

Impact of Leadership Roles on Managing Cultural Differences in the Redeemed College of Missions, Ede, Nigeria 2018-2023

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Abstract

Societies are mostly comprised of people with different languages, backgrounds, ethnics, and cultures that are very important to the need of the societies. This study focuses on how the leaders can effectively manage and promote peaceful co-existence among diverse cultures, ethnics and religions within their territories through their administrative approaches. The study uses the Integration Theory of Multiculturalism. It adopts a quantitative research design, focusing on the role of leadership in managing cultural differences. The targeted population include the staff members and students of the Redeemed College of Missions, Ede. 150 respondents were selected using purposive sampling techniques and questionnaire was used as the primary instrument for data collection. The findings emphasized the importance of leadership adaptability to diverse cultural contexts. It revealed that societal leaders who demonstrate flexibility and openness to different cultural perspectives are better positioned to facilitate effective communication and decision-making and that this adaptability is a key component of successful management of a multi-cultural society. It concludes that the comprehensive exploration of leaders' perceptions, attitudes, and practices in navigating diverse cultures within the institution have provided valuable insights. It recommended the implementation of regular cultural sensitivity training programmes and the establishment of leadership development initiatives to equip leaders with the necessary skills for effective cultural management to foster understanding, respect, and appreciation of diverse cultures, creating a more inclusive and harmonious environment.

Keywords: Acculturation, Cultural Differences, Multiculturalism, Peaceful Coexistence, Societal Leaderships.

Introduction

Multi-cultural societies comprise of people of different languages, backgrounds, ethnics, and cultures. These people that make up such societies are very important to the need of the society and if not well managed, co-existence can result into any type of violence. In some parts of the society, there are people who migrated from either far or near places and are already landlords or landladies, some have resolved not to return to their mother land. Nigeria is made up of several ethnic groups with a lot of differences within each of the ethnic groups. There are over 350 languages in Nigeria and many of them are represented in various communities and societies

with their cultural backgrounds (Hassan 2019). This diversity of ethnics and cultures is the reason for multi-cultural beliefs. Leading society of this kind can be challenging and may not be appreciated if the leadership of the society are not conversant with the peculiarity of each ethnic group and cultures represented under their administration.

There are some issues in the societies today that were caused by lack of understanding of the cultural differences by the leaders of such societies. Among such issues are; loss of job, miscommunication, broken courtship, dissociation, suspicion and wrong assumption, wrong accusation, divorce, lack of trust, lack of love, civil war, religion crisis, etcetera. There is almost no well-structured or organised community nowadays without people from at least two different cultures, therefore, it is noteworthy that there are some issues that will continue to exist because of the fact that multi-culture exists in the societies, and each group values their culture. These issues may not be totally eradicated, but they can be managed and brought down to minimum if the community leaders are sensitive and caring enough to create an atmosphere that is conducive for co-existence among the people living in the community.

There are some communities where people from different countries reside and work, and living in such an environment or institution can be challenging especially if there is communication problem as a result of linguistic factors such as misinterpretation. When a local language is spoken by some members of the organisation in the presence of those who do not understand it, it will reflect on the productivity and performance of such individuals. It is therefore very important for leaders of various organisations and societies to take cognizance of every available and identified cultures in each organisation or community under their administration (Muhammet & Ershad 2023).

There was a story of a young missionary trainer who went to a particular training center to teach some set of people. In the course of teaching, he got to an aspect where he needed to talk about culture and how it affects the efforts of missionaries when they move to another terrain. He made use of Yoruba and Igbo cultures. When it comes to greetings, the two are like words and opposite, an Igbo man in the class said that "*it is only God you worship, when you prostrate for somebody, it means you are worshiping the person*", but a Yoruba boy that greets an elderly one without prostrating will be seen as an uncultured child. Leading an organisation or community with the people from these two groups takes carefulness not to offend one while pleasing the other. Leaders must be conversant with the way people from different cultures see things so as to avoid ethnocentrism. Anybody who wants to be a leader, or someone who is recommended to be a leader must be ready to compromise his culture and some of his religious rites in order to create a peaceful environment for the people of different culture and religion that are in the community.

