (2019), national culture affects every aspect of human behaviour. National culture, however, differs from organisational culture,

The way a nation's culture is shaped will really influence how an organisation operates, manages, and develops its people, especially given the local environment and context (Morden, 1995). As such, organisations from a single country will need to consider the different national cultures of the countries they expand into and how much those cultures influence things (Morden, 1995).

Critics have argued that the idea of national culture suggests the homogeneity of culture, which is contestable given the increasing rates of globalisation, noting that the modern state is marked by cultural hybridity and cross-cutting social divisions, a recognition that culture is not uniform within geographical boundaries (Mason and Evers, 2010). Instead, it encompasses a rich blend of subcultures that may possess distinct histories that influence behaviour in unique ways. Even so, organisational culture, with its own set of shared values, beliefs, and practices, also plays a substantial role in shaping employee behaviour and interactions, often intersecting with and sometimes even overriding national cultural influences.

2.2 Assessing National Culture: Hofstede's National Culture Model

Several theoretical frameworks have been proposed for calibrating national culture among which are Trompenaars' Seven Dimensions of National Culture and Inglehart's Culture Map of the World (Backlund & Kullman, 2024). However, over the years, despite its criticism of sample bias,

Hofstede's national culture model remains the most frequently used in the literature (Gunkel et al., 2016). Zhou and Kwon (2020) analysed publications from the past 40 years and found over a thousand studies that employed Hofstede's model. The model is also the most widely used in cross-cultural studies involving conflict handling styles (Gunkel et al., 2016). For this research, Hofstede's framework is therefore preferred as justified by the earlier stated reasons, and also due to its empirical foundation, global applicability, and structured approach to comparing national cultures. Hofstede's model also provides quantifiable cultural insights, making it a practical tool for cross-cultural analysis (Poulova et al., 2024).

Although Hofstede's national culture model has undeniably provided a robust and influential framework for cross-cultural research, it is not without its limitations. A primary critique revolves around its static view of culture (McSweeney, 2002). Critics argue that cultures are dynamic and continuously evolve, and therefore, Hofstede's model, based on data largely collected in the late 1960s and early 1970s, may not accurately reflect contemporary societal shifts. The world has undergone dramatic changes since the initial research, including globalisation and technological advancements, which have led to a mixing of cultures and a transformation of communication and trade, potentially rendering the original data outdated (McSweeney, 2002).

Another significant concern is the issue of overgeneralisation and representativeness. The model is criticised for overgeneralising cultural traits, in that it overlooks the variations that exist within a single nation. The sample, drawn exclusively from IBM employees and specifically from marketing and sales categories, raises questions about its representativeness of the entire national culture (Weil, 2017). Critics contend that the findings might reflect the specific corporate culture of IBM or the characteristics of a particular occupation rather than the broader national culture (Weil, 2017). Furthermore, the initial research predominantly included male employees, meaning women's perspectives were largely absent from the data. The assumption of homogeneity within a multi-lingual society with diverse ethnic groups, such as China with its 56 ethnic minorities, is also problematic (Weil, 2017).

Methodological concerns have also been raised about Hofstede's assumptions. Weil (2017) noted that the questionnaire Hofstede used to collect data was initially designed to assess job satisfaction and not cultural values. Issues have also been raised about the validity of the constructs developed by the model with Weil (2017) arguing that the use of a limited number of items as identified in

the questionnaire (e.g., three items for Individualism and Collectivism) to define complex dimensions is considered insufficient to obtain accurate country scores and establish construct validity.

The most significant critique directly relevant to this study is the ecological fallacy (Grenness, 2012). This fallacy occurs when inferences about individuals are drawn from group-level data (Grenness, 2012). Hofstede himself acknowledged that his country-level dimensions, such as collectivism and individualism, could not be replicated at the individual level (Brewer and Venaik, 2014). This implies that directly assigning national culture scores to individuals, as many previous studies have done, is problematic as it incorrectly equates national culture with individual cultural orientation (Vaulclair, 2009). This oversight risks misattributing group-level characteristics to individuals, thereby obscuring the true influence of individual cultural orientations on behaviour (Brewer and Venaik, 2014). Some researchers have, however, argued against the ecological fallacy, stating that since the country-level dimensions were derived from individuals' responses, studying culture at the individual level only serves to reinvent the wheel. Vauclair (2009) puts forward an epistemological objection to this argument, stating that treating culture as the sum of all sampled individuals from a cultural group is useful for sociological endeavours.

However, from a psychological perspective of culture, where the aim is to understand individual behaviour, as it is with the study, investigating cultural values at the individual level is more suitable. Vauclair (2009) also noted that sticking to measuring culture at the national/collective level also has methodological consequences because it restricts the initiative for future research since the values and dimensions are known and static. In aligning with ecological fallacy, this study accounts for the national culture values and measures individual cultural orientations to enhance the validity of the research findings. This approach elevates the study from a mere application of existing theory to a critical engagement with its limitations, offering a more precise understanding of how culture influences individual conflict resolution behaviours within multinationals.

Initially, Hofstede's model included four dimensions, which have since been expanded to six: Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism-Collectivism, Masculinity vs. Femininity, Long-Term vs. Short-Term Orientation, and Indulgence-Restraint (Poulova et al., 2024). The Masculinity-Femininity dimension is now referred to as Motivation Towards Achievement and Success, though its fundamental meaning remains unchanged (Backlund and Kullman, 2024).

Cultural Dimension (vs. opposite pole[s])	Common interpretation of the Cultural Dimension (or its high value)
Individualism (vs. Collectivism)	A preference for a loosely-knit social framework in which individuals are expected to take care of themselves and their immediate families only
Power distance (high vs. low)	The degree to which less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally.
Masculinity (vs. Femininity)	A preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness, and material rewards for success
Uncertainty avoidance (high vs. low)	The degree to which the members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertain and ambiguous situations
Long-term orientation (vs. short-term orientation)	The degree to which members of the society are encouraged to thrift and take efforts in modern education as a way to prepare for the future
Indulgence (vs. self-restraint)	The degree to which members of the society are allowed free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun

Figure 1: Interpretation of Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions (Source: Gerlach and Eriksson, 2021)

2.2.1 The UK and Nigeria's Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

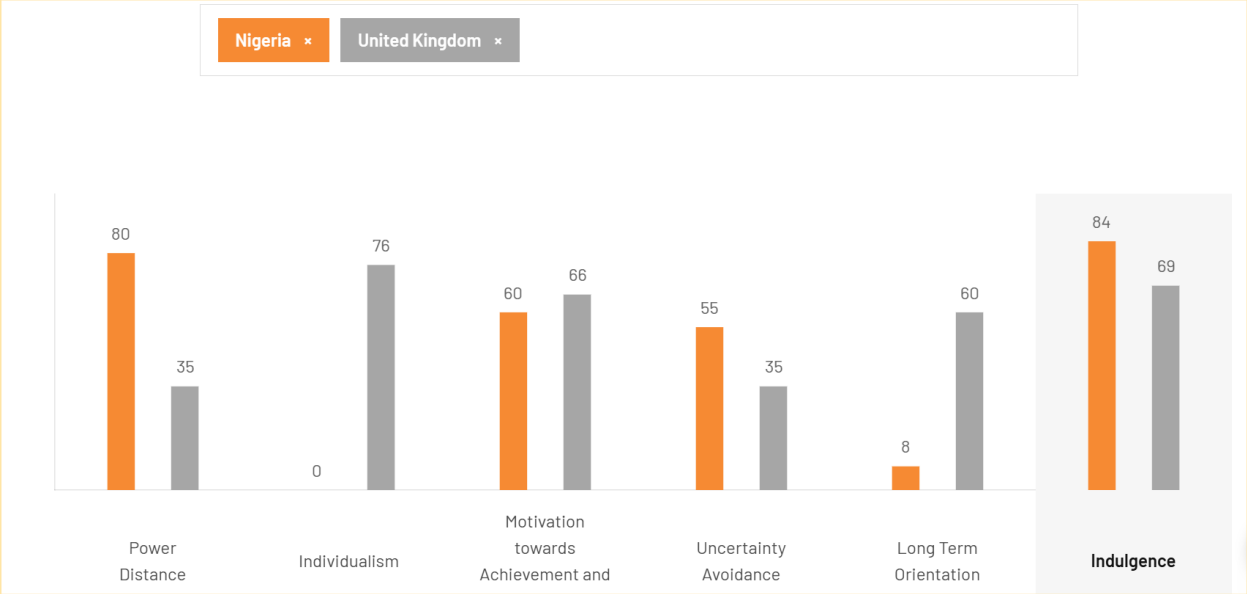

Figure 2: Comparing UK and Nigeria Hofsede Cultural Dimensions (Source: TheCulture Group, 2024)

i. Power Distance

The Power Distance Index (PDI) measures the degree to which less powerful members of organisations and institutions accept and expect uneven distribution of power. A high score on this index indicates a society where hierarchy is clearly established and largely unquestioned, with individuals understanding and accepting their place within a rigid social order. Conversely, a lower score signifies a culture where people are more likely to question authority and strive for the distribution of power in a more equitable way.

In the context of this study, Nigeria exhibits a robust score of 80 on the Power Distance Index (The Culture Group, 2024). This high score reflects a societal fabric where hierarchical order is not only accepted but deeply ingrained and expected. Leaders in Nigeria are often perceived as benevolent autocrats, and subordinates naturally defer to established structures that reinforce their position within the system. In contrast, the United Kingdom reveals a significantly different cultural narrative with a score of 35 on the same scale (The Culture Group, 2024). In the UK, there is a greater expectation for power to be more diffused, and fairness in its distribution is prioritised.

The implications of these differences for organisational behaviour are substantial. In cultures characterised by high Power Distance, managers often resemble absolute rulers, enjoying the privileges of their positions and remaining largely inaccessible to lower-ranking individuals. When issues or problems arise, subordinates are typically held accountable, reinforcing the top-down nature of authority (Backlund and Kullman, 2024). Conversely, in cultures with low Power Distance, managers tend to engage in closer collaboration with their employees, actively encouraging participation in decision-making processes and fostering a more inclusive work environment (Poulova et al., 2024).

ii. Individualism-Collectivism

The Individualism versus Collectivism dimension captures whether a society values personal autonomy and individual achievement or prioritises group loyalty and collective well-being (Backlund and Kullman, 2024). Individualistic societies are characterised by loose ties, often connecting individuals primarily to their immediate family, with a strong emphasis on the "I" rather than the "we." In such cultures, individual choices and decisions are expected, and self-reliance is highly valued. In contrast, collectivism describes a society where tightly integrated relationships bind extended families and communities into strong in-groups. These in-groups are characterised by unquestioning loyalty and mutual support, especially when conflicts arise with out-groups. In collectivist cultures, individuals know their place in life, and this is socially determined.

Nigeria, with an astonishingly low score of 0 (figure 1), epitomises a deeply collectivistic society. Here, social life revolves around the in-group, families, extended kin, and close communities, and loyalty forms the cornerstone of interpersonal relationships. An offence within such groups can trigger feelings of shame and a loss of face, emphasising the high stakes of maintaining communal harmony.

Meanwhile, the United Kingdom, scoring 76, is steeped in individualism (The Culture Group, 2024). This cultural orientation champions personal autonomy, self-motivation, and individual achievement. These divergent cultural orientations extend their influence into various domains, from organisational management to social behaviour. In Nigeria, leadership and managerial practices often mirror familial relationships, where decisions are interwoven with loyalty and group allegiance. Conversely, UK management tends to focus on individual performance, encouraging self-motivation and personal accountability (Zhang, 2020).

iii. Masculinity-Femininity (Motivation towards Achievement)

Sometimes referred to as the motivation towards success dimension, this dimension explores what truly inspires people within a society, particularly concerning their drive for accomplishment and their orientation towards competition versus cooperation (Hofstede, 2016). In masculine, success-driven cultures, there is a prevailing mindset of living to work where competitive drive, assertiveness, and a relentless focus on performance define social and organisational norms. Material wealth and status are often important indicators of success, and traditional gender roles can be rigid (Hofstede, 2016). In contrast, in feminine, consensus-oriented societies, success is measured by overall well-being and the collective quality of life rather than individual accolades. Cooperation, nurturing, relationships, and social harmony are highly valued, and gender roles tend to be more fluid.

Both Nigeria (scoring 60) and the UK (scoring 66) exhibit relatively high scores on this dimension, indicating that both cultures generally prioritise performance and decisiveness (The Culture Group, 2024). However, their manifestations of success and how they approach it can diverge in their expressive forms. In Nigeria, the narrative is one of determination; managers are expected to be assertive, and the pathway to success is carved out through competition, direct confrontation of challenges, and a steadfast commitment to performance (Bustamante et al., 2021). Meanwhile, the UK system, though equally ambitious, balances its competitive drive in a tradition of modesty and understatement (Maduagwu and Igwe, 2018).

iv. Uncertainty Avoidance

The Uncertainty Avoidance dimension reflects how societies cope with the inherent unpredictability of the future, shaping the degree to which they establish rules, institutions, and

beliefs to manage ambiguity (Backlund and Kullman, 2024). Societies with a high UAI score tend to opt for stiff codes of behaviour, detailed guidelines, and laws, generally relying on absolute truths to reduce ambiguity (Giebels et al., 2017). They perceive unregulated, disorganised, or sudden situations as uncomfortable and unpleasant, maintaining rigid codes of belief and being intolerant of unorthodox ideas (Giebels et al., 2017). In contrast, societies with a lower Uncertainty Avoidance score demonstrate greater acceptance of differing thoughts or ideas, imposing fewer regulations and being more comfortable with ambiguity and a free-flowing environment (Venaik and Brewer, 2010).

Nigeria's intermediate score of 55 (figure 1) suggests a moderate level of uncertainty avoidance (The Culture Group, 2024). This score indicates that Nigerian culture does not exhibit a strong preference for either strict control or laissez-faire attitudes toward uncertainty (Maduagwu and Igwe, 2018). In contrast, the United Kingdom's score of 35 reveals a markedly low level of uncertainty avoidance (The Culture Group, 2024). The UK approach is characterized by a comfortable acceptance of ambiguity (Zhang, 2020). This low uncertainty avoidance complements a highly individualistic and innovative culture, promoting creativity and flexible planning that prioritises clear end goals over excessively detailed processes (Wenxin and Yue, 2022).

v. Long-Term vs. Short-Term Orientation

The Long-Term Orientation dimension in Hofstede's framework reveals profound differences between Nigerian and British cultures, highlighting contrasting approaches to tradition, future planning, and adaptability (Poulova et al., 2024). This dimension considers the extent to which a society views its time horizon, assessing how societies prioritise traditions versus pragmatic problem-solving and adaptation

Nigeria's low score of 8 indicates a highly normative culture that prioritises established traditions and absolute truths (The Culture Group, 2024). In Nigerian society, there is a focus on achieving immediate results rather than long-term planning. Nigerian managers and decision-makers might prioritise short-term achievements and rapid results, which can be advantageous in dynamic, fast-paced environments but might also limit sustainable growth (Maduagwu and Igwe, 2018). This short-term orientation places a stronger emphasis on the present and respect for tradition

In contrast, the United Kingdom's score of 60 characterises it as a more pragmatic culture. In pragmatic societies, truth is viewed as context-dependent and adaptable to changing circumstances (The Culture Group, 2024). The UK culture exhibits a greater willingness to modify traditions to suit new conditions, with a focus on future rewards and long-term growth.

vi. Indulgence vs. Restraint Dimension

The Indulgence-Restraint dimension assesses the extent to which a society allows, or controls gratification related to human desires and enjoyment (Poulova et al., 2024). An indulgent society is one that permits relatively free gratification of these fundamental human desires, with a greater emphasis on personal happiness, leisure time, and freedom of expression (Hofstede et al., 2010). In contrast, a restrained society controls the gratification of needs and regulates them through strict social norms, prioritising discipline, hard work, and social harmony (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Both Nigeria and the UK score high on indulgence, indicating societies that emphasise enjoyment, optimism, and a willingness to fulfil desires (The Culture Group, 2024). This shared trait suggests a cultural propensity for positive emotions to be more freely expressed and for happiness, freedom, and leisure to be given importance (Hofstede et al., 2010). While both societies exhibit indulgence, the economic and structural realities shape how indulgence is expressed. Nigeria's indulgence leans towards social and cultural expression, often defying economic hardship, whereas the UK's indulgence is more individualistic and system-supported, enabled by stronger economic structures and welfare systems (Wenxin and Yue, 2022).

Table 1: UK-Nigeria Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

Dimension	Nigeria Score	UK Score	Interpretation of Difference/Similarity and General Implication
Power Distance	80	35	**Significant Difference:** Nigeria is highly hierarchical, accepting unequal power distribution, while the UK is more egalitarian, questioning authority. This implies differing expectations regarding managerial decision-making and subordinate input.
Individualism-Collectivism	0	76	**Stark Contrast:** Nigeria is profoundly collectivistic, prioritising group loyalty and harmony. The UK is highly individualistic, valuing personal autonomy and self-reliance. This suggests fundamental differences in how individuals perceive their role within a team and their approach to personal versus group goals.
Masculinity-Femininity (Motivation Towards Achievement)	60	66	**Slight Difference (Both Masculine):** Both cultures are achievement oriented. Nigeria tends towards direct confrontation for success, while the UK balances ambition with modesty. This suggests both value performance, but their expressive forms of competition may vary.
Uncertainty Avoidance	55	35	**Moderate Difference:** Nigeria shows moderate comfort with ambiguity, balancing rules and adaptability. The UK has low uncertainty avoidance, embracing flexibility and innovation. This indicates differing comfort levels with unstructured situations and rule adherence.
Long-Term vs. Short-Term Orientation	8	60	**Significant Difference:** Nigeria is short-term oriented, valuing tradition and immediate results. The UK is long-term oriented and pragmatic, adaptable to changing circumstances for future gain. This suggests different approaches to planning, patience, and strategic outlook.
Indulgence vs. Restraint	High	High	**Similarity:** Both societies lean towards indulgence, valuing enjoyment and optimism. This shared trait

			suggests a general openness to expressing desires and emotions, though contextual factors may shape its manifestation.

