Workforce Diversity and Team Effectiveness: Insights from the Construction Sector in Ghana

Florence Ellis
Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology

Titus Ebenezer Kwofie
Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology

Mathias Awuni
University of Mysore

Rosemary Boateng Coffie
Kwame Nkrumah University of science and Technology

Maura Duffour
Kumasi Technical University

The purpose of this study is to explore inter-organisational dynamics in workforce diversity and effectiveness. Since the study is exploratory in nature, a qualitative approach was adopted to increase chances of gaining holistic insights into the phenomenon of team surface-and deep-level dissimilarity and team effectiveness in project delivery settings. The data was collected through interviews from construction practitioners/professionals from major construction project organisations and institutions who have been involved in construction project delivery. The results suggest that the extent to which surface-and deep-level dissimilarity affect team effectiveness depends on the collaborative activities of project team members within the inter-organisational relationship.

Keywords: Diversity, Project Delivery Team, Inter-Organisational Relationship, Effectiveness, Culture

INTRODUCTION

Teams composed of diverse individuals are increasingly relied on to make critical decisions, generate new and creative ideas and adapt to dynamic environments (Yeager & Nafukho, 2012; Harvey 2015). In particular, project-based organisations are continuously using team members from different functional areas to perform complex, specialised and time-bound tasks (Cohen & Bailey, 1997; Scarnati, 2001; Ilgen, Hollenbeck, Johnson, and Jundt et al., 2005; Salas et al. 2005) in a highly complex inter-organisational environment (Vaaland & Håkasson, 2003). The use of "project teams", seen as temporary organisations coupled with a diverse workforce (DiTomaso et al., 2007) performing such complex and

time-limited tasks suggest that the dynamics and reality of perceived team dissimilarity at the surface-level and deep-level can influence team effectiveness (Mohammed & Angell, 2004; Harvey, 2015). Zaki, Karim, and Khan (2019) also noted that cultural diversity promotes "humanistic values, it improves 'productivity and profitability'", it helps to "create a pool of talent"; and exchanges "innovative ideas".

Team effectiveness is a team process and it underlies the overall performance of diverse teams working in complex and dynamic environments (Harvey, 2015). Consequently, some theorists have explained diversity by focusing on team processes (Mohammed and Angell, 2004), while others have also focused on outcomes (Lioa, et al. 2008). Abaker, Al-Titi, and Al-Nasr (2019) submitted in their study of the Saudi financial services sector that considering differences as strengths that can be utilized to enhance performance, a diverse workforce might better be able to serve diverse markets. Others have noted that team dissimilarity relative to other team members influences individual overall work attitudes (Lioa, et al. 2008). It is therefore not surprising that some researchers, such as De Dereu & Van Vianen (2001), asserted that team effectiveness in team-based structures is not only a function of an individual's background and experiences but also depends on the extent to which team members need to avoid team process-loss by coordinating activities. However, Bunderson (2003) noted that "project team members" individual's background and experiences in different functional areas bring different but complementary knowledge and expertise to their team.

It is worth noting that, although much is known about diversity or perceived surface-and deep-level dissimilarity at the individual level and how it influences team effectiveness, not much attention has been given to the extent to which interorganisational relationships (IORs) impinge on project team heterogeneity and effectiveness. We, therefore, emphasise diversity in interorganisational project teams– specifically surface-level (age, gender, and ethnicity differences) and deep-level (behavioural, functional and attitudinal differences) as observed by Harrison, Price & Bell, 1998; Harrison, Price, Gavey & Florey (2002). IOR researchers have highlighted interorganisational collaboration at the organisational, professional, industry, resources and governance structures (Halpert, 1982 cited in Laurine, 2002; Vries et al., 2014), but have focused less on diversity. Although to some extent, literature has suggested that there is a relationship between diversity and alliance team effectiveness (Zoogah et al., 2011) at both the micro and the macro level, the general issue of how diversity influences team effectiveness within the context of the micro-macro link has not been given much attention.

Hence, the objective of this study is to address a gap in the knowledge by examining interorganisational implications of team dissimilarity and team effectiveness in construction projects in Ghana. Essentially, it attempts to answer two main research questions:

(1) To what extent does team diversity influence team effectiveness in construction project teams (CPTs)?
(2) What is the nature of diversity in construction project teams (CPTs)?

The research questions are addressed through case studies in construction project sites, which consists of construction project teams that are characterised by a network of members from different organisations with inter-organisational arrangements and which are linked by mutually agreed work relations (Love et al. 2002; Vaaland & Håkansson 2003; Yiu & Cheung 2006; Wu et al. 2017). The study uses the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne 1971), social identity theory (Tajfel 1978) and self-categorization theory (Turner 1982) as underlying theories to explore interorganisational dynamics in the diversity and effectiveness relationship.