It is expected of a good leader to ensure the unity of people working under him and see to the development of his community. For any community or society to progress, the leadership of such a community must be ready to give what it takes. Offences are bound to occur as a result of

cultural variances, but when it happens, what is expected of a leader who wants the progress of the community is to find a way out as soon as possible so that the offence will not lead to another major problem. Anyone aspiring to be a leader of any society, no matter how small the society maybe, must be ready to be a man/woman of everybody and a man/woman of nobody. This implies that he must always ready to be identified with every tribe and culture. Furthermore, since leadership is connected with politics, there is need for politicians to be familiar with at least all the cultures present in their jurisdictions. This will enable them to handle individual differences among the tribes and cultures, and at the same time, know how to provide for the needs of the people under them.

It is very important to note that leadership roles can be discussed only if there is an organisation, institution or society that requires the functions of a leader for the purpose of maintaining growth, orderliness and peaceful coexistence among the unavoidable culturally differentiated and oriented workers who find themselves in such environment. As a result of this, the fact that leadership roles are determined by organisation or society should not be ignored, and leaders are not supposed to make rules based on their own perspectives without considering the peculiarity of their organisation.

Concept of Culture

The idea of culture sometimes can be somewhat cloudy. Although cultures have been studied for several decades or even centuries, yet it is still difficult to describe culture in just one word. Many people define culture as the surroundings they live in and associate things like language, history and habits with culture. Though, culture is not limited to environmental factors or surroundings, it can also be stated that culture is a patterned way of acting, thinking, and communicating because people's thoughts, actions and the way they express their feelings cannot be separated from their cultures. This means that every culture has its own way of communicating with its followers, which also in a way guides their behaviour towards their own culture, and likewise towards other cultures. This is easily spotted in that when groups of individuals from different cultures are associated, there will be variances in the communication and behavior of each various group (Hassan 2019).

One other definition of culture is that it is the system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviours, and artifacts that the members of society use to survive with the world and with one another, and that are conveyed from generation to generation through learning. Even though many people believe that culture is transmitted from generation to generation, one important thing to always remember is that no one is born with a particular culture; an individual from birth learns and acquires culture as they grow from the environment or society each person belongs to through communication and interaction with other people. This way an individual learns and masters the core rules of social behaviour.

Considering the emergence of several factors such as migration, establishment of organisations where people of different cultures work together as a team, global market and the likes that lead

to the globalisation, it is necessary to be thoughtful, aware and be very sensitive to the cultural differences and people from various tribes, ethnics, languages, religions and countries in order to have a peaceful co-existence and for the society to be internationally recognised and accomplish the world standard of being a successful mul-ticultural society. Culture can also be described as the *Mind's Driver* because it determines how human beings think, which leads to how they view things, respond to things, interpret signs and symbols, relate with each other and go about with their businesses.

The Integration Theory

Integration theory is a framework within multiculturalism that emphasizes the process through which individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds come together to form a cohesive society. Unlike the melting pot concept, which suggests that different cultures blend into a single entity, or the salad bowl model, which highlights the coexistence of distinct cultures, integration theory seeks a middle ground. It advocates for a harmonious society where cultural differences are acknowledged and respected while also promoting a shared national identity (Tariq 2014).

Statement of the Problem

One among the leading challenges in the society today is the inability of the leaders to create a collaborative environment, where people can live and work together in spite of their different cultural differences. Also, there are leaders in the society who assumed the position of leadership without necessary leadership price. It is also evident from the way some of the societal leaders are leading and ruling people under them, that Nigerian societal leaders are not serving people, but rather, people in the society are the ones serving their representatives at various levels.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine how societal leaders can manage and promote peaceful coexistence among the different cultures, tribes and religions represented in their terrains through their leadership styles.

The objectives of this study are to:

- i. identify cultural differences in Nigeria that pose as challenges to societal cohesion and development; and
- ii. recognise competencies and skills required for societal leaders to effectively manage cultural differences in Ede.