2.3 Multinational Organisations

With reduced trade barriers and improved access to foreign markets as a result of globalisation, organisations became motivated to expand their operations beyond domestic borders, leading to the formation of multinational entities operating across several national borders (Stobierski, 2021). These multinationals vary in the degrees of complexity of their structures. In investigating these complexities, a number of terminologies, such as Multinational Enterprises (MNEs), Multinational Corporations (MNCs), Multinational Organisations (MNOs), Transnational corporations (TNC) have been adopted in research to describe what makes for a multinational. While these terminologies are frequently employed interchangeably (EuroStat, n.d), they are also differentiated in some research, thus contributing to the definitional ambiguity of multinational entities.

According to De la Cruz-Fernandez (2021), MNCs refer to a corporate organisation that holds ownership and control over the production of goods or services in at least one country other than its country of origin, often referred to as the home country. A defining feature of an MNC is that its operations beyond national borders are centrally controlled and managed from a single location or headquarters in the home economy (De la Cruz-Fernandez, 2021).

The term Multinational Enterprise (MNE) is frequently employed interchangeably with Multinational Corporation (MNC) in academic and professional contexts. However, a more precise academic definition characterises an MNE as an enterprise that controls and manages production establishments located in at least two countries (Eurostat, n.d). A key aspect of an MNE's operation is its engagement in foreign direct investment (FDI), which involves making direct investments in host country facilities to secure equity ownership and managerial control. This strategy is often adopted to circumvent certain transaction costs associated with international operations.

Historically, scholars have sometimes differentiated MNEs as referring to earlier forms of vertically integrated international firms, while MNCs were used for later, more fully developed multinational corporate structures (De la Cruz-Fernandez, 2021). The definition of an MNE has broadened over time to encompass forms of international involvement that do not necessarily entail

equity ownership, such as franchising, management contracts, and leasing agreements. In these cases, the defining criterion shifts to the value added to the production, quality, and distribution of goods or services across multiple countries (Kusluvan 1998). This expanded scope means that MNEs represent a broader category of entities engaged in foreign direct investment, encompassing not only corporations but also partnerships, state-run enterprises, and various other business structures, which can be either private or state-owned.

Transnational Corporation (TNC) is another term also frequently used interchangeably with MNC and MNE. However, some scholars have attempted to draw a distinction between TNCs and MNCs, primarily based on the degree of integration and centralization in their global operations. In this view, MNCs are conceptualized as companies that operate as a collection of relatively independent national subsidiaries, each with its own management structure and strategy (Zhao et al., 2012). In contrast, TNCs are depicted as organizations that pursue a highly integrated global strategy with a centralized management structure, functioning more as a single, unified global entity rather than a loose federation of national units (Zhao et al., 2012; Rouse, 2019).

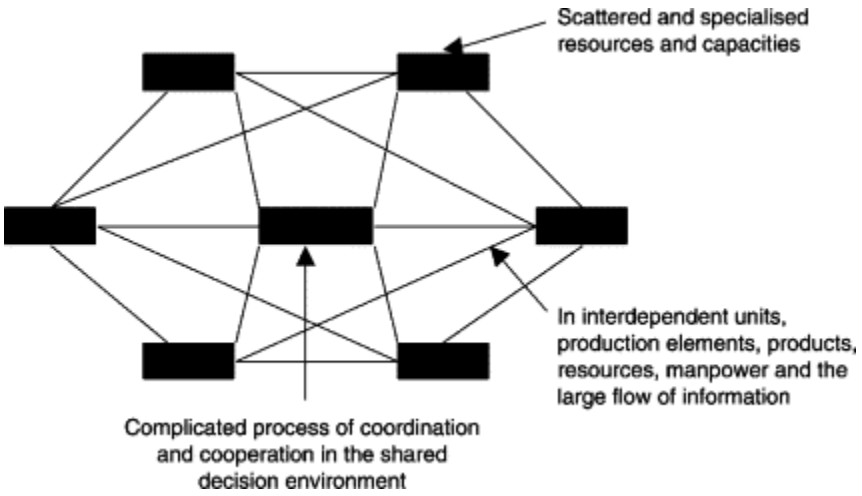

Figure 3: Transnational Corporations (Source: Zhao et al., 2012)

While MNCs and MNEs refer specifically to profit-seeking business entities, the term multinational organization (MNO) is not explicitly defined as a distinct, formal category in much of the provided academic literature, although Zhao et al. (2012) referred to it as form of MNCs. Instead, MNOs are utilized as a broader, overarching umbrella term for multinational entities, encompassing various organizational forms that operate across national borders, including both

profit-driven entities (MNCs/MNEs) and mission-driven non-profit entities, such as International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs).

Research points to the fact that the interchangeable use of these terms is not merely a matter of imprecision but stems from the dynamic evolution of international business and scholarly attempts to capture its changing characteristics (SOAS, n.d). In the nascent stages of international business studies in the 1960s, the term international corporation was primarily used to distinguish firms with overseas operations from purely domestic ones. As patterns of international production evolved, particularly in the 1970s, MNCs gained prominence to reflect these new configurations (SOAS, n.d). The concept of MNE emerged to portray firms that shared a common strategy and a pool of resources across their international affiliates, often accommodating local management and even local equity participation (SOAS, n.d). The subtle difference between a multinational (implying largely distinct operations in various countries) and a transnational (suggesting a highly integrated global strategy) is recognized by some scholars, yet this distinction is frequently blurred in practical application (Rouse, 2019). The inherent complexity of modern corporate structures and the continuous evolution of global business models naturally contribute to the difficulty in maintaining rigid definitional boundaries (Antras and Yeaple, 2014).

The observed pattern of interchangeable use, alongside persistent efforts to define subtle distinctions, reveals a fundamental tension in academic discourse: the drive for precise conceptualization necessary for rigorous analysis often conflicts with the practical convenience of using terms synonymously in broader contexts. The historical development of these terms illustrates an ongoing endeavour to articulate the increasingly intricate realities of global business. However, this very complexity makes it challenging to maintain rigid distinctions. For a literature review, it is therefore crucial not only to present the various definitions (as it is presented above) but also to acknowledge this inherent fluidity. This awareness is vital for navigating existing research effectively. This understanding also supports the decision to focus on the broader multinational organisation in this research, as it allows for the inclusion of relevant literature employing any of these related terms.

2.4 Conflict in Multinational Organisations

Conflict, in its broadest sense, is an expressed struggle between interdependent parties who see goals as incompatible, resources as limited, or interference from others as obstructing their path to achieving their objectives. (Mahan and Mahuna, 2017).

Conflict is an inherent and unavoidable element of organisational life, arising from differences in interests, values, and goals among members (Brett et al., 2014). In the context of organisations, conflict can manifest at various levels, from interpersonal disagreements to group-level or even interdepartmental conflicts (Stura and Johnston, 2018). Conflict in organisations can stem from multiple sources. Structural factors, such as hierarchical differences and unclear role definitions, often create environments where conflicts may arise. Interpersonal conflicts may occur due to personality clashes or differing communication styles, while task-related conflicts emerge from disagreements about work processes and resource allocation (Brett et al., 2014). In multinational environments, cultural conflicts are particularly pronounced due to the inherent presence of divergent cultural norms, values, and communication patterns, which can lead to significant misunderstandings and misaligned expectations (Chaudhary and Yadav, 2018).

On one hand, unmanaged conflict can lead to reduced morale, increased stress, and diminished productivity. Conversely, when conflict is managed effectively, it can be a powerful force for positive change (Chaudhary and Yadav, 2018). It has the capacity to stimulate critical thinking, encourage creative problem-solving by challenging existing assumptions, and ultimately lead to improved decision-making processes and clearer expectations within the organization (Chaudhary and Yadav, 2018). Conflict resolution techniques vary as much as the ways in which conflict appears and functions. The appropriateness and success of any given conflict resolution strategy are highly contingent upon the specific organisational culture, the precise nature of the conflict, and the broader context in which it arises objectives (Mahan and Mahuna, 2017). This is particularly true in culturally diverse settings, where conflict resolution approaches must be sufficiently flexible and adaptable to accommodate varying communication styles, deeply ingrained cultural norms, and diverse conflict-handling preferences (Magan and Mahuna, 2017).

2.5 Conflict Resolution vs Conflict Management

Within existing research, there is usually an interchange of the words conflict management and conflict resolution (Wang et al., 2024; Guo, 2025). Although Codliffe (2016) admits that the terms are not similar, he, however, treated conflict resolution as conflict management in his text, arguing that most conflicts can only be managed and cannot be resolved. Earlier in a 1978 paper, Robbins (1978) argued that conflict resolution is not synonymous with conflict management. According to Robbins (1978), conflict management is an ongoing process of mitigating and handling conflict, while conflict resolution focuses on finding a lasting and specific solution to a disagreement. While the objective of conflict management is minimising disruption even when conflicts persist, the objective of conflict resolution is to eliminate any form of conflict (Pollack, n.d). Techniques commonly associated with conflict management include active listening to understand differing perspectives, setting clear boundaries to reduce friction, and engaging in collaborative problem-solving efforts where the immediate goal is functionality rather than complete eradication of the conflict (Smriti and Kumar, 2021).

Despite the clear distinctions, some academic sources use the terms fluidly or imply that resolution is a goal embedded within a broader management framework. For instance, Harvard's Program on Negotiation features articles titled ‘Conflict-Management Styles’ that simultaneously discuss ‘best practices in conflict resolution’ (Shonk, 2022). Another publication from Harvard is titled ‘The New Conflict Management: Effective Conflict Resolution Strategies to Avoid Litigation’, suggesting a close, perhaps instrumental, relationship (Shonk, 2022).

In organizational studies, conflict management is defined as proactively identifying, mitigating, and containing conflicts (Zhyvko et al., 2024), while conflict resolution is described as effectively addressing conflicts to achieve mutually acceptable outcomes. This suggests a sequential or complementary relationship where management establishes the necessary frameworks and processes for resolution to occur effectively. Historically, classical organisational theorists viewed conflict as inherently undesirable and something to be eliminated or at least minimised, which aligns with the definitive outcome implied by resolution, thereby blurring the lines between the two concepts in earlier academic thought (Smriti and Kumar, 2021).

Furthermore, the concept of agreeing to disagree, often associated with conflict management, presents a unique challenge in cross-cultural contexts. While this strategy can minimise discontent

in some environments, its effectiveness may vary significantly across cultures. In high-context communication cultures or those with strong collectivist norms, where harmony and relationship preservation are paramount, agreeing to disagree might be perceived as a failure to achieve true accord or could lead to festering resentment and a breakdown in trust. This highlights a potential limitation of a purely management approach in such cultural settings. It suggests that a deeper resolution that addresses underlying issues is often necessary to genuinely restore harmony and trust, rather than simply containing the visible conflict. This makes the choice of resolution particularly salient for studies conducted within cross-cultural environments.

Table 2: Comparative Analysis of Conflict Management vs. Conflict Resolution

Feature	**Conflict Management**	**Conflict Resolution**
Primary Goal	To handle disagreements constructively, minimise negative impact, and maintain a functional relationship	To eliminate conflict, address core issues, find comprehensive solutions, foster long-term harmony
Nature of Conflict Addressed	Ongoing, chronic, value-based conflicts where full resolution is challenging or unlikely	Solvable problems: short-term disagreements requiring a clear, definitive outcome
Duration	Continuous process; addresses conflicts as they arise	More immediate, it aims to solve issues at their core for closure
Outcome	Maintain functionality; allow parties to coexist and agree to disagree	Definitive solution, prevent future conflicts; restore harmony, provide closure
Key Techniques	Active listening, setting boundaries, collaborative problem-solving (for coexistence), creating a supportive environment, and proactive identification	Identifying root causes, developing creative solutions, mediation, negotiation, formal written agreements, and problem-solving
Underlying Philosophy	Conflict is inevitable and can be functional; focus on containment and optimisation	Conflict is problematic and should be eliminated; focus on fun

A primary justification for emphasising conflict resolution lies in its objective of achieving definitive solutions that address the root causes of conflicts, rather than merely managing their symptoms. In complex cross-cultural settings, where misunderstandings can easily fester due to differing communication styles, values, and norms, a conflict management approach risks leaving underlying issues unresolved. Such unresolved conflicts can lead to repeated patterns of discord, resentment, and a constant state of tension, ultimately undermining trust and hindering long-term collaboration (Allwin, n.d).

Conflict resolution, conversely, aims to provide closure for solvable problems, fostering long-term harmony and preventing future conflicts by addressing their foundational elements. This is particularly critical in multinational organisations where persistent, unaddressed conflicts can severely impact productivity, group cohesion, and the overall success of cross-border projects (AllWin, n.d). For instance, a study on cross-cultural projects found that while a median of 80% of conflicts were eventually resolved, the negative impact of cultural differences on conflict was significant, underscoring the need for effective resolution to mitigate decreased efficiency (Wang et al., 2024). When issues affect productivity or group cohesion, or when parties are willing to reach a mutually beneficial solution, conflict resolution is the preferred approach (AllWin, n.d).

John Burton's Human Needs Theory further provides a robust theoretical framework that justifies a focus on conflict resolution. Burton posits a critical distinction between disputes and conflicts. Disputes involve negotiable interests that can be settled, whereas conflicts arise from the deprivation of basic human needs, which are non-negotiable (Goldberg, 2005). These fundamental human needs, such as identity, recognition, and autonomy, cannot be suppressed indefinitely by coercive power or superficial management techniques (Rubenstein, 2001).

Burton argues that traditional power-political realism, which relies on coercive strategies to handle disagreements, is ultimately unrealistic and self-defeating because it fails to address these underlying human needs (Goldberg, 2005). For him, true and lasting peace, can only be achieved when the basic, non-negotiable human needs of all parties are identified and satisfied. This perspective necessitates a shift in focus from institutions to individuals as the primary unit of analysis, and it demands that social structures and norms be adjusted to meet these inherent human requirements (Rubenstein, 2001).

In the context of UK and Nigerian multinational organizations, this theoretical lens is particularly pertinent. Conflicts arising from deep-seated cultural differences, perceptions of fairness, or issues of identity and recognition are unlikely to be genuinely resolved through mere management or compromise.

2.6 Conflict Resolution Models and Strategies

Scholars have proposed several conflict resolution strategies to enhance conflict management. As early as 1964, Blake and Mouton introduced two dimensions in handling interpersonal conflict. The first dimension concerns personal needs, while the second pertains to the needs of others (Ristic et al., 2020). Based on these two dimensions, Blake and Mouton developed four conflict resolution approaches: forcing, withdrawing, smoothing, and problem-solving (Ristic et al., 2020).

The forcing approach, characterised by a high concern for self and a low concern for others, involves imposing one's own solution on the conflicting party (Van der Vliert, 2013). This method aims for a swift resolution by unilaterally securing a decision, yet it often culminates in win-lose outcomes (Van der Vliert, 2013). Although forcing may be pragmatically beneficial in urgent or high-stakes situations, it has faced critical scrutiny for its tendency to engender resentment and undermine long-term cooperative relationships.

In contrast, the withdrawing approach, which reflects low concern for both self and others, entails a deliberate avoidance or disengagement from the conflict. While this strategy may provide temporary relief from tension, it is frequently criticised for permitting underlying issues to remain unaddressed. The resultant unresolved conflicts can, over time, erode trust and impair organisational cohesion.

Smoothing, also referred to as accommodating, represents a high concern for others combined with a low concern for self (Holt and DeVore, 2005). By prioritising interpersonal harmony and minimising contentious issues, smoothing seeks to preserve relationships at the expense of individual interests (Holt and DeVore, 2005). Critics argue that such an approach may lead to the suppression of significant problems, ultimately fostering superficial resolutions that fail to address the root causes of conflict. This oversight can result in chronic dissatisfaction and the recurrence of unresolved disputes.

The problem-solving approach, which integrates a high concern for both self and others, is posited as the most constructive and collaborative method (Azer, 2013). Emphasising open communication, joint analysis, and the pursuit of mutually beneficial solutions, this approach aspires to achieve win-win outcomes (Azer, 2013). However, while problem-solving is widely endorsed for its potential to foster sustainable resolution, it is not without its drawbacks. The method can be time-consuming and presupposes that all parties are equally committed to collaboration, an assumption that may not hold in every context.

While Blake and Mouton's four conflict resolution approaches offer foundational insights into interpersonal conflict, their application in multinational organisations is constrained by the model's oversimplified view of conflict dynamics. In multinational settings, conflicts are not only driven by individual concerns but are also deeply embedded in broader cultural, institutional, and contextual factors (Stura and Johnston, 2018). Take, for instance, the smoothing approach, designed to preserve relationships by prioritising the concerns of others; it also faces criticism when applied across multinational teams (Stura and Johnston, 2018). While smoothing might mitigate immediate tensions, it often results in the suppression of critical issues that require direct attention. In a multinational context, where cultural factors heavily influence conflict perceptions, such an approach risks producing superficial resolutions that may not address the underlying intercultural frictions. The failure to engage deeply with the source of conflict can lead to recurring disputes, particularly in organisations where different cultural groups possess conflicting expectations regarding conflict disclosure and resolution.

Contemporary conflict management theories emphasise the importance of adaptive strategies that integrate cultural sensitivity, emotional intelligence, and situational awareness, factors that Blake and Mouton's binary framework does not adequately address (Benke, 2023). Within multinational contexts, the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) is often considered more adaptable for cross-cultural studies (Wang et al., 2024). This is because TKI captures a broader spectrum of conflict behaviours and is highly popular even when combined with other techniques, including the Hofstede theory of culture (Lundula, 2024). Its widespread use in cross-cultural settings, including multinational organisations, indicates that it reliably captures the subtleties of conflict management (Backlund and Kullman Dandenell, 2024; Lundula, 2024). Based on these

factors, the current study adopts TKI as the foundational conflict resolution framework upon which this study is built.