We organised the paper into three sections. In the first section, we review the literature by discussing the three theories underlying the concept of diversity and we attempt to integrate empirical research on workforce diversity and its influence on team effectiveness. In the second section, we provide a brief overview of the construction industry. In the third section, we deal with the research method and provide the analysis and discussion of the evidence, as well as highlight the conclusions of the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Diversity is believed today to be salient in team-based structures and an important determinant in the interactive processes that combine individual resources, coordinating knowledge, skill, and effort to achieve task demands (Kozlowski & Ilgen 2006; Woehr, et al. 2013). Several theories have been utilized to explain the concept of workforce diversity. According to the social identity theory (Tajfel 1978) and self- categorization theory (Turner 1982), people define and differentiate themselves and others in terms of memberships such as personal, team, organizational, departmental affiliations and professionals. The social identity theory suggests that to a varying degree, people derive their part of their identity and self from the workgroup or organization to which they belong, and therefore may consider their workgroup or organizational identity more important to them than other identities (such as age or gender). Therefore, the categorization processes are likely to be triggered when members perceive themselves as dissimilar to other members, resulting in the tendency for members to evaluate themselves and others in terms of "my-team" and "their-team", where evaluations of situations, reactions, interactions, and relationships are likely to be considered in terms of members' social identity groups (Mannix & Neale 2005). Such categorization is likely to focus on grouping others on specific characteristics - such as race, gender, values, and beliefs- that are likely to be salient or distinct within a particular social context. This is because individuals are usually motivated to maintain their social identities and therefore tend to show positive bias towards those who appear to have similar characteristics to themselves than that of those who are dissimilar in character (Mohammed & Angell, 2004).

Another theory that has been used by diversity and interorganisational relationship researchers is the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne 1971), which suggests that people are attracted to similarity because of the assumption that it will reinforce their values and belief systems even as they interact with others. Research indicates that although the theories reviewed have been used to predict project team members' behaviour, they are also used in reference to workforce diversity in general and surface-level and deep-level categorization in particular (Harrison, et al. 1998; Mannix & Neale, 2005; Woehr, et al., 2013). Research indicates that scholars are still struggling to clearly define and categorise the concept of workforce diversity (Mannix & Neale 2005). For example, Mannix & Neale (2005) assert that workforce diversity is a complex and multifaceted term because it comprises of various individual perceptions of differences among people and various categorization paradigms in which the various types are identified. However, diversity is the umbrella term for the extent to which there are differences among members of a unit with respect to a common attribute (Harrison & Klien 2007).

Consistent with prior work (Jehn, et al. 1999; Harrison, et al. 2002), *workforce diversity* is defined as perceived differences to workgroup members in terms of readily detectable, surface-level characteristics (Milliken & Martins 1996; Harrison, et al. 2002) and information on the underlying, deep-level aspect of members (Milliken & Martins 1996). Perceived surface-level diversity is defined as an individual's perceived differences to a workgroup in terms of overt, demographic, observable information that can be obtained by observing physical attributes and to be relied upon in forming perceptions of others. Examples of surface-level diversities include age, gender, and ethnicity. Perceived deep-level diversity is an individual's perceived differences to workgroup members in terms of non-observable distinctiveness and is psychological in nature. Its characteristics include differences in ability, personality, values, functions and work attitudes (Harrison et al.1998). The study focused on three surface-level diversity characteristics: age, gender, ethnicity and several deep- level diversities including values, interest, specialisations, and attitudes among others. Both age, gender, and ethnicity are immediately recognizable and often serve as a very strong surface-level clue.

Although previous studies indicate that a majority of team diversity researchers have focused on surface-level characteristics, others have also looked at deep-level characteristics. Despite the categorisation and the advantages gained from the two forms of groupings, in analyzing team processes, research indicates that the use of specific attributes as a unit of analysis presents diverse challenges because diversity of any type creates significant complex situations (Jackson & Joshi 2004). For example, empirical research found that dissimilarity in gender increases relationship conflict (Jehn, et al.

1999) and others indicate that within a workgroup, a person's demographic characteristics may result in feelings of resentment towards other team members. Moreover, diversity heterogeneity according to an extensive review by Milliken and Martins (1996,), appears to be a double-edged sword, with great potential for generating creative ideas and the likelihood that members within the team will be dissatisfied.