Research Questions

1. What are the key cultural differences in Ede that pose as challenges to societal cohesion and development?
2. What are the competencies and skills required by societal leaders to effectively manage cultural differences in Ede?

Methodology

This study used a descriptive survey research design which is ideal for examining the impact of leadership roles in managing cultural differences in the Redeemed College of Missions, Ede, Osun State, Nigeria. This research design is considered appropriate because the study involved collection of data to objectively describe existing phenomena without any manipulation or randomisation. The targeted population of this study consists of the staff members of the Redeemed College of Missions Ede and missionaries on training in the Redeemed College of Missions, Ede, who are from all the geo-political zones of Nigeria with some persons from other Africa countries. A sample of 120 respondents was selected through a purposive sampling technique to ensure diverse representation. Data were collected using structured questionnaire, divided into sections covering demographics and key research questions about leadership roles, competencies/skills and their impact. The validity and reliability of the instruments were ensured through a thorough review of literature and expert opinions, with Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.80. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive analysis, allowing a clear and organized presentation of the findings, and insights into the impact of leaderships roles in managing cultural differences in the Redeemed College of Missions, Ede, Osun State, Nigeria.

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

S/N	Variables	NO.	Frequency	%
1	Gender	Male	100	83.33
		Female	20	16.67
2	Marital Status	Single	70	58.33
		Married	45	37.50
		Divorced	0	0
		Widow/Widower	5	4.17
3	Academic Qualification	SSCE	44	36.67
		OND/NCE	27	22.5
		HND,B.A, B.Ed, B.Sc.	43	35.83
		MSc. & Above	6	5
4	Geopolitical Zone	North-Central	19	15.83
		North-East	4	3.33
		North-West	2	1.67
		South-West	59	49.17
		South East	15	12.5
		South-South	20	16.69
	Other Countries	1	0.83	

Source: Field Work, 2023

The table above shows that majority of the respondents, accounting for 83.33%, identified as male. The female respondents constitute a smaller proportion, at 16.67%. The majority of the respondents, accounting for 58.33%, identified as single. The married respondents constitute a

significant portion, at 37.50%. There are no respondents reported as divorced. A small percentage, 4.17%, identified as widows or widowers.

Results and Discussion of Findings

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question One: What are the key cultural differences in Nigeria that pose as challenges to societal cohesion and development?

Key Cultural Differences in Nigeria that pose as Challenges to Societal Cohesion and Development

S/N	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	One among the key cultural differences that brings about disunity and development in the Nigerian society is ethnicity.	80(66.67%)	30 (25%)	10(8.33%)	0(0%)
2.	Religion is a strong factor that contributes to cultural differences and poses challenge to cohesion in Nigeria society.	60 (50%)	50(41.67%)	8(6.67%)	2(1.67%)
3.	Ethnocentrism is a major cause of disunity in Nigerian society and it fuels cultural inadaptability.	50(41.67%)	63(52.5%)	6(5%)	1(0.83%)
4.	Misunderstanding of cultural values is another factor that poses challenge on peaceful coexistence in Nigeria societies.	60(50%)	46(38.33%)	13(10.83%)	1(0.83%)
5.	Language is a cultural variance that has brought limitation to peaceful co-existence in the Nigerian society.	49(40.83%)	55(45.83%)	8(6.67%)	8(6.67%)
6.	Power imbalance is a factor that contributes to cultural differences and poses challenge on cohesion in the society.	65(54.17%)	48(40%)	4(3.33%)	3(2.5%)