2.6.1 The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI)

Developed by Kenneth W. Thomas and Ralph H. Kilmann (1974), the TKI builds upon earlier models, such as Blake and Mouton's (1964) conflict resolution grid, by introducing five distinct conflict-handling styles: competing, avoiding, accommodating, collaborating, and compromising. These modes are mapped along two key dimensions: assertiveness (concern for self) and cooperativeness (concern for others) (Benke, 2023). Assertiveness refers to the degree to which an individual attempts to satisfy their own concerns, while cooperativeness refers to the degree to which an individual attempts to satisfy the other person's concerns (Benke, 2023). These two dimensions form a two-by-two matrix, from which the five conflict-handling modes are derived. Each mode represents a unique combination of these dimensions, illustrating different approaches to managing incompatible concerns. The widespread adoption of the TKI in organisational studies, can be attributed to its capacity to capture the complexity of conflict dynamics in culturally diverse settings (Lundula, 2024).

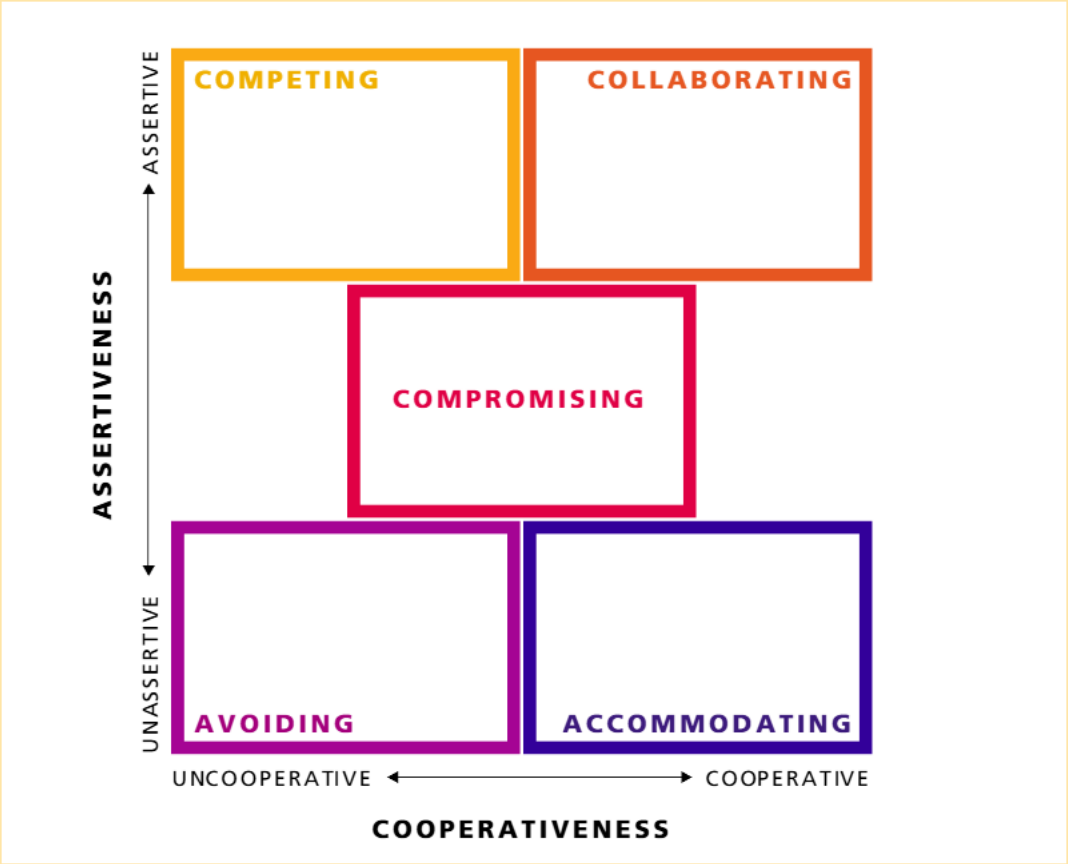

Figure 4: TKI (Source: Thomas, 2008)

The Five Conflict-Handling Styles in the TKI

i. **Competing:** Characterized by high assertiveness and low cooperativeness, the competing mode involves prioritizing one's own interests at the expense of others and is particularly useful in high-stakes scenarios requiring rapid decision-making (kilmanndiagnostics, n.d). However, in cross-cultural environments, an overreliance on competition can heighten power asymmetries and alienate employees from collectivist cultures, which emphasize consensus-building and harmony (Boom, 2021).

ii. **Avoiding:** Low in both assertiveness and cooperativeness, this approach entails sidestepping conflict or postponing confrontation (kilmanndiagnostics, n.d). While avoidance can serve as a mechanism for de-escalation in multicultural teams, it may also leave critical issues unresolved, thereby eroding long-term trust.

iii. **Accommodating:** This approach involves low assertiveness and high cooperativeness. It prioritizes the concerns of others over personal interests, fostering relationship preservation (Kabbani and Dalati, 2025). While accommodation is valued in collectivist cultures that emphasize group cohesion, it may be interpreted as passivity or indecisiveness in individualistic cultures that encourage self-advocacy (kilmanndiagnostics, n.d).

iv. **Collaborating:** Demonstrating both high assertiveness and high cooperativeness, this mode aims for a win-win solution by integrating the concerns of all parties. It involves a deep exploration of underlying needs to find mutually satisfying alternatives (Sayadat, 2024). This approach is frequently associated with positive outcomes such as increased engagement and stronger relationships and is generally considered highly effective for fostering long-term productive interactions (Kabbani and Dalati, 2025).

v. **Compromising:** Positioned between assertiveness and cooperativeness, compromising seeks a middle ground where both parties relinquish certain demands to reach a mutually acceptable resolution (kilmanndiagnostics, n.d). While this approach facilitates pragmatic resolutions, it may also lead to suboptimal outcomes if fundamental issues remain unaddressed (Sayadat, 2024).

2.7 Culture and Conflict Resolution

A growing body of research consistently indicates a direct link between a society's dominant cultural dimensions and the preferred conflict management styles of its members. The study by Rachwal-Mueller (2023) provides a comprehensive overview of these correlations, highlighting predictable patterns of behaviour. Specifically, individualistic cultures, which prioritise personal autonomy and self-interest, tend to exhibit a propensity towards an avoiding style when confronted with conflict (Tuan and Anh, 2023). This contrasts sharply with collectivistic societies, where the emphasis on group harmony and collective well-being often leads to a preference for compromising and obliging styles (Tuan and Anh, 2023). This pattern suggests that in environments where personal needs are paramount, conflict may be sidestepped, whereas in cultures valuing communal harmony, individuals actively seek a middle ground or attend to the needs of others.

Furthermore, a consistent finding across studies is the predisposition of high-power distance cultures to avoid conflict (Hofstede, 2013; Rachwal-Mueller, 2023). This indicates that in

hierarchical societies, lower-status individuals may refrain from challenging authority figures, thereby reinforcing established power structures and preventing overt confrontation (Hofstede, 2013). Additionally, a correlation has emerged between high uncertainty avoidance and a preference for avoiding conflict, implying that cultures that perceive ambiguity as a threat often eschew conflict in favour of maintaining predictability and order (Rachwal-Mueller, 2023). Conversely, societies with lower uncertainty avoidance, particularly when combined with collectivistic tendencies and a long-term orientation, tend to engage in more collaborative and compromising approaches to conflict resolution (Rachwal-Mueller, 2023). These general correlations provide a foundational understanding for predicting conflict behaviour in diverse cultural contexts.

2.7.1 Power Distance and Conflict Style

In cultures characterised by high power distance, there is a deeply ingrained acceptance of hierarchical structures and authority (Daniels and Greguras, 2014). Consequently, lower-status members within these societies may refrain from directly challenging authority figures or expressing dissent, thereby reinforcing established power structures and leading to a pronounced preference for avoiding conflict (Rachwal-Mueller, 2023). The avoidance style allows inequalities and power distance to be maintained, as direct confrontation could be perceived as disrespectful or insubordinate (Rachwal-Mueller, 2023).

Beyond avoidance, the competing style is also linked with high power distance. This connection arises from the exertion of control, a low tolerance for other views, and a preference for competitiveness, all of which are characteristic of individuals in positions of power within high power distance contexts (Rachwal-Mueller, 2023). Conversely, conflict styles that rely on cooperation and a more egalitarian approach, such as integrating, obliging, and compromising, are generally inconsistent with maintaining high power distance

2.7.2 Individualism-Collectivism and Preferred Conflict Style

The Individualism-Collectivism dimension fundamentally shapes how individuals perceive and engage in conflict, influencing their preferred styles and the underlying goals of conflict resolution. In individualistic cultures, with emphasis on personal autonomy, independence, and self-reliance, individuals tend to prioritise satisfying their own needs and achieving personal goals (Rachwal-Mueller, 2023). This orientation often translates into a preference for the competing style of

conflict management (Benke, 2023), where assertiveness and directness are valued over obliging or avoiding approaches. Individualists are typically associated with expressive and assertive behaviours in conflict situations (Rachwal-Mueller, 2023).

Conversely, in collectivistic societies like Nigeria (score of 0), where group harmony, loyalty, and collective well-being are paramount, individuals are more inclined to sacrifice personal needs for the sake of the group. This often leads to a preference for integrating, compromising, or avoiding styles of conflict management (Benke, 2023). A strong emphasis is placed on face-saving behaviours, which involve maintaining dignity and a positive reputation within the social group. While face-saving is crucial for preserving relationships, it can sometimes hinder direct conflict resolution by preventing issues from being openly addressed. Collectivists often exhibit a preference for listening, silence, and indirect communication to avoid confrontation and maintain harmony.

The contrast between individualistic and collectivistic cultures in conflict resolution styles suggests a fundamental difference in the objectives of conflict resolution. For individualists, conflict resolution is often about task accomplishment, achieving personal gains, or asserting individual rights (Kim and Coleman, 2015). The success of a resolution might be measured by how well individual objectives are met. Conversely, for collectivists, the primary objective of conflict resolution is often the maintenance of social harmony, the preservation of relationships, and to save face even if the core issue remains implicitly managed or a compromise is reached that does not fully satisfy all individual desires (Kim and Coleman, 2015). This suggests that simply identifying the style of conflict resolution is insufficient; understanding the perceived effectiveness of the preferred conflict resolution style requires further understanding, part of which this research aims to explore and investigate.

2.7.3 Uncertainty Avoidance and Conflict Resolution Style

Uncertainty Avoidance, as a cultural dimension, profoundly influences how individuals and societies approach and manage the inherent ambiguity and unpredictability associated with conflict. High uncertainty avoidance cultures, which exhibit a low tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity, tend to establish strict rules, detailed procedures, and rely on absolute truths to manage the unknown (Rachwal-Mueller, 2023). They perceive unregulated or disorganised situations, including conflicts, as inherently threatening and uncomfortable. In such contexts, there is a

tendency to avoid conflict, as direct confrontation introduces significant unpredictability and emotional expression that can be perceived as chaotic. This avoidance stems from a desire to maintain predictability and order. High uncertainty avoidance cultures may also lean towards compromising styles, as compromise offers a structured, middle-ground solution that reduces ambiguity, even if it does not fully resolve the underlying issues (Rachwal-Mueller, 2023). Nigeria, with a moderate score of 55 on the Uncertainty Avoidance dimension, might exhibit some of these tendencies, valuing established norms in conflict situations (The Culture Group, 2024).

On the other hand, low uncertainty avoidance cultures, such as the UK (score of 35), are characterised by a greater comfort with ambiguity and a higher tolerance for the unknown (The Culture Group, 2024). In these societies, there is less reliance on rigid rules and a greater openness to flexible approaches. This cultural orientation often translates into a preference for collaborative and compromising approaches to conflict resolution. In low uncertainty index cultures, disorganised and unregulated situations are not perceived as a direct threat and are accepted without a strong preference for rigid regulation (Rachwal-Mueller, 2023).

The relationship between uncertainty avoidance and conflict styles suggests that cultural comfort with ambiguity directly shapes the process of conflict resolution. High uncertainty avoidance cultures may find open, unstructured discussions inherently threatening, preferring established protocols or complete avoidance (Merkin, 2006). This can significantly impede collaborative problem-solving, which often requires a willingness to navigate uncertainty and explore multiple options. In contrast, low uncertainty avoidance cultures are more comfortable with the messiness of direct engagement and the collaborative exploration of solutions, as they are less threatened by the unknown outcomes of open dialogue (Merkin, 2006). This implies that interventions aimed at improving conflict resolution in high Uncertainty Avoidance contexts might need to emphasise clear processes, predefined steps, and predictable outcomes to reduce anxiety. Conversely, in low Uncertainty Avoidance contexts, fostering open dialogue, encouraging flexible problem-solving, and embracing emergent solutions could be more effective strategies.

2.8 Empirical Review of Cross-Cultural Conflict Resolution in Multinational Contexts

2.8.1 Global Empirical Studies

The research by Wang et al. (2024) empirically investigated conflicts and their resolution in cross-cultural projects, focusing on the significant influence of culture, comprising participants from countries such as China and Malaysia. Utilizing a mixed-method approach with questionnaires, the study identified five main conflict types: communication, cooperation, value, status, and relationship conflicts, with communication conflicts being the most frequent. The research explored conflict resolution strategies aligned with TKI's five conflict management styles: competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating. Collaboration emerged as the most frequently used, effective, and preferred style, while avoiding was the least used.

The study revealed a dual impact of culture: negatively, it causes conflicts through language barriers, differing work styles, and value clashes; positively, it fosters discussion, cultural understanding, and more comprehensive ideas. Similarly, Wang et al. (2024) found that culture had a dual effect on conflict resolution, promoting inclusiveness while potentially leading to more autocratic decision-making for efficiency. However, the study acknowledged limitations, including a small and culturally homogenous sample.

2.8.2 Empirical Studies Focused on Africa and European Contexts

In a comparative study investigating how national culture influences conflict management styles between Nigeria and Sweden, Ndubuisi (2010) utilised structured questionnaires administered to 60 randomly selected employees in each country and discovered significant cultural differences in conflict resolution approaches between the two countries. In Sweden, the study found that conflicts were almost exclusively resolved through compromise and negotiation, with 100% of respondents endorsing this method. This approach was perceived as yielding permanent solutions by directly addressing grievances and fostering common ground. Whereas in Nigeria, conflict resolution was primarily achieved through smoothing (59.3%), avoidance (18.5%), and fighting them out (14.8%), with only a small minority (7.4%) reporting compromise and negotiation. The impact of these methods is considered temporary, likening them to 'sweeping the dust under the carpet', which may eventually resurface or escalate.

Backlund and Kullman (2024) investigated conflicts within cross-cultural project teams, specifically focusing on Eastern European and Nordic teams in the Swedish construction sector. Leveraging a qualitative approach, data was collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed using thematic analysis based on a theoretical framework, including Hofstede's dimensions and the TKI. Backlund and Kullman (2024) found that the most prominent conflict was the linguistic barrier, leading to miscommunication and errors. Conflict due to differing work ethics and challenges integrating new team members mid-project were also significant. The research highlighted that cultural differences impact conflict, with variations observed in approaches to authority and individualism.

Ristic et al. (2020) conducted an empirical examination of conflict management styles among German and Serbian managers employed by German multinational organisations operating in Serbia. Utilising the Rahim Organisational Conflict Inventory-II, the research revealed significant differences in the preferred conflict management styles between the two nationalities. Serbian managers, emerging from a collectivistic and high power-distance culture, demonstrated a pronounced tendency to favour avoiding and compromising styles. This aligns with theoretical predictions that individuals in such cultures prioritise harmony and deference to authority. Conversely, German managers, whose cultural background is characterised by individualism and low power distance, exhibited a greater preference for dominating (competing) and integrating (collaborating) conflict management styles. The study also noted that German managers showed a significant inclination towards integrating styles, which focus on problem-solving and seeking win-win solutions. Ristic et al. (2020) suggested that this pattern might partly reflect a process of cultural adaptation, where German managers operating in Serbia might adopt less confrontational, more collaborative approaches in response to the local cultural context.

Similarly, Kim and Srisuphaolarn (2020) employed a qualitative approach, primarily relying on in-depth interviews with 15 employees (9 Korean and 6 Thai nationals) working in 9 non-manufacturing Korean organisations in Thailand. The study highlighted that cultural differences profoundly influence conflict management styles and contribute to conflicts within Global Korean Organisations' Thai subsidiaries. Thai employees favour an avoiding conflict management approach that emphasises maintaining harmonious relationships, indirect communication, and a reluctance to engage in confrontation. As a result, they tend to seek collaborative, middle-ground

solutions and often steer clear of conflict situations altogether (Kim and Srisuphaolarn, 2020). In contrast, Korean employees were more direct in their approach and were also keen to prevent any loss of face and prioritise swift, decisive action, which translated into a results-oriented and occasionally blunt communication style. These observed differences can be contextualised within Hofstede's cultural dimensions, with Thai conflict management reflecting collectivistic tendencies and Korean practices aligning with higher power distance and a focus on short-term outcomes (Kim and Srisuphaolarn, 2020).

2.8.3 A Critical Overview of Methodological Approaches in Existing Research

Existing empirical research on cross-cultural conflict resolution employs a variety of methodological approaches, each with its own strengths and limitations. Studies frequently utilise mixed methods designs, combining quantitative data collection (e.g., questionnaires) with qualitative data (e.g., interviews) to provide a more robust understanding of complex phenomena (Wang et al., 2024). Other studies adopt purely qualitative approaches, relying on in-depth interviews or case studies to explore rich contextual details (Backlund and Kullman, 2024; Kim and Srisuphaolarn, 2020), while some employ quantitative methods exclusively, often using surveys to measure and compare variables across larger samples.