Therefore, consistent with other works (e.g. Jehn, et al. 1999; Mohammed & Angell 2004), the focus of this study was shifted to examining simultaneously both the perceived surface- and deep-level diversity that characterizes interorganisational project teams, because they have received less attention in the management literature, yet may have profound influences on team cohesion, interactions, behaviour, and overall effectiveness.

WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND TEAM EFFECTIVENESS

The term "team effectiveness" has been conceptualized into various components. Based on Kozlowski & Ilgen's (2006) work, we conceptualise team effectiveness in terms of the input-process-output (I-P-O) logic. The inputs involve the assemblage of the individual members and resources at the various levels (e.g. individual, team and organization); process focuses on the activities that team members engage in as they collectively combine resources and processes in the performance of tasks, and outputs relate to the overall performance of the team in terms of meeting team goals and performance as judged by others external to the team such as meeting the interorganizational need (Kozlowski & Ilgen 2006). Some studies have documented a relationship between the perceptions of team diversity and team effectiveness. While some findings indicate diversity among team members had no significant impact on team effectiveness, other researchers have acknowledged that diversity with several dimensions has a significant influence on team processes (Woehr, et al. 2013). On the one hand, diversity research has stressed positive aspects of team member heterogeneity on team outcome, while on the other hand, it has been noted that heterogeneity among team members leads to dysfunction in team interactions and poor performances. For example, there is evidence that while visible diversity may hurt performance, non-visible, job-related diversity is likely to improve performance, especially where there is conflict (Pelled, 1996). These findings suggest that diversity is a salient attribute that can determine cooperation and most likely influence different team members' perceptions of similarity or dissimilarity, especially across national cultures (Zhang & Hua 2016).

CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES IN DIVERSITY EFFECTS

Culture has been acknowledged to influence not only behaviour and interactions (Leung, et al. 2006) but also in the team and team outcomes (Earley & Mosakowski, 2000) and may, therefore cause different effects. Although reviews indicate mixed results (e.g. Harrison, et al. 1998; Joshi & Roy 2009), cultural diversity in team can be both an asset and a liability (Stahl, et al. 2010), diversity research has been focused predominantly in developed individualist cultures and much less in collectivist developing cultures such as Ghana in West Africa, where inter-organisational project team members are more likely to interact and cooperate in different ways and therefore may show different patterns of effects (Zhang & Hua, 2016). This is because people from the same culture sharing the same basic underlying values are likely to feel strong similarity-attraction with each other (William & O'Reilly 1998). West Africa's collectivism has been well documented (Hofstede 2001). Research indicates that collectivist cultures prefer to ignore individual characteristics and rather define themselves in terms of group characteristics and collectivity (Zhang and Hua 2016). Therefore, it is likely that the Ghanaians who work in interoganisational project team settings will continue to emphasise harmonious relationships throughout their team interactions and men and women, as well as an older and younger team member, can bring more satisfying work processes and outcomes to the interorganisational relationship.

PROJECT TEAMS AS INTERORGANISATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS (IORS) AND SYSTEMS

A project team is defined as "a collection of individuals who are interdependent in their tasks, who share responsibility for their outcome, who see themselves and are seen by others as an intact social entity embedded in one or more social systems, who perform time-bound tasks and who manage their relationships across organizational boundaries (Cohen & Bailey 1997). This definition of the project team emphasizes its connection with interorganisational relationships (IORs) and the essential role of diversity. Previous research indicates a relationship between team diversity and interoganisational relationships (Van Knippenberg, et al. 2002). There has also been a number of theoretical approaches to studying interoganisational relationships and systems as well as studies that explain their emergence, growth, and functioning (e.g. Oliver 1990). For example, some theorists have focused some attention on interorganisational fields (Warren, 1967), interoganisational links (Oliver 1990; Goes & Park 1997), interorganisational systems (Hall, et al. 1977), interorganisational delivery systems (Alter 1990) and inter-firm alliances (Gulati & Garguilo 1999; Greve, et al. 2010). These theorists have conceptualized voluntary or mandatory patterns of exchanges of resources (such as time and clients) between different separate organisations that form the boundaries between systems and also boundary roles with the environment (external element) to accomplish goals. Overall, interorganisational relationships and systems generate a mix of uncertainties, as they work within environments of high complexities, dependencies (the degree to which a system is functionally specialized), and different types of interdependences (which includes the extent to which organizations are linked) and collaborations in order to achieve a common goal. These organisations are therefore not only goal-directed actors, but also actors that are subject to team-project-organisational and interoganisational influences. The increasing adoption of team-based and network-based structures (Marrone, et al. 2007) results in greater effects of project teams and interoganisational interactions and relationships. Following Alter (1990), interoganisational project delivery systems are defined as voluntary or mandatory collectives of diverse organisations who have collective goals, some common inputs, mutually agreed on throughputs including divisions of roles and tasks and shared outcome.