Source: Field Work, 2023

A significant majority of respondents, accounting for 80(66.67%), chose the option 'strongly agree', while a sizable portion, 30 (25%), agreed with the statement without expressing the same level of conviction as those who strongly agree. A smaller percentage, 10 (8.33%), chose the option 'disagree', notably, there are no respondents who selected strongly disagree. In the data

provided pertains to respondents' opinions on the statement: Religion is a strong factor that contributed to cultural differences and poses a challenge to cohesion in Nigerian society, a significant proportion of 60 respondents, representing 50% of the total, chose the option 'strongly agree', another considerable portion, 50 (41.67%), agreed with the statement without expressing the same level of conviction as those who strongly agree, a small percentage, 8 (6.67%), chose the option 'disagree' while smaller percentage, 2 (1.67%), selected strongly disagree. From the data provided pertains to respondents' opinions on the statement: "Ethnocentrism is a major cause of disunity in Nigerian society, and it fuels cultural inadaptability"; a substantial proportion of 50 respondents, representing 41.67%, chose the option 'strongly agree', another sizable portion, 63 (52.5%), agreed with the statement without expressing the same level of conviction as those who strongly agree. A small percentage, 6 (5%), chose the option disagree, while the smaller percentage, 1 (0.83%), selected strongly disagree.

The data provided pertains to respondents' opinions on the statement: "Misunderstanding of cultural values is another factor that poses a challenge to peaceful coexistence in Nigerian societies"; a significant proportion of 60 respondents, representing 50% of the total, chose the option 'strongly agree', another substantial portion, 46 (38.33%), agreed with the statement without expressing the same level of conviction as those who strongly agree. 13 respondents representing 10.83%, chose the option 'disagree', and a respondent which is the smallest percentage, 0.83% selected 'strongly disagree'. The data provided pertains to respondents' opinions on the statement: "Language is a cultural variance that has brought limitation to peaceful co-existence in the Nigerian society"; 49 respondents representing 40.83%, chose the option 'strongly agree', 55 respondents representing 45.83% agreed with the statement without expressing the same level of conviction as those who strongly agreed. 8 respondents which is 6.67% of the respondents chose the option disagree and another 6.67% of the respondents chose 'strongly disagree'. The data provided pertains to respondents' opinions on the statement: "Power imbalance is a factor that contributed to cultural differences and poses a challenge to cohesion in the society" show that 65 respondents, representing 54.17%, chose the option 'strongly agree', another 48 respondents, which is 40%, agreed with the statement without expressing the same level of conviction as those who strongly agree. A small percentage, (3.33%), which is 4 respondents chose the option 'disagree', and 3 respondents representing 2.5% of the respondents chose 'strongly disagree'.

Research Question Two: What are the competencies and skills required by societal leaders to effectively manage cultural differences in Nigeria?

Table 4.6: Descriptive Statistics on Competencies and Skills required by Societal Leaders to Effectively Manage Cultural Differences in Nigeria

S/N	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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1. To successfully lead a multi-cultural society, the leader needs to develop multiple leadership styles.	90(75%)	22(18.33%)	6(5%)	2(1.67%)
2. The leader in a multi-cultural society must be able to respect and interpret cultural values of each represented culture in the society where he's leading.	75(62.5%)	40(33.33%)	3(2.5%)	2(1.67%)
3. A multi-cultural society leader must possess an ability to envisage future challenges and problem-solving knowledge.	75(62.5%)	44(36.67%)	1(0.83%)	0(0%)
4. A multi-cultural society leader must be able to properly manage the societal resources and live a life of integrity.	85(70.83%)	27(22.5%)	8(6.67%)	0(0%)
5. A multi-cultural society leader is expected to possess social intelligence to be able to manage social issues.	85(70.83%)	32(26.67%)	3(2.5%)	0(0%)
6. A multi-cultural society leader must be able to effectively communicate and make every ethnic group in the society feel included, and must also be ready to adapt to different cultures in his territory.	79(65.83)	30(25%)	8(6.67%)	3(2.5%)