Common instruments for measuring conflict resolution styles include the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI), widely used for its five-style typology, and the Rahim Organisational Conflict Inventory-II (Qayyum et al., 2022). For measuring cultural values, Hofstede's Values Survey Module (VSM) and the Cultural Value Scale (CVSCALE) are frequently employed, with the latter specifically designed for individual-level measurement (Dhingra et al., 2024).

Despite these varied approaches, limitations are frequently acknowledged in existing studies. For instance, Wang et al. (2024) noted that their study was limited by a small and culturally homogenous sample, which can restrict the generalisability of findings. Other common limitations in cross-cultural research include the reliance on self-report measures, which can be subject to social desirability bias, and the difficulty in controlling for myriad non-cultural factors that may influence behaviour. A critical methodological concern, as previously discussed, is the widespread practice of inferring individual cultural orientations from national-level scores, which risks the

ecological fallacy (Grenness, 2012). This highlights the importance of studies that directly measure individual cultural values to provide more precise and valid insights into cross-cultural behaviour.

2.9 Identification of Research Gaps and Justification for the Current Study

2.9.1 The Geographical Gap: The Paucity of Nigeria-UK Comparative Studies

Despite the increasing academic interest in cross-cultural conflict resolution, a significant geographical void persists in the existing literature: a specific comparative analysis of conflict resolution strategies in multinational organisations operating in the United Kingdom and Nigeria. While numerous cross-cultural studies have explored conflict resolution in various global contexts, such as Serbia (Ristic et al., 2020), Thailand (Kim & Srisuphaolarn, 2020), and Sweden (Backlund & Kullman, 2024), none have specifically focused on this particular bilateral relationship.

This identified geographical gap is not merely a superficial absence of studies but represents a critical void in understanding conflict dynamics within a significant economic and cultural corridor. Previous research has explicitly highlighted substantial cultural incompatibilities between Nigeria and the UK that have a documented negative impact on business interactions (Maduagwu and Igwe, 2018). These incompatibilities manifest in various aspects, including differing perceptions of time (e.g., the UK's view of time as a store of value versus Nigeria's African time mentality), contrasting communication styles in negotiations and debates, and divergent attitudes towards mixing business with personal relationships (Maduagwu and Igwe, 2018). These deep-seated cultural differences are not merely academic curiosities; they tend to influence how conflict is viewed and resolved across these cultures.

Given these documented business challenges arising from Nigeria-UK cultural differences, a direct comparative study is essential for developing targeted, culturally sensitive strategies that can mitigate these specific incompatibilities. Such research is crucial for fostering more effective bilateral business relations. The proposed study, by focusing specifically on the Nigeria-UK context, moves beyond general cross-cultural findings to provide actionable insights for a specific and under-researched multinational context.

2.9.2 The Methodological Gap: Addressing the Ecological Fallacy in Cultural Value Measurement

A fundamental methodological limitation prevalent in much of the existing cross-cultural research is the reliance on national cultural dimension scores, such as those provided by Hofstede or the GLOBE study, to infer and assign cultural values to individuals (Grenness, 2012). This approach, while convenient, is inherently problematic because it erroneously equates the broad national culture of a country with the specific individual cultural orientation of a citizen, without directly measuring the latter (Gunkel et al., 2016).

This practice leads to a significant methodological flaw known as the ecological fallacy. The ecological fallacy occurs when group-level data are used to draw false conclusions about individuals within that group (Messner, 2016). In the context of cultural research, this means that what applies to cultural groups as a collective statistical average does not necessarily apply in the same way to every individual within that group (Brewer and Venaik, 2014). Hofstede himself acknowledged this limitation, noting that his original country-level dimensions, such as collectivism and individualism, could not be directly replicated or consistently applied at the individual level. The persistent use of national-level cultural scores for individual analysis, despite this well-documented fallacy, represents a fundamental methodological weakness in much cross-cultural research (Messner, 2016). This oversight risks misattributing group-level characteristics to individuals, thereby obscuring the true influence of individual cultural orientations on behaviour (Vauclair, 2009). This methodological gap means that many existing findings on cultural influence on individual behaviour might be less robust than assumed. The proposed study's direct measurement of individual cultural values is therefore not just an incremental improvement but a critical step towards more valid and psychologically relevant insights into cross-cultural organisational behaviour.

2.9.3 Review of Individual-Level Cultural Value Scales

To directly address and overcome the ecological fallacy inherent in using national-level cultural scores for individual analysis, researchers have developed and validated instruments specifically designed to measure Hofstede’s cultural dimensions at the individual level. One such prominent instrument is the Cultural Value Scale (CVSCALE) (Vauclair, 2009). This scale is an extension of Hofstede's original country-level cultural values scale and consists of 26 items that assess

individual cultural values consistent with Hofstede's typology, including Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism, Masculinity, and Confucian dynamism. The CVSCALE has demonstrated appropriate reliability in various contexts, making it a suitable tool for assessing cultural values at the individual level (Dhingra et al., 2024).

The existence and validation of individual-level cultural value scales like CVSCALE provide a direct and robust solution to the methodological gap posed by the ecological fallacy. By employing such a validated instrument, the proposed research directly addresses this fundamental methodological weakness. This ensures that the cultural values measured are indeed those of the individual respondents, rather than relying on potentially inaccurate national averages. This methodological rigor significantly strengthens the internal validity of the study's findings, making its contributions to the understanding of cross-cultural conflict resolution more reliable and impactful, as it moves towards a more precise investigation into the relationship between individual cultural orientations and conflict resolution styles.

2.9.4 Gaps in Understanding Perceived Effectiveness of Conflict Resolution Strategies Across Cultures

While existing literature extensively identifies and categorises various conflict resolution styles (e.g., through the TKI framework) and explores their correlation with broad cultural dimensions, there remains a significant gap in the deeper understanding of how cultural background shapes the perception of effectiveness of these strategies. Research often focuses on the adoption of certain styles, but less on the subjective evaluation of their success by the parties involved.

Cultural background profoundly influences not only how individuals understand the very nature of a conflict but also how they express their emotions during disagreements, and what strategies they ultimately believe are appropriate and successful for finding a way forward. This means that the definition of a successful resolution may differ significantly across cultures. For instance, individualistic cultures, which prioritise personal rights and autonomy, might define a successful resolution as one that explicitly satisfies each person's distinct interests or achieves a clear win on a task-related issue. Conversely, cultures valuing collectivism might focus on solutions that primarily benefit the larger group or community, sometimes even at the expense of individual desires, with success being measured by the preservation of social harmony and relationships. This divergence in success criteria implies that a strategy deemed effective in one cultural context might

be perceived as a failure in another, even if the overt conflict is technically resolved. For example, a competing style might achieve a task objective but could be perceived as highly ineffective if it causes significant loss of face in a collectivist culture, leading to long-term relational damage.

Furthermore, there is a notable absence of studies that explicitly examine whether all parties involved in a cross-cultural conflict agree with the chosen resolution strategy and, crucially, if they perceive that strategy as ideal or appropriate for their respective cultural backgrounds and understandings. This gap highlights a critical area for investigation: the subjective experience and evaluation of conflict resolution. The proposed study's qualitative component, through open-ended questions in the questionnaire, is uniquely positioned to address this gap. By asking managers to describe conflicts, their chosen approaches, how cultural values influence their handling of conflict, and what an effective resolution means to them, the research will uncover these culturally embedded criteria for successful conflict resolution. This qualitative data will provide rich, contextual insights into the nuanced perceptions of effectiveness, moving beyond a simple measurement of adopted styles to understand the underlying cultural logic and subjective experiences of conflict resolution in multinational settings. This deeper understanding is crucial for developing truly culturally sensitive and effective conflict management interventions.

2.10 Hypotheses

Based on the literature review and the identified cultural differences between Nigeria and the United Kingdom, this research proposes the following testable hypotheses regarding conflict resolution strategies in multinational organisations operating within these two countries:

i. **Hypothesis 1:** Managers in Nigerian multinational organisations, operating within a culture characterised by higher Power Distance and Collectivism compared to the UK, will exhibit a greater preference for Avoiding and Accommodating conflict resolution styles

ii. **Hypothesis 2:** Managers in UK multinational organisations, operating within a culture characterised by lower Power Distance and higher Individualism compared to Nigeria, will exhibit a greater preference for Competing and Collaborating conflict resolution styles

iii. **Hypothesis 3:** Managers from low Uncertainty Avoidance cultures like the UK are more likely to prefer collaborative conflict resolution strategies in cross-cultural workplace

interactions, whereas individuals from high Uncertainty Avoidance cultures are more likely to prefer compromising or avoiding strategies.

2.11 Conceptual framework

The central conceptual framework of this research explores the relationship between national cultural dimensions (Hofstede's Six Dimensions) and managerial conflict resolution strategies (Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument - TKI) within multinational organisations in Nigeria and the United Kingdom.

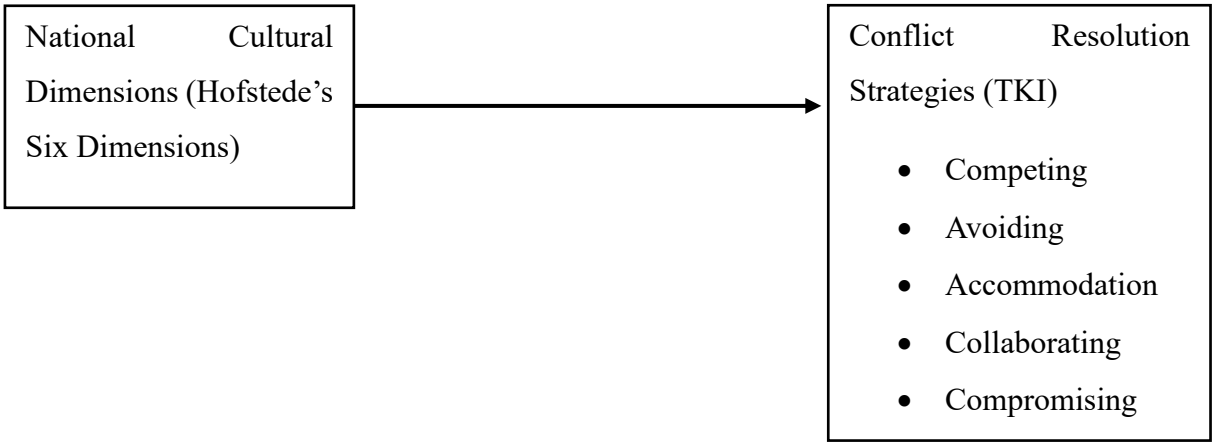

Figure 5: Independent and Dependent Variable

i. **Independent Variables:** Hofstede's Six Cultural Dimensions (Power Distance, Individualism-Collectivism, Motivation Towards Achievement, Uncertainty Avoidance, Long-Term Orientation, and Indulgence-Restraint) will be used to analyse the cultural differences between Nigeria and the UK. Significant differences exist between the two countries across these dimensions.

ii. **Dependent Variables:** The five conflict-handling styles of the TKI (Competing, Avoiding, Accommodating, Collaborating, and Compromising) will be used to assess managerial approaches to conflict resolution.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section outlines the comprehensive methodology for a comparative investigation of the conflict resolution strategies employed by managers in multinational organisations operating in Nigeria and the United Kingdom. It discusses the philosophical foundations, research methodology, design, sample strategies, data collection methods, instruments, and analytical approaches. The discussed methodological choices are designed to address identified research gaps, particularly concerning the paucity of Nigeria-UK comparative studies, the ecological fallacy in cultural value measurement, and the understanding of perceived effectiveness of conflict resolution strategies across cultures.

3.2 Research Philosophy

The foundational choice of a research philosophy is paramount, as it dictates the ontological and epistemological stances of a study (Grix, 2018). It also shapes the methods to be selected and the subsequent interpretation of findings (Grix, 2018). This research, which combines quantitative measurement of conflict styles and cultural values with a qualitative exploration of perceptions, necessitates a philosophical stance capable of accommodating both objective and subjective realities.

Several philosophical paradigms exist within social science research, each offering a distinct lens through which to view reality and knowledge. Positivism, traditionally rooted in the natural sciences, posits an objective reality that can be measured and understood through empirical observation and experimentation (Ali, 2024). This paradigm aims for generalisable, replicable findings, often focusing on identifying causal relationships between variables (Ali, 2024). While valuable for hypothesis testing, its strict adherence to objectivity can limit a comprehensive understanding of complex social phenomena (Ali, 2024).

In direct contrast, Interpretivism argues that reality is socially constructed and inherently subjective, understood primarily through individuals lived experiences and interpretations (Pervin and Mokhtar, 2022). This approach values in-depth understanding and context-specific insights,

typically employing qualitative methods (Pervin and Mokhtar, 2022). However, its emphasis on subjectivity can present challenges for generalisation across broader populations.

Critical Realism offers a more integrated perspective. It asserts an objective reality that exists independently of human perception, a position known as ontological realism (Lawani, 2021). Simultaneously, it acknowledges that human knowledge of this reality is fallible and socially mediated, a concept termed epistemic relativism (Lawani, 2021). Critical realism seeks to identify underlying causal mechanisms that generate observable events, recognising that social structures and human agency are in a constant state of flux (Lawani, 2021). This philosophy is well-suited to underpin mixed methods research designs.

Finally, Pragmatism emerges as a highly suitable philosophy for mixed methods research, as it prioritises the research problem and the practical consequences of inquiry (Dube et al., 2024). It is not constrained by a singular view of reality or knowledge, instead adopting a what works approach to address complex social situations (Dube et al., 2024). Pragmatism views knowledge as an objective reality that can only be realised through human experience, and truth as the best available knowledge confirmed by practical consequences (Gillespie et al., 2024).

This study adopts a pragmatist philosophical stance, as it is uniquely positioned to bridge the quantitative and qualitative components of the research design (Dube et al., 2024). The overarching aim of this research is to provide actionable insights for enhancing cross-cultural communication and organisational effectiveness in multinational settings. Pragmatism's problem-solving orientation and its focus on generating useful knowledge that empowers human action align perfectly with this objective (Gillespie et al., 2024). While pragmatism serves as the philosophical framework for the research, the study also incorporates elements of critical realism, particularly in its pursuit of understanding why certain conflict resolution styles are preferred and how cultural dimensions influence these choices and perceptions of effectiveness (Lawani, 2021). The emphasis of critical realism on identifying causal mechanisms allows for a deeper exploration of the underlying cultural structures, such as Power Distance and Individualism-Collectivism, that generate observable conflict behaviours and subjective evaluations.

By combining pragmatism's practical, problem-solving orientation with critical realism's focus on generative mechanisms, the study can move beyond simply describing what conflict styles are used and what cultural values exist. It can also delve into how and why these cultural values

produce specific conflict behaviours and shape the subjective perception of effectiveness. This allows the research to contribute not only to practical application but also to theoretical understanding by explaining the deeper, often unobservable, forces at play in cross-cultural conflict resolution.

3.3 Research Approach

The research approach describes how knowledge is generated within a study (Opie, 2019). This research adopts a combination of deductive and inductive reasoning, a characteristic feature of a mixed-methods design.

3.3.1 Deductive Reasoning

This approach commences with existing theories and hypotheses, which are subsequently tested against empirical data (Gilgun, 2019). In this study, the hypotheses derived from Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory and the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) will be quantitatively tested. For instance, Hypothesis 1 posits that managers in Nigerian multinational organisations, operating within a culture characterised by higher Power Distance and Collectivism compared to the UK, will exhibit a greater preference for Avoiding and Accommodating conflict resolution styles. This involves the systematic collection of quantitative data on cultural values using the CVSCALE and conflict styles via the TKI, followed by statistical analysis to either confirm or refute these pre-defined theoretical relationships.

3.3.2 Inductive Reasoning

In contrast, the inductive approach moves from specific observations or data to broader generalisations, ultimately leading to the development of new theories (Hayes et al., 2010). The qualitative component of this study, specifically the open-ended questions, will predominantly utilise an inductive approach. By exploring managers' personal experiences of conflict, their chosen approaches to address these conflicts, and their perceptions of what constitutes an effective resolution, the study aims to uncover insights that may not be fully predicted by existing theories This inductive process allows for the generation of richer, context-specific understanding of the subtleties inherent in cross-cultural conflict resolution.

3.3.3 Abductive Reasoning

While not explicitly stated as a primary approach, a mixed-methods study often implicitly engages in abductive reasoning (Andrade, 2023). This involves inferring the best explanation for observed phenomena. After analysing both quantitative (deductive) and qualitative (inductive) data, the researcher will synthesise these findings to construct the most plausible and comprehensive understanding of cross-cultural conflict resolution within the Nigeria-UK context. This synthesis will involve identifying underlying causal mechanisms that explain the observed patterns and experiences. This iterative process allows for continuous refinement of understanding as new data emerges and is integrated.

Based on this, the research combines both inductive and deductive approach. If the study relied solely on deduction, it would only confirm or deny existing relationships, potentially overlooking the rich, culturally specific reasons why managers choose certain styles or what effectiveness truly means to them. Conversely, a purely inductive approach might generate rich insights but lack the statistical power to generalise findings or test specific theoretical links. By combining the approaches, the study is able to bridge the gap between identifying what conflict resolution styles are prevalent and understanding why they are adopted and perceived as effective within specific cultural contexts.

3.4 Research Design

This study employs a Comparative Mixed-Methods Design. This method involves the simultaneous collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data (Alele and Malau-Aduli, 2023). The findings from these two distinct data streams are then integrated during the interpretation phase to provide a robust understanding of the research problem. The comparative element is central to the design, focusing on managers in multinational organisations with significant operations in both Nigeria and the United Kingdom.