Consequently, workforce diversity within work project teams pertaining to interoganisational setting are jointly influenced by factors linked to team interorganisationality. The social identity ((Tajfel, 1978) and self-categorization theory (Turner, 1982) and the similarity-attraction perspective (Byrne, 1971), defined earlier suggest that fundamental to the idea of having individuals work together or collaborate in interorganisational project delivery teamwork is the complex interaction and relationships that are as a result of members from who are not only diverse in terms of functional backgrounds, disciplines, professions, teams, and organisations but also in terms of other dimensions such as age, gender, values, and attitudes (Hogg & Terry 2000; Harrison, et al. 2002; de Poel, et al. 2014). Previous research indicates a relationship between team diversity and interoganisational relationships (Van Knippenberg, et al. 2002).

For the sake of theoretical review and following the lead of others, the surface-and deep-level diversity forms the generic construct of perceived workforce diversity in the construction projects and to assess whether workforce diversity influences team effectiveness. These constructs are explored in the main discussion section. But before that, we present a brief overview of the Construction Industry in Ghana.

THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY IN GHANA

The construction industry in Ghana is said to be complex in nature. The Ghanaian construction industry is defined according to the nature of the features of the industry's products (Ofori 1990). This definition focuses on activities and firms related to the construction of buildings, real estate and private and public infrastructure (Anaman & Osei-Amponsah 2007) and is involves actual on-site construction activities by contractors, the repair, maintenance and construction of buildings and engineering works, manufacturers and sellers of the building materials and construction-related products, the services provided by agencies directly in the construction activities and the various professionals and organisations

associated with construction and the built environment (Ofori 1990; Anaman & Osei-Amponsah 2007). For example, the World Bank in 2003 estimated that the annual value of publicly procured goods, works, and services in 2003 was US$600 million, representing about 10% of Ghana's GDP. The bulk of the expenditure programmes in Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) and District Assemblies involve capital construction procurement (World Bank 2003). Again, some major construction activities are often sponsored by the Ghana government and international agencies, which makes it an investment-goods industry with a broad range of end-uses. Therefore, the industry constitutes a large part of the economy (Ofori-Kuragu, et al. 2016) in that it does not only stimulate development but is also a major player in employment creation and turn poverty reduction. For example, the industry's contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) has been about 8.2% per annum (Owusu-Manu & Badu 2011; Ofori-Kuragu, et al. 2016) and employs about 10% of the working population (Asamoah & Decardi- Nelson 2014). Multinational construction enterprises and their activities have also become an important feature of the current face of economic liberalization. However, it is generally agreed that construction products are very expensive, in large part because they are "tailor-made" and involves high initial capital investment. Therefore, changes in governmental policies, cost, schedules (time), specifications (quality) and high budget imply that demand for high budget buildings and other infrastructure can not only be seasonal, unstable and a highly risky business, but also constructed items are also unsatisfactory in terms of durability (Zawdie & Langford 2000; Ofori 2012).

It is therefore not surprising that Ofori (1990) argues that the heterogeneous nature of the industry's activities and the agencies including the various participants involved tend to create difficulties in the coordination of activities and administrative mechanisms, create deep-seated problems and adversarial relationships, which in turn influence effective project delivery. It is against this background that we discuss diversity within the construction project organisations and projects, but we first provide an outline of the research method within the context it was adopted for the study.

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH CONTEXT

This study adopted a qualitative approach in line with the works of Debrah & Ofori, (2006). The qualitative approach is also in line with the accepted history of the use of the qualitative-oriented approach in project groups, organisational behaviour, interoganisational delivery systems, and management research (Gersick, 1988; Alter, 1990; Guttormsen, 2017). With the qualitative approach, it was possible to increase the chances of gaining a holistic insight into the phenomenon of the concept of workforce diversity and effectiveness in interoganisational project delivery settings. Given the paucity of literature on workforce diversity in project delivery teams in Sub-Saharan Africa, this study is more exploratory in nature.

The exploratory nature of the study, which brings the experiences of construction industry practitioners to the forefront of the investigation, enables knowledge production that moves beyond the known traditional patterns concerning how diversity in project teams are studied. It was felt that the qualitative exploratory approach would be the most appropriate way to carry out this study because it provides the opportunity to examine the nature of diversity and effectiveness. In line with the results of the literature review, interviewing of construction professional on the same issues, and to determine variations of opinion on the issues outlined was deemed very instrumental. Moreover, the qualitative exploratory approach makes it possible to adopt some form of an explanatory approach (Yin, 2012) to the study diversity by explaining issues pertaining to how workforce diversity influence team effectiveness within a particular cultural context.

