

Preface

China's economic reforms have seen the country engaging with the rest of the world, particularly resource-rich countries, to meet its huge resource needs and to attract foreign direct investments. China has developed its construction industry's competitiveness from its need to service the world's most populous and urbanized nation. Chinese construction firms (hereinafter referred to as Chinese firms) undertake infrastructure construction in almost all the 55 African countries. Nigeria has become China's fourth largest investment partner and the second largest export market in Africa. Nonetheless, Chinese firms face challenges in the quality of their construction services in Nigeria. Consequently, cross-cultural differences between Chinese and Nigerians and corresponding impacts on the perceptions of quality of construction services need to be investigated.

By integrating two perspectives including Hofstede's five national cultural dimensions (NCDs) and the eight quality management principles toward total quality management (TQM) implementation, this book develops and presents a conceptual framework (CF) to achieve the research aim. The CF is underpinned by the bi-directional and culture-specific relationship between national culture and TQM implementation. The theoretical framework developed postulates that Chinese firms that are able to identify and manage differences in the influences of national culture on TQM implementation are perceived as firms with good quality performance in Nigeria.

The empirical findings presented in this book were generated from fieldwork conducted in Nigeria. The research methods were based on questionnaire survey, Delphi technique, and case studies; data collection instruments were purpose-designed questionnaires for different stages of the study; and data were collected using e-mail, face-to-face interview, and observations. In total, 48 and 80 completed questionnaires were, respectively, received from the Chinese and Nigerians with prior working experience with each other in Nigeria. At the data analysis stage, relative rank revealed *customer focus*, *leadership*, and *people involvement* as the top-3 ranked significant TQM principles to achieving good quality both among the Chinese and Nigerians.

Further, Friedman tests revealed no significant difference among the Chinese on the perceived significance of the TQM principles and NCDs to achieving good quality in their firms and among the Nigerian firms. Among the Nigerians, Friedman tests only revealed a significant difference in their perceived significance of the TQM principles to achieving good quality in their firms, but no significant difference in their perceptions for the Chinese firms. Using the frequency of ranks 1–3, the Wilcoxon rank sum tests showed that there is a significant difference in the perceived influences of TQM principles and NCDs on quality management among the Chinese and the Nigerians. The study also found a significant association between Hofstede's NCD scores for China and Nigeria and their perceptions of the influence of national culture on TQM implementation.

Following 2-round surveys among the Chinese and the Nigerians, 30 pairs each of important TQM and NCD attributes, being culture-specific TQM, were generated among the Chinese (presented as Matrix 1A) and Nigerians (presented as Matrix 2A), of which 18 pairs were found to be common (presented as Matrix 3) after cross analysis. Following a 3-round Delphi and four case studies and triangulating the results of the survey, Delphi and case studies, the 18 common pairs (as presented in Matrix 3) were analyzed thematically. Matrix 3 consists of 10 pairs relating to the stated needs of the Nigerians and the basic requirements of the Chinese in Nigeria; 4 pairs were found relating to the implied needs of the Nigerians and the strategic abilities of the Chinese in Nigeria, and the last 4 pairs were found relating to the potential needs of the Nigerians and risk appetites of the Chinese in Nigeria.

Matrix 3 as presented was developed into a model based on the thematic categories for validation with additional two case studies that confirmed the prediction, predictive capability, and effectiveness of the 18-pair model. The quality management assessment matrix (QMAM) developed in this book underpinned the model. It is recommended that the Chinese firms in Nigeria adopt the model for strategic decision making on the stated needs, implied needs, and potential needs to minimize conflicts related to their quality. Other non-Chinese firms can also adopt the model for insights into important considerations when engaging with the Chinese and the Nigerians. The QMAM developed and presented in this book can be adopted by future researchers to investigate the culture-specific TQM framework involving some another countries to further complement and validate the QMAM.

Keywords Chinese, Conflict, Construction, Model, National culture, Nigerians, Service quality performance, Total quality management

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Chinese Construction Firms in Nigeria

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