This design choice is not merely a combination of methods but a strategic decision to address the inherent complexity of cross-cultural phenomena, particularly the interplay between observable behaviours and subjective interpretations. The study aims to compare conflict styles, which are measurable, and understand perceived effectiveness, which is interpretive, across two distinct cultures. Quantitative methods excel at identifying patterns and testing hypotheses (Fischer et al.,

2023), while qualitative methods are strong in exploring meaning and context (Muzari et al., 2022). If only one method were used, the study would be incomplete.

i. Quantitative Component

The purpose of the quantitative component is to identify and compare the dominant managerial conflict resolution strategies and key cultural dimensions (Power Distance, Individualism-Collectivism, Uncertainty Avoidance) in UK and Nigerian multinational organisations. This component will also serve to test the formulated hypotheses linking these variables. The nature of this component will be a cross-sectional survey design, wherein data will be collected from a sample of managers at a single point in time. This design is highly efficient for gathering data from a large number of participants across different geographical locations (Alele and Malau-Aduli, 2023). The instruments for quantitative data collection will include Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) and the Hofstede's Cultural Value Scale (CVSCALE).

ii. Qualitative Component

The purpose of the qualitative component is to deeply explore managers' experiences with conflict, understand the influence of cultural values on their conflict-handling approaches, and ascertain their perceptions of what constitutes an effective resolution. This component is specifically designed to address the identified gap in understanding the perceived effectiveness of conflict resolution strategies. The nature of this component involves collecting qualitative data through open-ended questions embedded within the same online questionnaire. While not traditional in-depth interviews, these questions are designed to elicit insightful, descriptive responses that capture individual perspectives and contextual insights. The justification for embedding qualitative questions within a quantitative survey lies in its practicality, allowing for broader reach while still capturing valuable subjective insights. This approach is particularly advantageous for a comparative study spanning two countries, where extensive face-to-face interviews might present significant logistical challenges. The detailed responses obtained will provide crucial context and depth, enriching the quantitative findings.

3.5 Population and Sampling

This section delineates the specific group of individuals targeted for the study and outlines the strategies employed for selecting participants from this group.

3.5.1 Target Population

The target population for this study comprises managers currently working in multinational organisations with significant operations in both Nigeria and the United Kingdom. Managers have been specifically chosen as the focus of this research because their conflict resolution strategies profoundly influence organisational outcomes and employee interactions (Malik, 2024). Their roles inherently involve navigating diverse cultural contexts and are frequently tasked with resolving cross-cultural conflicts (Malik, 2024). Understanding their perspectives is, therefore, crucial for developing targeted interventions and training programs aimed at improving cross-cultural communication and organisational effectiveness.

3.5.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

i. Inclusion Criteria

To ensure the relevance and focus of the study, participants must meet the following inclusion criteria:

a. Currently employed in a managerial role (at any level) within a multinational organisation.

b. Working in operations located in either Nigeria or the United Kingdom.

c. Possess documented experience working in culturally diverse teams.

d. Fluent in English, as the questionnaire is administered in English.

e. Willing and able to provide informed consent for participation.

ii. Exclusion Criteria

Conversely, individuals will be excluded from participation if they:

a. Are not currently in a managerial role.

b. Are employed in purely domestic organisations without multinational operations.

c. Do not provide informed consent to participate in the study.

3.6 Sample Size

Determining an appropriate sample size is a critical step in research (Ahmad and Halim, 2017), ensuring both the statistical power required for the quantitative analysis and the thematic saturation necessary for the qualitative data.

For the quantitative component of the study, a target sample size of approximately 20 managers will be sought, comprising 10 from Nigeria and 10 from the United Kingdom. The objective is to achieve a balanced representation from both countries, which is fundamental for facilitating meaningful and statistically sound cross-cultural comparisons.

This specific number (20 participants) is not considered robust for conducting comparative analyses, especially for the quantitative aspect. However, the timeframe and the limit of resources are reasons why the researcher have selected this sample size.

Although the quantitative survey will be distributed widely to a large number of participants, the qualitative analysis will focus on a carefully selected subset of the responses to the open-ended questions. It is anticipated that a smaller, yet sufficient, number of rich and detailed responses will be required to achieve a thorough qualitative understanding. This approach ensures depth of understanding and rich contextual insights without necessitating every participant to provide extensive qualitative data, thereby optimising research resources and participant burden.

3.7 Sampling Strategy

The sampling strategy outlines the specific methods by which participants will be recruited from the defined target population (Ahmad and Halim, 2017). Given the practical constraints inherent in accessing managers within multinational organisations across two distinct countries, a non-probability sampling approach will be employed.

For the quantitative part of the study, convenience and snowball sampling will be utilised. Convenience sampling involves the selection of participants who are readily accessible and willing to participate in the study (Etikan et al., 2016). Following this initial recruitment, snowball sampling will be employed, whereby initial participants will be asked to refer other eligible managers within their professional networks or organisations who might also be suitable for the study (Sharma, 2017).

This combined approach is pragmatic and often necessary for reaching a geographically dispersed and often time-constrained population, such as managers in multinational organisations (Gillespie et al., 2024). Direct access to comprehensive lists of such managers is typically restricted due to organisational privacy policies and data protection regulations.

While the non-probability sampling approach is practical for this study, it inherently limits the direct generalisability of the findings to the broader population of all managers in UK and Nigerian multinational organisations. Furthermore, conscious efforts will be made during the recruitment process to engage managers from diverse multinational organisations and various industries to broaden the spectrum of perspectives captured.

For the qualitative part of the study, specifically the analysis of responses to the open-ended questions, a purposive sampling strategy will be applied to the collected quantitative data. This technique involves intentionally selecting responses from participants who are most likely to provide rich, in-depth information directly relevant to the qualitative research questions (Etikan et al., 2016). The selection will aim to ensure a diversity of experiences and perspectives among the chosen qualitative responses.

Purposive sampling is considered ideal for qualitative research because it allows the researcher to select cases that are particularly informative for the phenomenon under study, directly contributing to the achievement of thematic saturation (Etikan et al., 2016). This ensures that the qualitative analysis yields comprehensive and insightful findings.

3.7.1 Practical Challenges and Recruitment Strategies

Gaining access to multinational organisations and securing participation from busy managers can present significant practical challenges. Potential issues include low response rates due to time constraints, gatekeeper resistance from organisational leadership due to confidentiality concerns, and difficulties in establishing initial contact with eligible participants. To address these challenges, a multi-pronged recruitment strategy will be implemented. This will involve leveraging professional networks, reaching out to industry associations, and utilising online professional platforms (e.g., LinkedIn) to disseminate the survey link.

3.8 Data Collection

The data collection process for this study will involve a structured approach to gather both quantitative and qualitative information from the target population.

3.8.1 Data Collection Method: Online Questionnaire

Data will be collected primarily through a single, comprehensive online questionnaire. This method is chosen for its efficiency in reaching a geographically dispersed sample across Nigeria and the United Kingdom, ensuring anonymity, and facilitating data management (Lefever et al., 2007). The questionnaire is self-administered, allowing participants to complete it at their convenience.

3.8.2 Research Instrument

The research instrument is the questionnaire itself, which is divided into four distinct sections designed to capture all necessary data points for the study's objectives and hypotheses.

i. Section A: Demographics & Background

This section collects essential demographic and professional background information from the participants. This includes:

a. Country of Work: Nigeria or United Kingdom. This is crucial for the comparative aspect of the study.

b. Age Bracket: Categorised ranges (25–34, 35–44, 45–54, 55+).

c. Gender: Male, Female, Non-binary, prefer not to say.

d. Educational Background: Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree or higher, Diploma/Professional Certification, Other.

e. Years in Managerial Role: Categorised ranges (0–2 years, 3–5 years, 6–10 years, 10+ years).

f. Years Employed in This Multinational Organisation: Categorised ranges (0–2 years, 3–5 years, 6–10 years, 10+ years).

g. Department/Function: Operations, Human Resources, Finance, Marketing/Sales, Other.

h. Approximate Number of Years Working in Culturally Diverse Teams: Categorised ranges (Less than 1 year, 1–3 years, 4–6 years, 7+ years).

This demographic data is vital for contextualising the findings and for potential subgroup analyses, allowing for a more granular understanding of how various professional and personal backgrounds might correlate with conflict resolution styles and cultural values.

ii. Section B: Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) Questionnaire

This section incorporates the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI), a widely recognised and validated tool for assessing individual preferences across five distinct conflict-handling styles: Competing, Avoiding, Accommodating, Collaborating, and Compromising. The TKI is particularly suitable for cross-cultural studies due to its capacity to capture a broad spectrum of conflict behaviours and its popularity in conjunction with cultural theories like Hofstede's.

The instrument presents 30 pairs of statements, and for each pair, participants choose the statement (A or B) that is most characteristic of their behaviour in conflict situations (Kilmann diagnostics, n.d). This forced-choice format helps to reduce social desirability bias to some extent. The scores derived from the TKI will provide quantitative data on the dominant conflict resolution styles of managers in both the UK and Nigeria, enabling direct comparison and hypothesis testing related to managerial conflict strategies.

iii. Section C: Hofstede's Cultural Value Scale (CVSCALE)

To directly measure individual cultural orientations and address the methodological concern of the ecological fallacy, Section C of the questionnaire integrates the Cultural Value Scale (CVSCALE) **(**Prasongsukarn, 2009). This scale, an extension of Hofstede's original country-level cultural values scale, comprises 26 items designed to assess individual cultural values consistent with Hofstede's typology, specifically focusing on Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, and Individualism (the inverse of Collectivism) (Prasongsukarn, 2009). Participants will rate their agreement with each statement on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree) **(**Prasongsukarn, 2009).

The inclusion of the CVSCALE is a critical methodological decision. A fundamental methodological limitation prevalent in much of the existing cross-cultural research is the reliance

on national cultural dimension scores, such as those provided by Hofstede, to infer and assign cultural values to individuals (Messner, 2016). This approach, while convenient, is inherently problematic because it erroneously equates the broad national culture of a country with the specific individual cultural orientation of a citizen, without directly measuring the latter (Messner, 2016). This approach results in the ecological fallacy, a significant methodological mistake that happens when conclusions made from group-level data are incorrectly applied to individuals within that group (Gunkel et al., 2016).

The proposed study's direct measurement of individual cultural values through the CVSCALE is therefore not just an incremental improvement but a critical step towards more valid and psychologically relevant insights into cross-cultural organisational behaviour, ensuring that the cultural values measured are indeed those of the individual respondents, rather than relying on potentially inaccurate national averages. This methodological rigour significantly strengthens the internal validity of the study's findings, making its contributions to the understanding of cross-cultural conflict resolution more reliable and impactful.

iv. Section D: Open-Ended Questions

This section comprises a series of open-ended questions designed to elicit rich qualitative data regarding managers' personal experiences and perceptions of conflict resolution. These questions include:

- Can you describe a recent conflict you managed in your organisation? What steps did you take to address it, and what guided your choice of approach?
- In your experience, how do cultural values, such as respect for hierarchy, group loyalty, planning, or being assertive, influence how you typically handle conflict at work?
- What does an effective resolution to a workplace conflict mean to you, and how do you think your cultural background shapes that view?

This qualitative component directly addresses a significant gap in existing literature: the deeper understanding of how cultural background shapes the perception of effectiveness of conflict resolution strategies. While existing research identifies and categorises various conflict resolution styles and explores their correlation with broad cultural dimensions, there remains a notable

absence of studies that explicitly examine whether all parties involved in a cross-cultural conflict agree with the chosen resolution strategy and, crucially, if they perceive that strategy as ideal or appropriate for their respective cultural backgrounds and understandings.

The open-ended questions in this section are uniquely positioned to uncover these culturally embedded criteria for successful conflict resolution, providing rich, contextual insights into the nuanced perceptions of effectiveness, moving beyond a simple measurement of adopted styles to understand the underlying cultural logic and subjective experiences of conflict resolution in multinational settings.

3.9 Data Analysis

The data analysis phase will involve distinct approaches for the quantitative and qualitative data, followed by an integrative interpretation to provide a holistic understanding of cross-cultural conflict resolution.

3.9.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data collected will be analysed using appropriate statistical software. Initial analysis will involve calculating descriptive statistics for all variables. This includes frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, and ranges for demographic information, TKI scores, and CVSCALE dimensions for both Nigerian and UK samples. These statistics will provide an overview of the sample characteristics and the distribution of conflict styles and cultural values within each country.

3.9.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data collected will be analysed using Thematic Analysis, following the rigorous guidelines proposed by Braun and Clarke (2014). This method is flexible and well-suited for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within qualitative data. The process will involve several iterative steps:

i. **Familiarisation with the Data:** This initial step involves reading and re-reading the open-ended responses to gain a deep understanding of the content and immerse oneself in the data.

ii. **Generating Initial Codes:** Relevant pieces of data will be systematically coded. Codes are labels that identify interesting features of the data relevant to the research questions.

iii. **Searching for Themes:** The codes will be categorized into more general themes that highlight noteworthy trends or interpretations in the data. This involves looking for commonalities, differences, and relationships across codes.

iv. **Reviewing Themes:** Themes will be reviewed to ensure they are coherent, distinct, and accurately reflect the data. This may involve refining, merging, or splitting themes.

v. **Labelling Themes:** A succinct label will be given to each theme after it has been thoroughly established. The essence of each theme and its significance to the overall narrative will be articulated.

vi. **Producing the Report:** The last phase is combining the themes into a logical story, supported by illustrative quotes from the participants' responses.

This thematic analysis will specifically address Research Question 3, which explores how cultural background shapes UK and Nigerian managers' perceptions of conflict resolution effectiveness.

3.9.3 Integration of Findings

The final and most crucial stage of the data analysis will be the integration of the quantitative and qualitative findings. In accordance with the mixed-methods design, the results from both analyses will be combined to provide a thorough understanding of cross-cultural conflict resolution in Nigeria and the UK. This integration will involve:

i. **Triangulation:** Comparing and contrasting quantitative statistical results with qualitative themes to see if they corroborate, diverge, or complement each other. For instance, if quantitative data shows a preference for avoidance in Nigerian managers, qualitative data can explain the cultural reasons and perceived effectiveness of this style (e.g., face-saving, maintaining harmony).

ii. **Elaboration:** Using qualitative data to elaborate on and provide deeper context for quantitative findings. This involves explaining *why* certain statistical patterns exist, offering a richer understanding of the mechanisms at play.

iii. **Contradiction/Discrepancy:** Exploring any contradictions or discrepancies between the quantitative and qualitative findings. Such discrepancies are not weaknesses but opportunities for deeper critical analysis, revealing complexities that a single method might miss.

This integrative approach will allow the study to move beyond simply identifying prevalent styles to understanding the underlying cultural logic and subjective experiences of conflict resolution.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction to the chapter

This chapter presents the findings from the data collected through the quantitative and qualitative research instruments. It is structured to systematically address the research questions and test the hypotheses outlined in the earlier chapters. The findings are presented in the order of the sections as they were structured in the questionnaire. The chapter then moves into a detailed presentation of the quantitative findings from the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) and the Cultural Values Scale (CVSCALE). Following this, the chapter integrates qualitative data derived from interviews to enrich the numerical findings and provide a deeper understanding of the why behind the observed trends.

4.2 Section 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

i. Country of Work

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by country of work

Country	Count	Percentage
Nigeria	10	50%
UK	10	50%

The sample comprised an equal representation of respondents from both Nigeria and the United Kingdom, each accounting for half of the total population (50% respectively). This balanced distribution ensured that perspectives from both national contexts were proportionately included in the study.

ii. Age Distribution

Table 4: Age distribution of respondents

Age Group	Count	Percentage
18-24	2	10%
25-34	7	35%
35-44	6	30%
45-54	2	10%
55+	3	15%

The largest proportion of respondents were between the ages of 25 and 34 years (35%), followed closely by those aged 35-44 years (30%). A smaller proportion of respondents were aged 18-24 years (10%) and 45-54 years (10%), while 15% were aged 55 years and above. Overall, the data indicates that the sample primarily comprised mid-career individuals within the 25–44-year age range.

iii. Gender Distribution

Table 5: Gender distribution of respondents

Gender	Count	Percentage
Male	8	40%
Female	9	45%
Non-binary	3	15%

Respondents were relatively evenly distributed by gender, with females comprising the largest share (45%), followed by males (40%). Additionally, 15% of respondents identified as non-binary, reflecting a notable level of gender diversity within the sample.

iv. Educational Qualification

Table 6: Educational qualification of respondents

Qualification	Count	Percentage
Bachelor's Degree	8	40%
Master's or Higher	8	40%
Diploma/Professional	4	20%

Educational qualifications were concentrated at the Bachelor's and Master's levels, with each category accounting for 40% of respondents. A smaller proportion (20%) reported holding diploma or professional-level qualifications. The data therefore indicates a generally high level of formal education among the respondents.

v. Years in Managerial Role

Table 7: Years of experience in managerial roles

Experience (Years)	Count	Percentage
1-5 years	5	25%
6-10 years	10	50%
11-15 years	3	15%
16+ years	2	10%

Half of the respondents reported between 6 and 10 years of experience in managerial roles, while a quarter had 1-5 years of experience. Smaller proportions reported longer-term experience, with 15% indicating 11-15 years and 10% reporting over 16 years in such roles.

vi. Years in Culturally Diverse Teams

Table 8: Years of experience in culturally diverse teams

Years	Count	Percentage
1-3 years	3	15%
4-6 years	5	25%
7+ years	8	40%
None	4	20%

The largest share of respondents (40%) reported seven or more years of experience working in culturally diverse teams, followed by 25% who had 4-6 years of such experience. A further 15% had between one and three years of experience, while 20% indicated they had no prior experience in multicultural teams.

4.3 Section 2: Conflict Resolution Styles (TKI)

The TKI instrument generates two levels of information:

1. Group-level totals: These are the aggregate counts of all item selections mapped to each style. They indicate which conflict-handling approaches are most frequently used overall across respondents.