Therefore, given the nature of the study, and the fact that the focus of the study was on professionals with expert and practical knowledge of the construction industry, it was decided that a purposive/judgement sampling approach would be most appropriate. This decision was also precipitated by our focus on gaining knowledge of the industry and its elements, and also from a broader perspective, how the environment of the parties shapes their perceptions of dissimilarity as they attempt to handle interorganisational and project dynamics. As indicated by Babbie (1995), the purposive sampling

technique made it possible for us to do a more intensive study by focusing on the key stakeholders in the industry with knowledge of the issues pertaining to the study. With the help of the Ministry of Water Resources and Housing (MWRWH) and Ministry of Transport (MOT) and based on the initial generation of a list of possible participants who might be available for interviews, key institutions and organizations who were in the position to provide reliable data/information for the study were identified. A list was made of major stakeholders in the construction industry in Ghana. This procedure yielded five (5) construction project participant organisations/institutions (CPOs) (client organisations, academic institutions, consulting organisations, contracting and subcontracting organisations and institutional consultants) who were selected.

The data was collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews. Consistent with previous studies of this type (e.g., Eisenhardt 1989), much of the data reported were obtained from semi-structured interview with construction practitioner/professionals, experts, and workers from major construction project organisations (CPOs) and institutions and have been involved in construction project delivery as project participants and/or project team members. The semi-structured interview questions were prepared following a review of the literature and preliminary discussions with some key stakeholders. All the interviews were face-to-face and lasted between one and one-and-a-half hours. All the interviewees were willing to discuss and share their views because they were assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. Again, they were assured that their responses that are reported are those that are consistent with the study themes or patterns. This is to ensure that ethical standards and the integrity of the research process are maintained. Consequently, the interviews allowed us to capture the interviewees' rich array of subjective views and perceptions of diversity and team effectiveness in project teams just as in existing literature.

Following the approach adopted by Miles & Huberman (1994), interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Field notes were taken and were also analysed as part of the interview evidence. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed flexibility and latitude to both the interviewer and the interviewees to probe or ask questions of clarification and follow new leads (Burns, 2000). Because the interviews focused on the perspectives of respondents from the same industry, the study avoided the potential drawback of a lack of comparability of information between respondents that is associated with semi-structured interviews (Burns, 2000). In total, 56 interviews were conducted with experienced construction experts and practitioners in Accra (the capital) and Kumasi as shown in Table 1. At the end of the interview, informants were from local and foreign construction firms, educational institutions involved in the training of construction professionals; contracting companies; architectural, engineering and quantity surveying consultancies; institutional clients of the construction companies; institutional consulting professionals and the regulatory institution of the industry as shown in Table 2. The people interviewed are key personnel in the construction business, the management of the industry, the development of its personnel, or the maintenance of standards in the various professions in the industry.

TABLE 1
INTERVIEWS BY GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS

Areas	**Number interviewed**	**Percentage of total Interviewees**
Accra (capital)	26	46.4%
Kumasi	30	53.6%
Total	56	100%

TABLE 2
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROJECT PARTICIPANT ORGANISATIONS STUDIED

Project Participant Organisations	Interviewees	Brief Description
Local and foreign construction firms	13	Project Directors, Project Managers and Project Supervisors (PM) involved in general construction work.
Educational institution	4	Faculty involved in teaching and research. Also, act as advisers and consultants for public para-statal and private projects
Contracting companies and subcontracting	10	Project Managers, Architects (Arc), Structural Engineers and Quantity Surveyors (QS) responsible for the designs and oversee control of the project
Architectural, engineering and quantity surveying consultancies	12	Project Managers, Architects, Structural Engineers and Quantity Surveyors responsible for the designs and oversee control of the project
Institutional clients of the construction companies	12	Initiators and financiers of the project and the project team; appoint a clerk of works (director) and other consultants as supervisors and representatives.
Institutional consulting professionals	4	Public Senior Level Officers (Architects) responsible for the design phase of the project and oversee the control of public projects.
Regulatory institution of the industry	2	Public Senior Level Officers responsible for the design phase of the project and oversee the control of public projects.