Source: Field Work, 2023

The data provided pertains to respondents' opinions on the statement: "To successfully lead a multicultural society, the leader needs to develop multiple leadership styles"; 90 respondents which is the majority representing 75%, chose the option 'strongly agree', another substantial portion of 22 respondents representing 18.33% agreed with the statement without expressing the same level of conviction as those who strongly agreed. 6 respondents representing 5% chose the option 'disagree', while only 2 respondents representing 1.67% selected 'strongly disagree'. The data provided pertains to respondents' opinions on the statement: "The leader in a multi-cultural society must be able to respect and interpret cultural values of each represented culture in the society where he's leading"; a significant majority of respondents (75), representing 62.5%,

chose the option 'strongly agree', another 40 respondents representing 33.33%, agreed with the statement without expressing the same level of conviction as those who strongly agree, while a small percentage (3 respondents) 2.5%, chose the option disagree, and 2 respondents which is the smaller percentage, 1.67%, selected 'strongly disagree'. The data provided pertains to respondents' opinions on the statement: "A multi-cultural society leader must possess an ability to envisage future challenges and problem-solving knowledge" show that a significant majority of 75 respondents, representing 62.5%, chose the option 'strongly agree', another 44 respondents representing 36.67%, agreed with the statement without expressing the same level of conviction as those who strongly agree. 1 respondent representing 0.83%, chose the option 'disagree' and no respondent selected 'strongly disagree'.

The data provided pertains to respondents' opinions on the statement: "A multi-cultural society leader must be able to properly manage societal resources and live a life of integrity"; a substantial majority of 85 respondents, representing 70.83%, chose the option 'strongly agree', another sizable portion of 27 respondents representing 22.5%, agreed with the statement, while 8 respondents representing a smaller percentage (6.67%), chose the option 'disagree' and no respondent selected 'strongly disagree'. The data provided pertains to respondents' opinions on the statement: "A multi-cultural society leader is expected to possess social intelligence to be able to manage social issues"; a substantial majority of 85 respondents, representing 70.83%, chose the option 'strongly agree', another sizable of 32 respondents representing 26.67%, agreed with the statement without expressing the same level of conviction as those who strongly agree, while 3 respondents representing 2.5% chose the option 'disagree', and no respondent selected 'strongly disagree'. The data provided pertains to respondents' opinions on the statement: "A multi-cultural society leader must be able to effectively communicate and make every ethnic group in the society feel included, and must also be ready to adapt to different cultures in his territory"; 79 of the respondents representing 65.83% chose the option 'strongly agree', another 30 respondents representing 25% also agreed with the statement without expressing the same level of conviction as those who strongly agree, while 8 respondents representing 6.67% chose the option 'disagree', and another 3 respondents representing the smaller percentage (2.5%) selected strongly disagree.

Discussion of Research Findings:

This research investigation explores two critical dimensions of Nigeria's multicultural landscape: the key cultural differences that challenge societal cohesion and development, and the competencies required by societal leaders to effectively manage these differences. This study was conducted through field work in 2023; it surveyed 120 respondents using a structured questionnaire with Likert scale responses.

Research Question One: Cultural Differences as Challenges to Societal Cohesion

This research question reveals six primary cultural factors that significantly contribute to the challenges of Nigeria's societal cohesion and development which includes ethnicity, religion, ethnocentrism, misunderstanding of cultural values, language barriers and power imbalance.

First, the finding shows that ethnicity emerges as a paramount cultural difference affecting Nigerian unity. An overwhelming 91.67% of respondents identified ethnicity as a key factor bringing about disunity and hindering development. The low disagreement of 8.33% of the respondents underscore the universal recognition of ethnicity as a critical challenge. This finding reflects Nigeria's complex ethnic composition, with over 250 ethnic groups, where the major groups (Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo) often compete for political and economic dominance, creating tensions that fragment national unity. This goes in agreement with Toyin Adetiba (2019) who argues that the political system in Nigeria has since been tailored along the ethnic lines, and it may be the factor that led to conflict that took place on the 19th of May, 2022 at the Dei Dei International Food Market between the Hausa and Igbo traders, which also saw the death of over four people, destruction and looting of hundreds of millions of naira worth of goods and properties (Premium Times, 2022). **Secondly**, religion (primarily between Christianity and Islam) emerges as one of the most significant factors that are creating cultural differences and challenging cohesion in the Nigeria societies, causing substantial societal divisions. 91.67% of the respondents acknowledged that though 8.33% of the respondents are of different opinion to that, but it is in agreement with the opinion of Jegede Paul (2029) that as the religious conflicts linger on, distrust and suspicion became the order of the day, more especially between the adherents of Islam and Christianity in Nigeria. The religious dimension is particularly complex in Nigeria, where faith often intersects with ethnic identity and regional politics, creating multi-layered conflicts that extend beyond purely theological differences.