2. Individual dominant style: For each respondent, the style with the highest number of selections is identified as their dominant style. This represents their personal default orientation in conflict situations.

Because each individual contributes many selections across multiple styles, it is possible for a style to register a large group total but still be the dominant style for very few individuals. This occurs when a style is widely used as a secondary preference but not as the primary orientation for most respondents.

4.3.1 Nigeria

Distribution of Selections by Style (Nigeria)

Table 9: Nigeria - total selections and percentages by conflict style

Style	Count	Percentage (%)
Competing	33	13.8
Collaborating	37	15.4
Compromising	61	25.4
Avoiding	57	23.8
Accommodating	52	21.7
Total	240	100.0

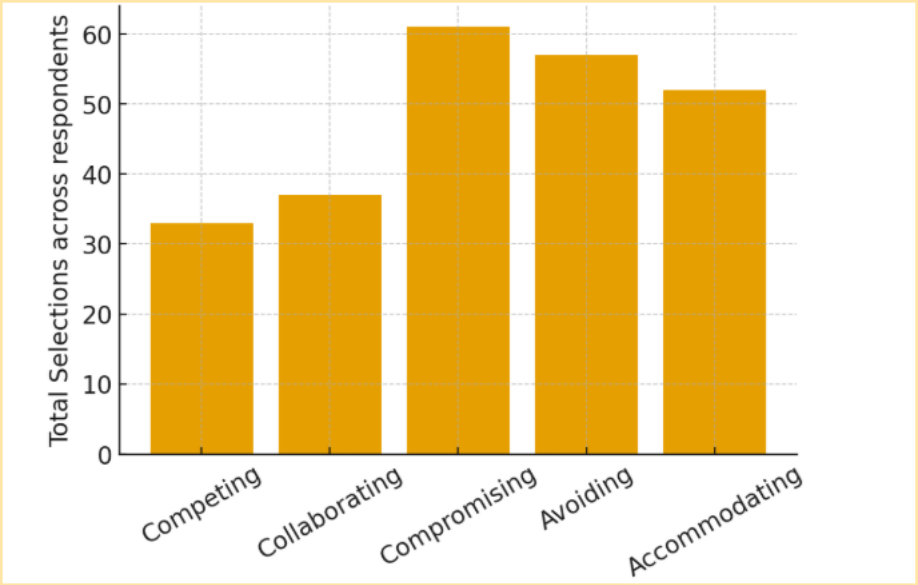

Figure 6: Nigeria - bar chart of total selections by style

Among Nigerian respondents (n=10), Compromising emerged as the most frequently selected style (25.4% of all selections), followed closely by Avoiding (23.8%) and Accommodating (21.7%). Collaborating (15.4%) and Competing (13.8%) trailed behind. This distribution points to a predominant emphasis on middle-ground solutions and relationship-preserving approaches (Avoiding and Accommodating), with less reliance on competitive or assertive tactics.

Table 10: Nigeria - Dominant Style per Respondent

Dominant Style	**Respondents (n)**
Competing	0
Collaborating	1
Compromising	5
Avoiding	3
Accommodating	1
Total	10

At the individual level, half of Nigerian respondents (5/10) identified Compromising as their dominant style. Avoiding followed with three respondents, while Collaborating and Accommodating each dominated for one respondent. Notably, Competing did not emerge as a dominant style among any Nigerian participants, underscoring a collective tilt toward conciliation and middle-ground conflict handling.

4.3.2 United Kingdom

Distribution of Selections by Style (UK)

Table 11: UK - total selections and percentages by conflict style

Style	**Count**	**Percentage (%)**
Competing	58	23.0

Collaborating	39	15.5
Compromising	61	24.2
Avoiding	50	19.8
Accommodating	44	17.5
Total	252	100.0

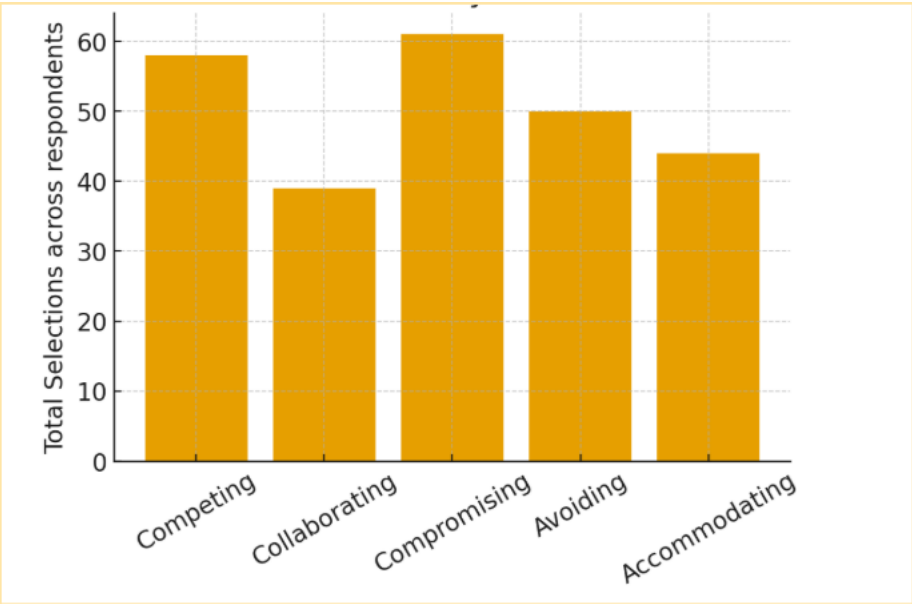

Figure 7: UK - bar chart of total selections by style

Among UK respondents (n=10), Compromising again registered the highest share of selections (24.2%), closely followed by Competing (23.0%). Avoiding (19.8%) and Accommodating (17.5%) formed the next tier, with Collaborating the least used (15.5%). Unlike the Nigerian sample, the UK group demonstrates a much stronger reliance on Competing, positioning assertive strategies as nearly equal to compromise in importance.

Table 12: UK - Dominant Style per Respondent

Dominant Style	**Respondents (n)**
Competing	4
Collaborating	2
Compromising	1
Avoiding	3
Accommodating	0
Total	10

In the UK group, the dominant style distribution was more dispersed. Four respondents identified Competing as their leading approach, three leaned toward Avoiding, two toward Collaborating, and one toward Compromising. No UK respondent identified Accommodating as dominant. This respondent-level pattern reinforces the aggregate data, where Competing emerges as a key distinguishing feature of UK conflict-handling tendencies compared to Nigeria.

4.3.3 Cross-Country Comparison

Table 13: Nigeria vs UK - Conflict Styles (% and Difference)

Style	**Nigeria (%)**	**UK (%)**	**Difference (UK – Nig) pp**
Competing	13.8	23.0	+9.2
Collaborating	15.4	15.5	+0.1
Compromising	25.4	24.2	–1.2
Avoiding	23.8	19.8	–4.0
Accommodating	21.7	17.5	–4.2

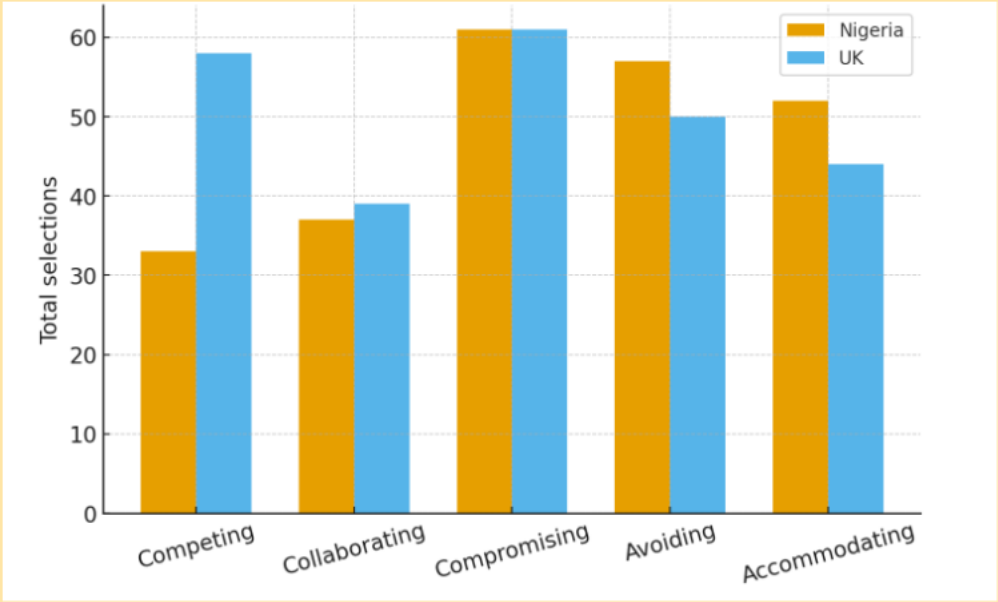

Figure 8: Nigeria vs UK - side-by-side bar chart

Competing: UK respondents relied far more on Competing (23.0%) compared to Nigeria (13.8%), a +9.2 percentage-point difference.

Compromising: Similar in both groups (Nigeria 25.4%, UK 24.2%).

Avoiding and Accommodating: Higher in Nigeria (23.8% and 21.7%) than in the UK (19.8% and 17.5%).

Collaborating: Nearly identical in both countries (~15.5%).

4.3.3.1 Dominant styles comparison:

Nigeria: Heavily dominated by Compromising (5/10 respondents).

UK: Most commonly Competing (4/10) with a secondary presence of Avoiding (3/10).

The Nigerian group emphasises conciliation and avoidance of direct confrontation, while the UK group displays a stronger assertive and competitive orientation. Both countries rank Compromising highest overall, but the underlying secondary preferences diverge sharply, shaping different national conflict profiles.

4.3.4 Internal Consistency of Conflict Style Responses

To examine the reliability of responses, an inconsistency index was calculated for each participant. The aim was to assess the extent to which individuals consistently selected items aligned with their dominant conflict-handling style, versus distributing answers across contradictory or secondary styles.

4.3.4.1 Method of Calculation

The inconsistency index was defined as:

$$\text{Inconsistency} = 1 - \frac{\text{Number of answers in dominant style}}{\text{Total answers per respondent}}$$

- A score of **0.00** indicates perfect consistency, where all responses fell within the dominant style.
- A score closer to **1.00** indicates high inconsistency, where a respondent's answers were widely scattered across other styles.
- This approach adopts a **conservative definition** of inconsistency, treating any response outside the dominant style as inconsistent, even if it may plausibly reflect a legitimate secondary preference.

Table 14: Inconsistency Summary (Nigeria)

Statistic	**Value**
Respondents (n)	10
Mean	0.181
Median	0.185
Minimum	0.000
Maximum	0.417

Table 15: Inconsistency Summary (UK)

Statistic	**Value**
Respondents (n)	10
Mean	0.194
Median	0.167
Minimum	0.077
Maximum	0.370

Both Nigerian and UK respondents demonstrated low average inconsistency (0.181 and 0.194 respectively), suggesting that participants' dominant conflict styles were generally well supported by their item-level choices. This indicates a high degree of internal coherence in the data.

Nigeria: Inconsistency scores ranged from 0.000 to 0.417. Several respondents demonstrated perfect or near-perfect alignment with their dominant style.

UK: Inconsistency scores ranged from 0.077 to 0.370, reflecting slightly greater dispersion, but still within acceptable limits.

The low mean values across both groups reinforce confidence that the conflict style distributions reported earlier are stable and credible, with only minor overlaps into secondary styles.

4.4 Section 3 (CV Scale) Findings - Nigeria and United Kingdom

4.4.1 Method and Scoring

This section reports descriptive statistics for section 3 (CV scale), covering three cultural value dimensions: Power Distance (PD), Uncertainty Avoidance (UA), and Collectivism (vs Individualism) (COL). Responses were captured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree).

Country-level descriptive statistics are the mean and standard deviation of the respondent-level scores within each country, along with the sample size (N). The analysis uses the 'Country of Work' field to assign respondents to Nigeria or the United Kingdom.

4.4.2 Item Mapping (Transparency)

The following tables list the item codes and wordings included in each cultural dimension for Section 3 (CV).

Table 16: Power Distance items (Q57–Q61).

Code	**Item wording**
Q57	People in higher positions should make most decisions without consulting people in lower positions.
Q58	People in higher positions should not ask the opinions of people in lower positions too frequently.
Q59	People in higher positions should avoid social interaction with people in lower positions.
Q60	People in lower positions should not disagree with decisions made by people in higher positions.

Q61	People in higher positions should not delegate important tasks to people in lower positions.

Table 17: Uncertainty Avoidance items (Q63–Q67).

Code	**Item wording**
Q63	It is important to have instructions spelled out in detail so that I always know what I'm expected to do.
Q64	It is important to closely follow instructions and procedures.
Q65	Rules and regulations are important because they inform me of what is expected of me.
Q66	Standardized work procedures are helpful.
Q67	Instructions for operations are important.

Table 18: Collectivism (vs Individualism) items (Q69–Q75).

Code	**Item wording**
Q69	Individuals should sacrifice self-interest for the group at workplace.
Q70	Individuals should stick with the group even through difficulties.
Q71	Group welfare is more important than individual rewards.

Q72	Group success is more important than individual success.
Q73	Individuals should only pursue their goals after considering the welfare of the group.
Q75	Group loyalty should be encouraged even if individual goals suffer.

Nigeria - Descriptive Results:

Table 19: Nigeria - Section 3 (CV) descriptive summary (Mean, SD, N).

Dimension	**Mean (1-5)**	**Std Dev**	**N**
Power Distance	3.360	0.548	10.000
Uncertainty Avoidance	3.520	0.920	10.000
Collectivism (vs Individualism)	3.533	1.062	10.000

In the Nigerian sample, Collectivism (vs Individualism) has the highest mean, followed very closely by Uncertainty Avoidance, with Power Distance somewhat lower but still above the neutral midpoint. This pattern suggests a tilt toward group-oriented norms and a preference for clarity, rules, and standardized procedures, alongside a moderate acceptance of hierarchical structures and top-down decision-making.

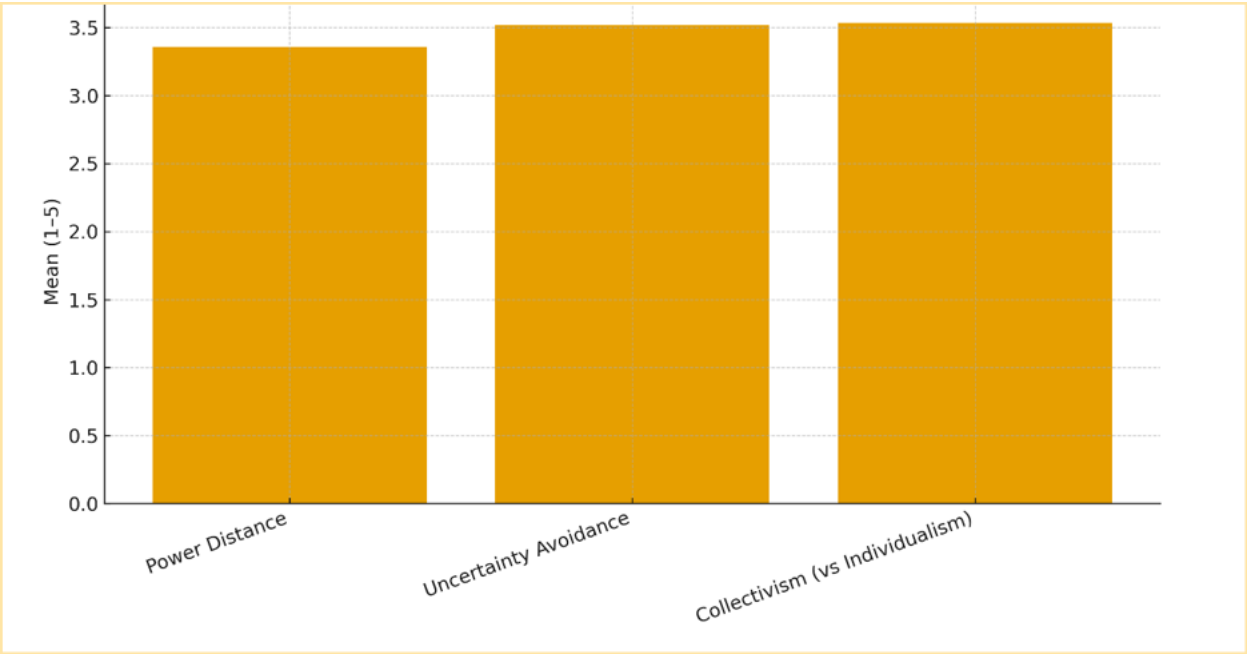

Figure 9: Nigeria - mean scores across the three CV dimensions.

The visual shows Collectivism (vs Individualism) and Uncertainty Avoidance at similar levels, both exceeding Power Distance.

United Kingdom - Descriptive Results:

Table 20: United Kingdom descriptive summary (Mean, SD, N).

Dimension	**Mean (1-5)**	**Std Dev**	**N**
Power Distance	2.660	0.844	10.000
Uncertainty Avoidance	3.510	0.644	10.000
Collectivism (vs Individualism)	3.233	0.686	10.000

In the UK sample, Uncertainty Avoidance is the highest dimension, indicating a clear valuation of instructions and procedures. Power Distance scores are the lowest of the three dimensions, indicating lower acceptance of hierarchical decision-making and greater comfort with consultation

and upward feedback. Collectivism (vs Individualism) sits between the two, closer to the neutral point and lower than in the Nigerian sample.