Data analysis began with listening to the interview recording several times and transcribing the interview verbatim. Besides, the transcripts were read repeatedly, which allowed for the integration of the data drawn from the transcripts and notes. This was followed by thematically coding the information. This was done by "hand coding" of the transcripts by moving between the original text and the coded transcripts segments by examining lines and grouping quotes into emerging themes or patterns in line with the interview and based on key issues arising from the literatures to support or build new theories (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Sub-themes (axial coding) were derived from the project participants' construction of what they have seen and their lived experiences. This allowed the coding of the data into two broad headings – issues of surface-and deep-level dissimilarity and team effectiveness in the project delivery environment.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Before presenting the differences and their influence on project team outcomes, we first present the nature of the interoganisational relationship and interactions among the various project delivery

organisations. In this study, we follow Alter's (1990) definition of interoganisational delivery systems as "voluntary or mandatory collectives of diverse organisations who have collective goals, some common inputs, mutually agreed on throughputs including divisions of roles and tasks and shared outcome". Oliver (1990) also refers to interoganisational links as "enduring transactions, flows, and linkages that occur among and between an organization and one or more organisations in its environment". The data uncovered that the interoganisational relationships and systems that define construction projects are characterised by a network of coordination of capital, labour and other resources as enshrined in contractual arrangements. For example, the interviewees noted that the network of coordination brings together project organizations including clients, consultants, contractors and sometimes academic institutions into social and technical interactions and relationships such that they have to combine human physical and financial resources to bring the construction project into fruition. For example, a consultant noted that:

> *"the task requires that we collaborate and work hand in hand...but where for instance a contractor decides to do things single-handedly, he does it at his/her own risk and he/she stands to lose because the terms of the contract mandates the consultant to coordinate and supervise the building project based on the "terms of instructions" that guides the progress of work from the beginning till the end"*

WORKFORCE DIVERSITY

Given the perception of workforce diversity, almost all interviewees agreed that both forms of diversity exist among members of the project team. Some of the responses given by the interviewees to illustrate the surface-level and deep-level diversity are shown in Table 3. These responses provide clear evidence of workforce diversity in construction project team delivery.

TABLE 3
SUMMARY OF TYPES OF DIVERSITY

Types of diversity	Transcribed interview text
Surface-level diversity	"..there is a mixture of men and women …but there are few women in our project team and the women who join really put in their best…." "…we have different age groups…some are quite old especially the artisans…." "…members from various ethnic backgrounds although maybe in a region that one ethnic group is dominant…."
Deep-level diversity	"…different educational backgrounds… some are at the HND level, and others are 1st and 2nd degrees holders…." …project team members who have different attitudes, preferences, and behavior…"

A large number of the professionals and consultants interviewed were of the unanimous view that deep-level diversity, especially functional-level diversity, team-level diversity, and organizational-level diversity were very high. In the view of the experts and professionals, the main participants of a given project are differentiated in terms of skills, professions, employers, functions and sometimes geographical

areas (as shown in Table 1 and Table 4). They mentioned that in some cases, almost all these differences do shape the perceptions and expectations of different members. This view was reinforced by a consultant with an architectural firm:

> *"..when different groups come together….especially where different people leave differentvfirms….client, consultant, contractor and subcontractor firms…. come together to form a project team to construct a building….where is their allegiance?"*

Similarly, a project manager from a construction firm asserted that:

> *"…because we mostly see ourselves as coming from different organisations…and especially in the project team, we still see ourselves differently. Someone might say that because he/she is the project manager with an architectural firm….and I am from an engineering background … when we meet and various opinions are being expressed as to how the task should be performed, a consulting architect can outright say that my opinion should not be taken….and that is just because of our different functional backgrounds".*

In the literature, it is stressed that technical, social and administrative functions of the individual construction project organisations (client, consulting and contracting) can present opportunities and cause problems at the same time.

WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND TEAM EFFECTIVENESS

On the issue of the relationship between workforce diversity and team effectiveness, both senior-level and junior-level workers interviewed indicated that their differences in the functions, professions, and expertise often help them to work better, which in turn influence the successful completion of projects. They further noted that the degree of collaboration across organisational boundaries is such it regulates tasks and task outcomes of team members and it defines the relationship among individual team members as collective entities making team diversity beneficial for the execution of successful tasks as shown in Table 4. For example, an artisan asserted that:

> *"..in fact, diversity enhances the team to be effective, especially when there is collaboration. One professional cannot do the work. We need an architect, a surveyor, an engineer and all those who matter to help realise the project goal in the construction field. Especially the few women who are part of the team enriches the team with their knowledge..."*

A project manager noted that:

> *"…in the construction team, the differences in gender, age, ethnicity does not really have an impact on the project."*