Thirdly, ethnocentrism received strong validation as a disunity factor, with 94.17% of respondents agreeing it causes disunity and fuels cultural inadaptability. This finding is particularly significant as it suggests that the problem extends beyond mere cultural differences to attitudes of cultural superiority and resistance to inter-cultural adaptation. The high agreement rate indicates that respondents recognize how ethnocentric attitudes prevent the development of shared national identity and impede cultural integration efforts, and this has resulted into various kind of tragedies. This finding is in agreement with Emman, Oguntunji Abidemi (2023) that ethnocentrism has led to the death of thousands of people, displaced families, and turned children into orphans, wives into widows and husbands into single parents. **Fourthly**, cultural misunderstanding also received substantial recognition, with 88.33% of respondents agreeing that it brings challenges to peaceful co-existence. This finding highlights the knowledge gap between different cultural groups and the lack of intercultural education and dialogue platforms. The relatively higher disagreement rate of 11.66% respondents, compared to other factors suggest that some respondents believe cultural misunderstandings are more easily addressable through education and exposure. The **fifth** factor is language difference which is also another factor contributing to the societal division as 86.66% of respondents agreed that language

variance limits peaceful co-existence. Notably, this factor had the highest disagreement rate (13.34%), possibly reflecting Nigeria's adoption of English as a unifying official language. This might indicate recognition that while language differences exist, they may be less intractable than ethnic or religious divisions. If conflict must be resolved in Nigeria, linguistic and cultural diversity must be taken into consideration in order to bring about system balance as people's worldview is rooted in their culture (Isiong & Willie, 2019). **Lastly**, power imbalance received strong recognition, with 94.17% of the respondents agreeing that it contributes to cultural differences and challenges cohesion. This finding connects cultural issues to political and economic inequalities, suggesting that cultural conflicts are often manifestations of deeper structural inequalities. The very low disagreement rate (5.83%) indicates a broad recognition that unequal distribution of political power, economic resources, and opportunities along cultural lines exacerbates intercultural tensions.

Research Question Two: Leadership Competencies for Managing Cultural Differences

This research question identifies six essential competencies (**key leadership requirements**) for effectively leading multi-cultural societies, these are multiple leadership styles, cultural respect and interpretation, future vision and problem-solving skill, resource management and integrity, social intelligence and communication and inclusivity.

First, Multiple Leadership Styles received a strong validation, with 93.33% of the respondents agreeing that multicultural leaders need diverse leadership approaches. This finding suggests recognition that different cultural groups may respond to different leadership approaches, requiring adaptive leadership capabilities. The overwhelming agreement indicates the understanding that rigid, one-size-fits-all leadership approaches are inadequate for diverse societies, therefore, multiple leadership style is paramount to successfully govern multicultural societies (Paiuc Dan, 2024). **Secondly**, Cultural Respect and Interpretation also came up as one of the competences needed by societal leaders as 95.83% of the respondents endorsed that the societal leaders must be culturally sensitive. This finding emphasizes the critical importance of leaders understanding and respecting diverse cultural values rather than imposing dominant cultural norms. The low disagreement of 4.17% of the respondents suggests broad consensus that cultural competency is non-negotiable for effective multicultural leadership. Therefore, accepting and respecting cultural diversities is one of the pre-requisites of maintaining peace and ensuring peaceful coexistence of communities living in multi-ethnic/religious societies (Hussain Maria, 2021). The **Third** requirement, Future Vision and Problem-Solving Skills came up as the most needed skill for societal leaders as the 99.17% of the respondents agreed that multicultural societal leaders must be visionary leaders. This finding indicates and recognizes that multicultural societies face complex, evolving challenges requiring proactive and strategic thinking. The near-universal agreement suggests that respondents view anticipatory leadership as essential for preventing and managing cultural conflicts. There is no doubt that visionary

leaders are needed in the organizations and societies that are characterized by various cultures (Rido, Muhammad, Rahman & Hamid, 2024).