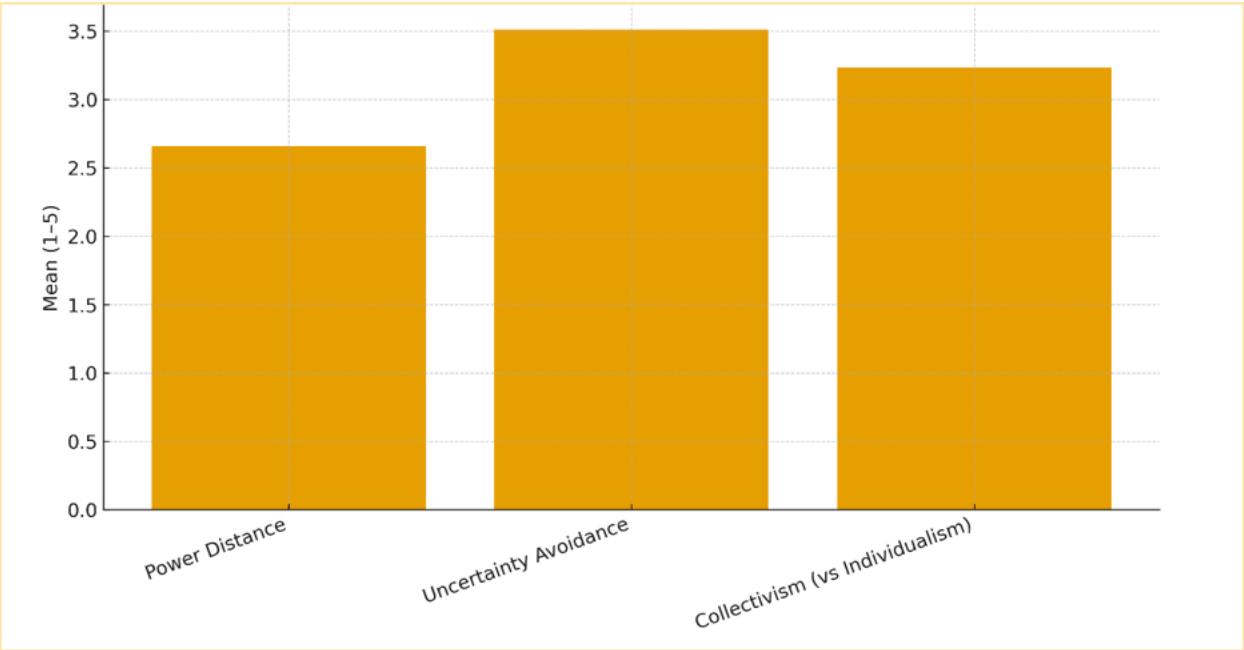

Figure 10: United Kingdom - mean scores across the three CV dimensions.

Uncertainty Avoidance leads, followed by Collectivism (vs Individualism), with Power Distance notably lower.

Nigeria vs United Kingdom - Comparative Summary:

Table 21: Side by side comparison of Nigeria and UK mean scores, with differences (Nigeria/UK).

Dimension	Nigeria (mean)	UK (mean)	Difference (Nigeria - UK)
Power Distance	3.360	2.660	0.700
Uncertainty Avoidance	3.520	3.510	0.010
Collectivism (vs Individualism)	3.533	3.233	0.300

The largest between-country difference appears in Power Distance, which is substantially higher in Nigeria than in the UK. Uncertainty Avoidance is almost identical across the two groups, indicating similar preferences for clarity and procedural guidance. Collectivism (vs Individualism) is higher in Nigeria, suggesting stronger group-orientation relative to the UK sample.

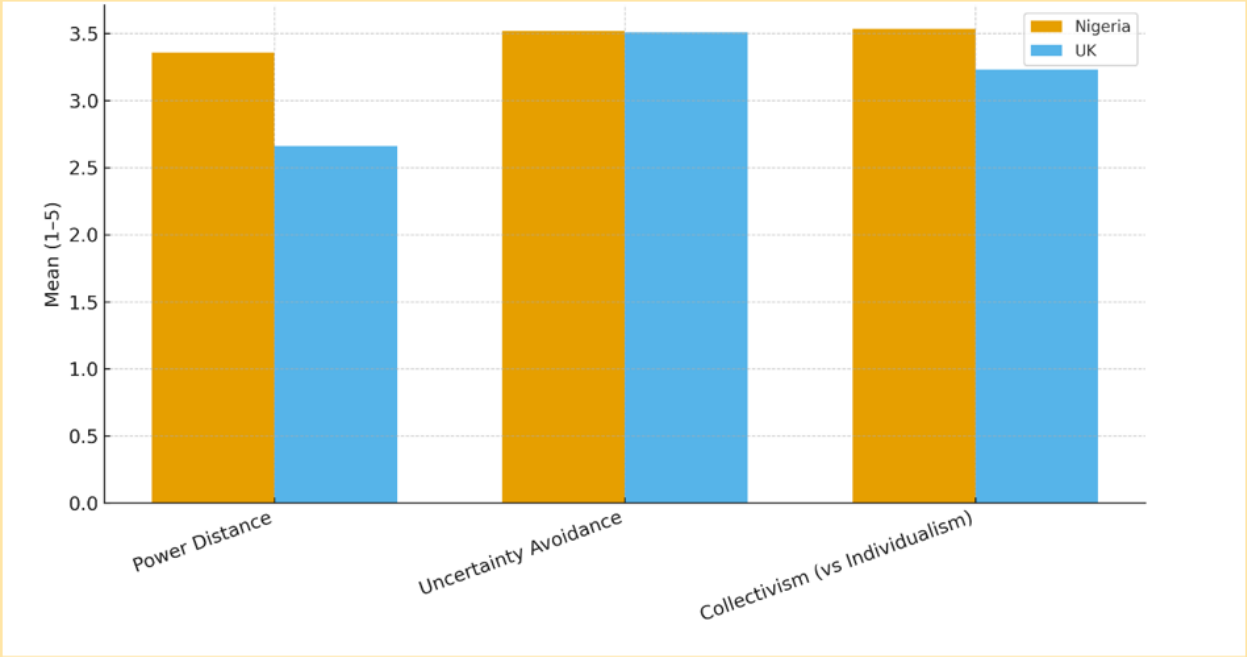

Figure 11: Grouped bar chart comparing Nigeria and UK mean scores by dimension.

The visual emphasizes the larger gap in Power Distance and the near-parity in Uncertainty Avoidance, with Nigeria also showing higher Collectivism (vs Individualism).

Dominant Cultural Dimension per Country:

Nigeria: The dominant dimension is Collectivism (vs Individualism).

United Kingdom: The dominant dimension is Uncertainty Avoidance.

4.5 Thematic Analysis of Open-Ended Questions

Participant identifiers (P1, P2,) are assigned based on the order of responses in the Excel dataset. This ensures that each quoted example can be directly traced back to the raw data by row number.

4.5.1 Nigeria (DANS)

The following table presents the key themes identified from the responses to Questions 77 to 80 for Nigeria (DANS) participants. Themes were derived from repeated keywords and phrases. Example extracts are provided verbatim and linked to participant identifiers (e.g., P1, P2) corresponding to their row number in the Excel dataset.

Table 22: Nigeria (DANS)

Theme	**Keywords/Phrases**	**Frequency (mentions)**	**Example Quotes (with PID)**
Collective orientation	group, team, harmony	29	P3: "Handled a departmental dispute over workload sharing by calling a team meeting to openly discuss responsibilities. Used a collaborative approach rooted in shared group values and fairness."; P4: "Challenged a colleague's decision head-on to protect the team's financial integrity. Direct approach came from

			having worked in both UK and Nigerian teams."; P10: "Chose not to escalate a minor scheduling dispute to avoid disrupting team morale."
Respect and values	respect, values, culture	26	P3: "Handled a departmental dispute over workload sharing by calling a team meeting to openly discuss responsibilities. Used a collaborative approach rooted in shared group values and fairness."; P4: "Cultural respect for strong leadership influences my willingness to assert my position."; P5: "Dealt with a scheduling conflict by accepting the other person's preference. It

			seemed more respectful."
Conflict resolution strategies	resolution, avoid, conflict, effective, means	46	P3: "Respect for elders and group cohesion guide my approach. I try to avoid embarrassing others and prefer consensus."; P4: "A resolution is effective when the best solution wins, even if it causes tension. My culture supports firm leadership in critical decisions."; P5: "Dealt with a scheduling conflict by accepting the other person's preference. It seemed more respectful."

4.5.2 United Kingdom (FOS)

The following table presents the key themes identified from the responses to Questions 77 to 80 for United Kingdom (FOS) participants. Themes were derived from repeated keywords and phrases. Example extracts are provided verbatim and linked to participant identifiers (e.g., P1, P2) corresponding to their row number in the Excel dataset.

Table 23: United Kingdom (FOS)

Theme	**Keywords/Phrases**	**Frequency (mentions)**	**Example Quotes (with PID)**
Directness in communication	direct, sometimes, escalate	9	P6: "British culture values fairness and open communication. I avoid passive aggression and prefer direct engagement."; P8: "In most UK workplaces, we sometimes avoid uncomfortable discussions. I did the same."; P15: "Chose not to escalate a minor scheduling dispute to avoid disrupting team morale."
Fairness and justice	fairness, good, not	8	P6: "British culture values fairness and open communication. I avoid passive aggression and prefer direct engagement."; P8:

			"A good resolution is when tensions don't explode. I'd rather avoid than escalate"; P15: "Chose not to escalate a minor scheduling dispute to avoid disrupting team morale."
Conflict resolution approaches	avoid, resolution, when, escalation	16	P6: "Facilitated a resolution between two engineers through a structured mediation process. Transparency and logic led the way."; P8: "In most UK workplaces, we sometimes avoid uncomfortable discussions. I did the same."; P15: "Chose not to escalate a minor scheduling dispute to avoid disrupting team morale."

4.5.3 Comparison of Themes: Nigeria vs United Kingdom

The following table presents a side-by-side comparison of the themes emerging from Nigerian (DANS) and British (FOS) participants. Participant identifiers (PID) in the thematic tables above are globally unique, based on dataset row order.

Table 24: Comparison of Themes

Dimension	**Nigeria (DANS) Themes**	**United Kingdom (FOS) Themes**
Orientation	Collective orientation (group, team, harmony)	Directness in communication (direct, escalate)
Values	Respect and values (respect, culture, values)	Fairness and justice (fairness, good, not)
Conflict resolution	Resolution strategies (avoid, resolution, effective means)	Conflict resolution approaches (avoid, resolution, escalation)

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This discussion critically examines the findings on managerial conflict resolution styles in multinational organizations in Nigeria and the United Kingdom, interpreting the results against the backdrop of established cross-cultural literature. By integrating quantitative data on conflict styles (TKI) and cultural dimensions (CVSCALE) with rich qualitative insights, this analysis seeks to answer the research questions, test the proposed hypotheses, and provide a more nuanced understanding of the intricate relationship between culture and conflict resolution.

5.2 Answering the Research Questions and Testing the Hypotheses

i. Research Question 1: What are the main conflict resolution strategies used by managers in UK and Nigerian multinational organisations?

The findings reveal a clear divergence in the primary conflict resolution strategies preferred by managers in the two countries. Among Nigerian managers, there is a pronounced preference for compromising, which emerged as the most frequently selected style overall (25.4%). This is closely followed by Avoiding (23.8%) and Accommodating (21.7%). The quantitative data is reinforced by the individual-level findings, where half of the Nigerian respondents identified compromising as their dominant style. The near-absence of a competitive dominant style underscores a collective tilt toward conciliation and middle-ground conflict handling.

In contrast, the distribution of styles among UK managers was more dispersed, with Compromising also showing a high frequency (24.2%) but Competing registering as a significant and distinguishing preference (23.0%). A critical point of difference emerged at the individual level, where competing was the dominant style for four of the UK respondents, while it was not a dominant style for a single Nigerian participant. This finding suggests that while both groups are open to finding common ground, UK managers are far more likely to embrace a direct, assertive, and even win-lose approach, a stark contrast to their Nigerian counterparts.

ii. Research Question 2: How do Hofstede's cultural dimensions affect conflict resolution strategies in UK and Nigerian multinational organisations?

This study's findings directly support the theoretical links between cultural dimensions and preferred conflict styles, though with important discoveries.

Hypothesis 1: *Managers in Nigerian multinational organisations, operating within a culture characterised by higher Power Distance and Collectivism compared to the UK, will exhibit a greater preference for Avoiding and Accommodating conflict resolution styles.*

This hypothesis is accepted. The quantitative findings from the CV scale show that Nigerian managers scored significantly higher on Collectivism (mean of 3.533) and Power Distance (mean of 3.360) compared to their UK counterparts. This aligns with the TKI results, which demonstrated a clear preference for the Avoiding and Accommodating styles. This finding resonates with existing literature, which posits that high collectivism fosters a desire to preserve group harmony and relationships, often leading individuals to use non-confrontational strategies (Backlund and Kullman, 2024; Rachwal-Mueller, 2023). Similarly, a high-power distance culture, where hierarchy and respect for authority are paramount, often leads to conflict avoidance to prevent challenging superiors or disrupting established social order. The qualitative data further reinforces this by revealing that Nigerian managers frame avoidance not as a weakness but as a deliberate strategy to *"preserve group harmony"* and avoid *"disrupting team morale".*

Hypothesis 2: *Managers in UK multinational organisations, operating within a culture characterised by lower Power Distance and higher Individualism compared to Nigeria, will exhibit a greater preference for Competing and Collaborating conflict resolution styles.*

This hypothesis is partially accepted. The CV scale findings confirm the UK's lower score on

Power Distance (mean of 2.660) and a lower score on Collectivism (mean of 3.233), which, in a comparative context, indicates a leaning toward individualism. This aligns with the quantitative TKI data showing that Competing emerged as a key distinguishing feature of UK conflict-handling tendencies. The literature consistently links individualism to a preference for direct, assertive, and competing styles (Benke, 2023; Rachwal-Mueller, 2023).

However, while the hypothesis predicted a preference for both competing and collaborating, compromising was the most frequently selected style overall among UK managers, on par with Nigerian managers. This finding presents an interesting tension. Could it be that in a globalised multinational environment, the need for efficiency and a middle ground transcends national cultural predispositions? Is it that the shared context of the modern workplace is beginning to shape a more pragmatic, compromising style regardless of country of origin? This suggests that while individualism may still influence an individual's dominant style, the organisational environment might nudge behaviour towards a more pragmatic, relationship-preserving approach.

A final, and crucial, point of contrast is the finding related to uncertainty avoidance. The study's results showed that the mean score for Uncertainty Avoidance was almost identical across both Nigerian and UK respondents. This finding directly challenges the national-level Hofstede scores, which typically portray the UK as a low-uncertainty-avoidance culture and Nigeria as a high one (The Culture Group, 2024). This presents an important methodological discussion and a key contribution of this research.

iii. Addressing the Ecological Fallacy: National vs. Individual Culture

The finding that Uncertainty Avoidance is nearly identical in both the Nigerian and UK samples, despite national-level differences, validates a central argument of this research: the need to address the ecological fallacy. The literature review highlighted this fallacy, noting that national-level cultural scores cannot be directly applied to individuals (Grenness, 2012; Brewer and Venaik, 2014). This study's use of the CV scale, which measures cultural dimensions at the individual level, has exposed this very disconnect.

The data suggests that while Nigeria and the UK may have national-level differences in their comfort with ambiguity, managers operating in multinational organisations may be socialised into a shared corporate or professional culture that values clarity and procedure, regardless of their nationality. This suggests that certain dimensions of national culture may converge in a globalised work environment. It raises the question: Are the static national scores of Hofstede becoming less relevant in an age of increased cross-cultural interaction? Or is it more accurate to say that while the national culture provides a powerful backdrop, individual experiences within a specific organisational context can significantly alter and shape a person's individual cultural orientation?

iv. Research Question 3: How does cultural background shape UK and Nigerian managers' perceptions of conflict resolution effectiveness?

Beyond the numerical data, the qualitative findings illuminate how cultural backgrounds shape the subjective experience and evaluation of what makes a conflict resolution strategy effective. For Nigerian managers, effectiveness is often framed in terms of group harmony and the preservation of relationships. One respondent, for instance, described choosing "*not to escalate a minor scheduling dispute to avoid disrupting team morale"*. Here, an avoiding style is not a failure to resolve, but rather an active and effective strategy to maintain social cohesion, which is a core tenet of collectivism. The same manager also spoke of a collaborative approach "*rooted in shared group values",* reinforcing the idea that for Nigerian managers, a successful resolution is one that benefits the group.

In contrast, the qualitative data from UK managers suggests that effectiveness is defined by fairness, directness, and transparency. Quotes highlight a preference for "*resolving conflicts directly to maintain fairness and clarity"*. This aligns with an individualistic cultural orientation, where personal rights and an open discussion of interests are prioritised. The absence of an accommodative dominant style and the stated discomfort "*with being seen as avoidant"* among UK managers underscore this point.

This divergence in perception is critical. A competing style might achieve a clear task objective (a "win") in a UK context and be seen as highly effective. However, the same approach might be seen as highly ineffective in Nigeria if it causes significant loss of face or relational damage, even if the overt conflict is resolved. The voice of the literature meets the voice of the data here, as this study's findings directly support the literature's argument that the definition of a successful resolution can vary significantly across cultures.

5.3 Conclusion

This discussion has critically examined the study's findings against the literature and research objectives. The results clearly demonstrate that cultural dimensions significantly shape conflict resolution styles among Nigerian and British managers in multinational organisations. Both

research hypotheses were supported, and the three research questions were comprehensively addressed.

In sum, while Hofstede's dimensions remain useful explanatory tools, the subtle interplay between individual cultural orientations and organisational practices suggests the importance of context-sensitive approaches to cross-cultural conflict resolution. The findings on the ecological fallacy, in particular, serve as a potent reminder that we must move beyond broad national stereotypes to truly understand how individuals navigate conflict in a globalized world. Future research may benefit from larger sample sizes and consideration of industry-specific dynamics to deepen understanding of these relationships.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

The overarching aim of this research was to explore the influence of national culture on managerial conflict resolution styles in multinational corporations in Nigeria and the United Kingdom. The study successfully answered all three research questions and validated both hypotheses.