In spite of this observation, the interviewees asserted that sometimes these same differences can lead to conflict behaviour. Some of the interviewees could relate to conflicts caused by perceived differences among members to differences in demographic characteristics. On this issue, a consultant observed that:

> *"sometimes age issues result in conflict. Although in Ghana, respect for the elderly is the norm, a younger person's view is not discounted. However, sometimes the way things are said, the language used, the tone and voice and the presentation made when a young person is talking to an elderly person may show lack of respect, which is likely to cause an offense and hence conflict."*

Notwithstanding the issues of conflict, it also became evident that although in the last thirty years, the number of younger professionals have increased dramatically and as a result bringing about changes in how people work and live, cultural values that emphasise tolerance and respect for whom fellow workers are held in high esteem and at the same time high respect and reverence for older people are still strong. As a result, young professional workers in the construction industry are expected to create a work environment where individual differences are not discounted and where older workers are highly respected and held in high esteem. It was mentioned by the interviewees that it explains why gender differences may give rise to conflict episodes as well as barriers to project team interaction and conflict management behaviour, and in turn team effectiveness. The interviewees also talked about the difficulties that sometimes team members have in understanding each other in terms of attitudes and values, as well as the difference in administrative functions of the individual construction project organisations. For example, a quantity surveyor asserted that:

> *"..the project consulting team has a leader. However, being the head does not mean that you play the role of everyone on the team. You are required to coordinate the roles of the members of the team. If a team leader, for example, does not recognize and appreciate another consultant's expertise, it will be difficult for such a consultant to make an input".*

It is quite evident from these responses how complex processes of cultural settings and diversity management can influence an individual member's perception of dissimilarity among members of the project team.

TABLE 4
CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY PROJECT DELIVERY
(PARTICIPANTS AND ORGANISATIONS)

	Project Delivery	**Definition**	**Number interviewed**
1	Project Participants (diverse in terms of skill, professions, functions, expertise, knowledge)	A coalition of powerful individuals and interest groups	
	Architect		40
	Quantity Surveyor		40
	Project Manager		35
	Structural/Services Engineers		22
2	Construction Project Organisations (CPOs)	Temporary multiorganisations (TMOs)	
	Clients/public and private		12
	Consultants/professional		20
	Contractor/subcontractor/suppliers		23
	Public agencies		6

DISCUSSION

Previous research has distinguished between surface-level diversity from deep-level workforce diversity between members in a team and noted that such differences can facilitate team outcomes. In this effort, the phenomenon of workforce diversity was analysed at two levels: workforce diversity and team effectiveness in an interorganisational project delivery relationship. The result of the study is consistent

with previous research that suggests that both perceived surface-level and deep dissimilarity exist in an interorganisational project team delivery system. The study shows that the deep-level differences that were explicitly recognized at the individual, team and organizational levels benefit group work performance.

The study examined the interaction between surface-level and deep-level differences and team effectiveness to suggest that deep-level diversity plays a significant role in shaping the expectations and behaviour of team members and in turn team effectiveness. Deep-level diversity led to the team members' successful completion of project goals, in particular, when team members realize that they need to rely on each other in achieving team and organizational goals. This implies that within an interorganisational project delivery setting, teams do not function in a vacuum and that collaborative activities are important determinants of team effectiveness of the project team. It also suggests that in a relationship, bringing members together does not necessarily ensure that they function as a delivery system that has the potential to provide complex and comprehensive solutions to organisational problems. There must be a synergetic process in which the coordinated efforts of the team members surpass team performance. This issue is highlighted by Zoogah et al. (2011) who stressed that coordination strengthens the positive relationship between non-observable diversity characteristics of functional background and team effectiveness. It also shows that recognising deep-level or underlying differences, including the assumptions that team members bring to the team interactions and their organisations can help build teams that are able to overcome challenging situations and ensure the performance improvement of individuals, teams, and organisations (Vos and van der Zee, 2011; Yeager and Nafukho, 2012).