Integrity and ability to manage resources is the **fifth** requirement that was seen as one of the most important competencies and skills needed to be able to manage the affairs of multicultural societies like Nigerian societies. This competence received very strong validation, with 93.33% of the respondents' agreement. This finding suggests that ethical leadership and fair resource distribution are very crucial for maintaining multicultural harmony. It involves acting in an honest, transparent, and responsible manner, with a focus on the greater good of the nation and all the stakeholders involving in the play (Anita & Orlu, 2023). The emphasis on integrity likely reflects concerns about corruption and favoritism that often exacerbate cultural tensions in diverse societies. The **Fifth** requirement, social intelligence, received identical validation to resource management, with 97.5% of the respondents' agreement. This finding emphasizes the importance of emotional and social competencies in managing complex intercultural dynamics. This finding reveals that technical competencies alone are insufficient for governing multicultural societies. **Lastly**, the findings showed the importance of communication skills and inclusiveness as crucial tools for managing multicultural societies. Effective communication and cultural adaptability received strong validation, with 90.83% agreement. In order to successfully govern a multicultural environment, there is a great necessity for the leaders to develop communication as a sensible skill (Hussain 2018).

Critical Analysis and Implications

1. Interconnected Challenges

The findings reveal that Nigeria's cultural challenges are deeply interconnected. Ethnicity, religion, and power imbalance form a complex web where ethnic identity often correlates with religious affiliation and political power distribution. This interconnectedness suggests that addressing cultural divisions requires comprehensive, multi-dimensional approaches rather than isolated interventions.

2. Leadership as a Solution Framework

The research positions leadership competence as a critical intervention point for managing cultural differences. The high agreement rates across all leadership competencies suggest confidence in leadership as a mechanism for cultural integration, though this may also reflect idealistic expectations of what individual leaders can achieve.

Practical Implications

The findings have these practical implications for policy and practice:

1. **Educational Policy:** The recognition of cultural misunderstanding and ethnocentrism suggests the need for enhanced intercultural education programs.
2. **Political Reform:** The emphasis on power imbalance indicates a need for structural and political reforms to ensure more equitable representation.

3. **Leadership Development:** The identified competencies provide a framework for developing multicultural leadership training programs.
4. **Conflict Prevention:** Understanding these factors can inform early warning systems and conflict prevention strategies.

Conclusion

This research provides valuable empirical evidence of the cultural challenges facing societies and the leadership competencies needed to address them. The findings confirm existing theoretical understandings of multicultural challenges, supply important quantitative validation and a clear prioritization of the most pressing factors. The data show that cultural fault lines such as ethnicity, religion, ethnocentrism, misread values, language barriers, and power imbalances are deeply interwoven and collectively undermine social cohesion and development. Importantly, these divisions reflect underlying structural inequalities and gaps in intercultural understanding rather than mere differences of belief or practice. It highlights leadership as the crucial remedy. Respondent consensus on six core competencies (adaptive leadership styles, cultural respect and interpretation, visionary problem-solving, integrity in resource management, social intelligence, and inclusive communication) form a practicable blueprint for managing diversity constructively. Translating these competencies into practice requires intercultural education to reduce misunderstanding and ethnocentrism, political and institutional reforms to redress power imbalances and targeted leadership development programs to build capacity in culturally competent governance. Stakeholders (policymakers, civic leaders, educators, and development partners) should act on this evidence by prioritizing structural reform and investing in leadership capacity that is culturally informed, ethical, and strategic. The future stability and prosperity of societies depend less on erasing difference than on managing it wisely through leaders who can bridge identities, allocate resources fairly, and foster inclusive dialogue that transforms diversity into shared national strength.

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