The findings confirm a clear divergence in preferred conflict resolution styles between managers in Nigeria and the UK, which is directly linked to their respective cultural orientations. Nigerian managers, operating within a collectivist and high-power distance culture, demonstrated a pronounced preference for Compromising and a significant use of Avoiding and Accommodating styles. This aligns with a cultural logic that prioritises relational harmony and deference to authority. In contrast, while UK managers also favoured Compromising, their willingness to utilise a Competing style emerged as a key distinguishing factor, a finding consistent with the UK's individualistic cultural profile. However, the near-equal scores on Uncertainty Avoidance highlighted that global professional contexts could produce similarities that are not predicted at the national level. The qualitative analysis further demonstrated that managers interpret and justify their conflict styles in ways deeply rooted in cultural logics, while also displaying evidence of hybridisation shaped by global managerial discourse (Mason and Evers, 2010). These results confirm both hypotheses, while also illustrating the complexity and fluidity of cultural influences at the organisational level.

Ultimately, this study reinforces the notion that culture is a fundamental lens through which conflict is perceived and managed. The findings provide strong evidence that what is considered an effective conflict resolution strategy is culturally contingent, with Nigerian managers valuing relational preservation and UK managers prioritising directness and fairness.

6.2 Contributions of the Study

This research makes several significant contributions to academic and professional discourse.

i. **Academic Implications:**

a. **Revisiting the Ecological Fallacy:** This study provides robust empirical evidence highlighting the limitations of applying national-level cultural dimensions to individuals.

It serves as a crucial reminder for researchers to be cautious when generalising from national data and advocates for the use of individual-level instruments like the CV scale.

b. **Contextualising Hofstede's Dimensions:** The findings do not invalidate Hofstede's model but rather enrich it. By showing how specific cultural dimensions manifest in conflict resolution, the study provides a more nuanced understanding of how these theoretical constructs operate in a practical, real-world setting.

c. **Qualitative Insight into Conflict Perception:** By integrating qualitative data, the research moved beyond simply identifying what styles are used to understanding why. The discovery that managers frame their styles according to their cultural logics (e.g., viewing 'avoiding' as 'harmony') adds a layer of depth to the literature on cross-cultural conflict.

6.3 Policy and Practical Implications

The study carries several important policy implications for multinational organisations. First, training programmes in conflict resolution should be tailored to reflect cultural diversity, recognising that approaches valued in one context may be perceived as ineffective or inappropriate in another. Second, HR and management policies should foster cultural intelligence and sensitivity, ensuring that managers are equipped to handle conflict in multicultural teams. Policies should avoid imposing a one-size-fits-all model of conflict management and instead emphasise adaptable strategies that accommodate different cultural orientations. Third, leadership development programmes should recognise that high Power Distance contexts, such as Nigeria, may require different managerial communication strategies compared to lower Power Distance contexts like the UK. Organisations that fail to account for these cultural dynamics risk exacerbating workplace tensions rather than resolving them.

6.4 Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Further Research

This study, while significant, has several limitations that provide clear directions for future research.

i. **Sample Size and Generalisability:** The relatively small sample size of 20 participants, while sufficient for a qualitative study, limits the generalisability of the quantitative findings. Future research could replicate this study with a larger, more diverse sample from multiple industries to confirm these findings. Future work should also consider mixed

methods designs that combine surveys, interviews, and observational data to triangulate findings and deepen understanding.

ii. **Focus on Two Countries:** The study was limited to a comparison between Nigeria and the UK. Future research could expand the scope to include countries with different cultural profiles (e.g., high vs. low power distance, masculine vs. feminine) to provide a more comprehensive global perspective.

iii. **Industry Specificity:** The study did not control for industry-specific norms. It is possible that the nature of work within certain industries may influence conflict styles regardless of nationality. Future research could explore whether, for instance, tech-heavy industries exhibit a different conflict culture than manufacturing or service-based sectors.

In conclusion, this research has provided a strong foundation for understanding the complex interplay between culture and conflict resolution. The findings serve as a call to action for both academic researchers and multinational corporations to adopt a more robust, culturally sensitive approach to managing conflict in our increasingly interconnected world.

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APPENDICES

Ethical Application Outcome

Ethical Application Outcome

[redacted]

Date: Tue, 3 Jun 2025, 11:21 am

Hello,

Top of the day to you, and I hope this email finds you well. Having reviewed the details of your ethical application, I believe, based on your responses, you are carrying out primary research. It is essential to send the participants' recruitment form, your questionnaire, consent form and any relevant information before we can proceed with your application. I have copied in your supervisor to also notify them of this update.

Best regards,
Dr. Adebowale Samuel Adeshipo
ADEShipo
B.Sc. (Hons) | M.Sc. | MBA | PhD
MRes. Management Studies Programme Director | LICC Module Director | Module Director DTSH | Module Director EHM
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Participant Information Sheet

Title of Project	**Cross-Cultural Conflict Resolution in Multinational Organisations: A Nigeria-Uk Comparative Study**
Researcher/Department name and contact details	Zechariah Ogungbile. Master of Research in Management Studies.+[redacted]
University contact details	York St John University, Lord Mayors Walk, York YO31 7EX. Tel: 01904 624624

Part 1: Project Details	
Introduction	*Hello, my name is Zechariah Ogungbile, and I am currently pursuing a Master of Research in Management Studies. My academic journey has been deeply rooted in understanding conflict-related concepts, a field I have been passionate about for several years. My interest in conflict management was sparked during my BSc program in Political Science and International Relations, where I focused on conflict management in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This experience has significantly shaped my perspective and has driven me to explore this area further.* *For my current research, I am investigating cross-cultural conflict resolution within multinational organisations, focusing on a comparative study between Nigeria and the UK. This topic is particularly important to me because it addresses how diverse cultural backgrounds impact conflict dynamics and resolutions in business settings.* *I am excited to learn from your experiences and insights, and I appreciate your participation in this important study.*
What is the purpose of the project?	*This study aims to explore how managers in multinational organisations with operations in Nigeria and the UK resolve workplace conflict and how their cultural backgrounds influence these conflict resolution strategies. The research investigates how national cultural values, based on Hofstede's Six Cultural Dimensions, shape managerial preferences for conflict resolution approaches using the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI). The findings will provide valuable insights into culturally sensitive management strategies that enhance organisational effectiveness in cross-cultural teams.*

What can I expect?	*As a participant, you will be asked to complete a survey questionnaire. This includes:* • ***Closed-ended questions**: These assess your typical conflicthandling preferences using hypothetical workplace conflict scenarios based on the TKI framework.* • ***Open-ended questions**: These allow you to share your personal experiences and reflections regarding how cultural differences affect conflict management in your organisation based on the Hofstede's Six Cultural Dimensions.* *The survey will take approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete and can be completed online at your convenience.*
Why have I been asked to take part?	*You have been invited to take part because you currently hold a managerial or senior position at a multinational organisation, either in the UK or Nigeria. The study seeks insights from individuals who:* • *Have experience managing culturally diverse teams.* • *Are familiar with workplace conflict situations.* • *Represent either UK or Nigerian national cultures.* *Your perspective is critical to helping us understand the similarities and differences in conflict management styles between the two countries.*
Is taking part voluntary?	*Yes. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to decline to participate or to withdraw at any stage without giving a reason. Your decision to participate or withdraw will not affect your employment or relationship with the company or the university in any way.*
What information will be collected?	*The following types of information will be collected:*
	• *Responses to survey questions about conflict resolution preferences.* • *Experiences and views related to cultural influences on workplace conflict.* • *Identifiable demographic data might include years of experience and nationality.* *No personally identifiable information (e.g., name, address, or company ID) will be collected unless you voluntarily provide it in an open-ended question, in which case it will be anonymised before analysis.*
Who will have access to the information?	*All data will be confidential and handled in accordance with UK GDPR. Only the researcher **(Zechariah Temitope Ogungbile)** and the supervisor **(Dr. Bilal Ahmed Abbasi)** will have access to the raw data. Anonymised results may be used in academic presentations or publications.* *In rare cases, if you disclose information indicating serious harm or risk to yourself or others, we may be required to share this with appropriate authorities, as per ethical guidelines.*
Where will the information be stored?	*Data will be stored securely in:* • *A password-protected file on the researcher's encrypted university OneDrive account.* • *Institutional research storage platforms approved by York St John University.* *Paper records (if any) will be scanned and shredded immediately after digitisation.*
How long will the information be retained?	• ***Identifiable data (if any):** Deleted immediately after anonymisation.*

	• ***Anonymised data:*** *May be retained indefinitely in a secure academic data repository for future research and learning, as permitted by York St John University ethics policies.*
What happens next?	*After completing the survey, no further action will be required from you. You may be contacted via email if any clarification on your responses is needed, but this is unlikely. The study is expected to be completed by* ***August 2025****, and participants may request a summary of the findings upon completion.*

Part 2: Privacy Notice

All personal information gathered and held by York St John University (detailed in Part 1 of this Participant Information Sheet) is treated with the care and confidentiality required by the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. For the purposes of processing your personal information, the data controller is York St John University. The University's Data Protection Officer is the University Secretary and Registrar.

Legal basis for processing your information	Processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest (academic research).
Additional condition for processing special category data	If any sensitive data is provided (e.g., views on workplace dynamics), processing will be based on Article 9(2)(j): scientific or historical research purposes.
Additional condition for processing criminal conviction/offence data	Not applicable. This study will not collect or process data relating to criminal convictions.
Your rights in relation to personal data	Under the GDPR, you have a right to: • be kept informed as to how we use your data; • request a copy of the data we hold about you via a Subject Access Request; • update, amend or rectify the data we hold about you; • change your communication preferences; • ask us to remove your data from our records; • object to or restrict the processing of your information • raise a concern or complaint about the way in which your information is being used.
Any questions of concerns?	If you have any questions or concerns about the way we are collecting and using your personal data we request that you contact the University by emailing: gov.compliance@yorksj.ac.uk. You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) about the way in which we process your personal data. Details can be found at: https://ico.org.uk.

Part 3: Participant Consent	Yes	No
(3a) I have read and understood the project details and have been able to ask questions about the project and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.		
(3b) I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this project and understand that I can refuse to answer questions and I can withdraw from the project at any time, without having to give a reason.		
(3c) I understand what the information I provide will be used for, how it will be stored and how long it will be retained.		
(3d) I give my permission for the information specified in (3e) to be retained by the University after the project has ended so that it can be used for future research and learning.		
(3e) Information to be retained	*Anonymised responses to both the closed and open-ended survey questions relating to conflict resolution preferences and cultural influences will be retained for use in future academic research and learning activities.*	
Name of Participant		
Signature		
Date		

If you have any concerns, or a complaint regarding this research, please contact our independent chair ENTER NAME at York St John University. E-mail: ENTER EMAIL ADDRESS
[Please enter your independent chairs name and email address which can be found here under 'Working with participants']
If you have any questions or concerns about the way we are collecting and using your personal contact the University by emailing: gov.compliance@yorksj.ac.uk

Questionnaire

Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Zechariah Ogungbile, a Master of Research student in Management Studies at York St John University. This study explores how cultural background influences the way managers handle conflict in multinational organisation operating in Nigeria and the UK.

The aim is to compare conflict resolution strategies of managers from different cultural backgrounds using Hofstede's cultural dimensions and the Thomas-Kilmann framework.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may skip any question or withdraw at any time without penalty.

Your responses will remain confidential and will be used solely for academic purposes. No identifying information will be shared or published.

This questionnaire will take approximately **15–20 minutes** to complete.

I have read and understood the above information and agree to participate in this study

Demography

Demographics & Background

(Please tick or fill in as appropriate.)

What is your Nationality?

What is your Country of Work?

Nigeria

United Kingdom

What is your Age Bracket?

18–24

25–34

35–44

45–54

55+

What is your Gender?

Male

Female
Non-binary / third gender
Prefer not to say

What is your Educational Background?

Bachelor's Degree
Master's Degree or higher
Diploma/Professional Certification
Other

Years in Managerial Role

0–2 years
3–5 years
6–10 years
10+ years

Years Employed in This Multinational Organisation

0–2 years
3–5 years
6–10 years
10+ years

What is your Department or Function?

Operations
Human Resources
Finance
Marketing/Sales
Other

Approximate Number of Years Working in Culturally Diverse Teams

Less than 1 year
1–3 years
4–6 years
7+ years

Block 2

Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument Questionnaire

The following questions are based on the Thomas–Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI), a thirty pairs of statements and a widely used tool that identifies how individuals typically

respond to conflict. This section is important for understanding your preferred conflict resolution style and how cultural values may influence it in cross-cultural workplace settings.

Source: Kilmann Diagnostics - kilmanndiagnostics.com/overview-thomas-kilmann-conflictmode-instrument-tki

(Please tick or fill in as appropriate.)

1

A. There are times when I let others take responsibility for solving the problem
B. Rather than negotiate the things on which we disagree, I try to stress those things upon which weboth agree

2

A. I try to find a compromise solution
B. I attempt to deal with all of another's and my concerns

3

A. I am usually firm in pursuing my goals
B. I might try to soothe the other's feelings and preserve our relationship

4

A. I try to find a compromise solution
B. I sometimes sacrifice my own wishes for the wishes of the other person

5

A. I consistently seek the other's help in working out a solution
B. I try to do what is necessary to avoid useless tensions

6

A. I try to avoid creating unpleasantness for myself
B. I try to win my position

7

A. I try to postpone the issue until I have had some time to think about it
B. I give up some points in exchange for others

8

A. I am usually firm in pursuing my goals
B. I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open

9

A. I feel that differences are not always worth worrying about
B. I make some effort to get my way

10

A. I am firm in pursuing my goals
B. I try to find a compromise solution

11

A. I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open
B. I might try to soothe the other's feelings and preserve our relationship

12

A. I sometimes avoid taking positions which would create controversy
B. I will let another have some of their positions if they let me have some of mine

13

A. I propose middle ground
B. I press to get my points made

14

A. I tell another my ideas and ask them for theirs
B. I try to show him the logic and benefits of my position

15

A. I might try to soothe the other's feelings and preserve our relationship
B. I try to do what is necessary to avoid tension

16

A. I try not to hurt the other's feelings
B. I try to convince the other person of the merits of my position

17

A. I am usually firm in pursuing my goals
B. I try to do what is necessary to avoid useless tensions

18

A. If it makes the other person happy, I might let them maintain their views
B. I will let the other person have some of their positions if they let me have some of mine

19

A. I try to get all concerns and issues immediately out in the open
B. I try to postpone the issue until I have had some time to think it over

20

A. I attempt to immediately work through our differences
B. I try to find a fair combination of gains and losses for both of us

21

A. In approaching negotiations, I try to be considerate of the other person's feelings
B. I always lean toward a direct discussion of the problem

22

A. I try to find a position that is intermediate between mine and another person's
B. I assert my wishes

23

A. I am often concerned with satisfying all my wishes
B. There are times when I let others take responsibility for solving problems

24

A. If the other's position seems important to them, I would try to meet their wishes
B. I try to get the other person to settle for a compromise

25

A. I try to show the other person the logic and benefits of my position
B. In approaching negotiations, I try to be considerate of the other person's wishes

26

A. I propose a middle ground
B. I am nearly always concerned with satisfying all my wishes

27

A. I sometimes avoid taking positions that would create controversy
B. If it makes the other person happy, I might let them maintain their views

28

A. I am usually firm in pursuing my goals
B. I feel that differences are not always worth worrying about

29

A. I propose middle ground
B. I feel that differences are not always worth worrying about

30

A. I try not to hurt the other person's feelings
B. I always share the problem with the other person so that we can work it out

Block 3

Hofstede's Cultural Value Scale

The following questions are based on Hofstede's Cultural Value Scale, which measures key cultural dimensions such as power distance, collectivism, and uncertainty avoidance. This helps the research explore how your cultural values may influence the way you approach and resolve workplace conflicts.

Source: Prasongsukarn, K., 2009. Validating the cultural value scale (CVSCALE): a case study of Thailand. ABAC journal, 29(2).

(Please rate how strongly you agree with each statement based on your own cultural beliefs and preferences. All statements are rated on a 5-point Likert scale, 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Power Distance

People in higher positions should make most decisions without consulting people in lower positions.

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly agree

People in higher positions should not ask the opinions of people in lower positions too frequently.

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly agree

People in higher positions should avoid social interaction with people in lower positions.

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly agree

People in lower positions should not disagree with decisions made by people in higher positions.

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly agree

People in higher positions should not delegate important tasks to people in lower positions.

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly agree

Uncertainty avoidance

It is important to have instructions spelled out in detail so that I always know what I'm expected to do.

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly agree

It is important to closely follow instructions and procedures.

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly agree

Rules and regulations are important because they inform me of what is expected of me.

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly agree

Standardized work procedures are helpful.

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly agree

Instructions for operations are important.

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly agree

Collectivism

Individuals should sacrifice self-interest for the group at work place.

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly agree

Individuals should stick with the group even through difficulties.

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly agree

Group welfare is more important than individual rewards.

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree

Strongly agree

Group success is more important than individual success.

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly agree

Individuals should only pursue their goals after considering the welfare of the group.

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly agree

Group loyalty should be encouraged even if individual goals suffer.

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly agree

Block 4

Open-Ended Questions

(Please answer the following questions in your own words. There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your experiences and perspectives)

1. Can you describe a recent conflict you managed in your organisation? What steps did youtake to address it, and what guided your choice of approach?

2. In your experience, how do cultural values, such as respect for hierarchy, group loyalty,planning, or being assertive, influence how you typically handle conflict at work?

3. What does an effective resolution to a workplace conflict mean to you, and how do youthink your cultural background shapes that view?

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