Again, the results show that both perceived surface and deep diversity can cause task related conflict, which can negatively influence team interaction and that surface-level diversity deteriorate attitudes towards other team members as members combine the processes and resources needed to be completely successful. Furthermore, the results indicate that the difficulties that project team members sometimes have in understanding each other and also their interpretation of issues can be attributed to their different functional backgrounds and linguistic styles. One issue that is specific to the Ghanaian society clearly stands out in these findings, and it is the role of cultural norms and values. This confirms some assertions that norms and values within the wider society to some extent influences workplace processes and interactions, and that other contextual issues are critical in shaping the work processes in project teams. Following Bunderson and Sutcliffe (2002), this can be taken as some evidence of how cultural diversity, national heterogeneity, and nationality diversity can have very serious consequences for project teams, given their strong dependence on each other, their shared common resources, task-related knowledge and expertise as well as their need for effective coordination in all team areas and with all team members. As indicated by Zoogah et al. (2011), differences in language, dialects, communication norms, and communication challenges can lead to increased miscommunication and conflict, which can, in turn, increase the difficulty in achieving team effectiveness among teams that need to effectively coordinate activities and processes. Along similar lines, Garrison et al. (2010) noted that diversity has a direct negative impact on individual performance in global project teams. It suggests that workforce diversity can make members unwilling to build on the knowledge of others if the cultural setting is not taken into consideration. It is, therefore, crucial to understand the effects of culture and diversity management on workforce diversity. In general, the findings indicate that workforce diversity has both positive and negative effects on team and project team effectiveness. Also, the findings revealed that of paramount importance are contextual factors including the organisational, inter-organisational, industry and cultural factors in project delivery teams' processes and activities. This means that the ability of project teams to both perceive, understand and recognize the bases of their differences (surface-level and deep-level) will help make a sense of others' behaviour and their willingness to collaborate better so that the interorganisational team (team, organisational and interorganisational) goals can be achieved.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As project teams become increasingly diverse and interorganisational relationships become more complex, understanding how workforce diversity influences work input, processes, and outcomes is critical. The study provides insights into the limits of surface level and deep level aspects of conflict behavior and advances deep-level diversity, cooperative activities and the use of diversity management as an effective tool for achieving team effectiveness. Evidence emerging from the study has implications for the general debate on the role of workforce diversity and team effectiveness especially in the context of the construction interorganisational project teams. In particular, the findings of the study indicate that in the case of the construction industry in Ghana, contextual factors including team dynamics, project characteristics, organisational factors, interoganisational factors, and cultural factors influence the dynamics of workforce diversity and team effectiveness. It can, therefore, be argued that team interorganisationality has implications for team dissimilarity and team effectiveness in construction project delivery. In terms of methodological contribution, the study has demonstrated the value of qualitative inquiry in examining the surface-level and deep-level diversity in teams; how team dissimilarity influence team effectiveness; and the role of team interorganisationality in the coordination of activities and processes in a construction project. In relations to the industry, project and HR managers may need to develop the skills and competencies of team members not only to understand the complex interactive processes in a project team delivery arrangement but also to anticipate conflict issues that are likely to occur and reoccur during the inter-organizational collaboration and tackle them. Also, although the findings suggest that there may be a general level of acceptance and appreciation of issues relating to surface-level and deep-level diversity in the context of the construction sector, some dimensions of diversity issues -especially age and function, as well as culture -were perceived. For example, the negative effects of diversity that we found in age and cultural/belief diversity may also reflect an "unfriendly" work environment for older workers in this setting, and so may lead to decreased social integration (Stahl et al., 2010). This suggests that we need to understand much more how diverse teams work when they are team and organisationally dissimilar. Furthermore, construction project organisations and project managers may need to invest in a more focused interorganisational project team-based approach to diversity management as a means to examine and modify the processes, interaction and relationships and well as the norms that discourage diversity. Not only will the investment help promote diversity among the categories of the diverse workforce, but it will enhance coordination-based activities at individual, team and organisational levels. Partnership with the tertiary educational institutions (TEIs) to increase diversity/diversity management courses in Architecture, Construction Management, Building Technology, and Engineering, as well as the development of training interventions, could enhance the visibility of work environment diversity climate, and in turn, help overcome project-based team issues of diversity, alleviate conflict and increase effectiveness. Future research could look at extending this line of research to include how other related project-related factors can influence diversity and effectiveness. In addition, it will be interesting to investigate the role of team interorganisationalilty in the management of human resources in the construction industry in Ghana.

A limitation of the study was its cross-sectional nature, despite the fact that team processes and dynamics in project teams may unfold over time. Therefore, longitudinal research that assesses different aspects of diversity of project time members and their influence on the team's interaction, relationships and overall performance in the project team's life cycle would have been a better option. Also, the sample for the study focused on construction project teams (CPTs) within the built environment, although it was comprehensive in covering all the construction project organisations. The limitation here is that the study contacted only a proportion of construction participants, without considering other construction teams, who might also experience other aspects of team diversity and who may be working on different types of tasks. On the other hand, however, the involvement of project team participants shows that the findings help to understand workforce diversity and team effectiveness issues relating specifically to construction project teams in Ghana.

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