Exploring work-related cultural dimensions in Malawian projects.

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ABSTRACT

Economic growth has spurned an increase in Malawian projects. The result is constant interaction between project professionals from different cultures. This interaction undoubtedly carries with it misunderstandings between people with different values. The purpose of this study was to explore the national culture work-related values of project professionals in Malawi. The goal is to bridge a gap between foreign project managers and local project managers by uncovering values present in a Malawian project environment. This study utilized four national work-related cultural dimensions as proposed by Geert Hofstede. The four dimensions of culture used in this study were Power Distance, Individualism- Collectivism, Uncertainty avoidance and Masculinity- Femininity. A cross-sectional survey instrument was used to gather data.

The sample populations were required to meet the following criteria:

(1) The respondents had to have worked on projects in Malawi;

(2) The respondents had to possess at least one year work experience.

This study attempted to answer two main questions:

(1) What are the of work related values among Malawian project management professionals.

(2) How important are work-related cultural dimensions to project success in Malawi.

This study found that participants in Malawi possess low power distance index, collectivist and feminine cultural traits, and high uncertainty avoidance. The cultural indexes found by this study were directly connected to the experiences of project management professionals in Malawi. Cultural factors were also considered to be important to the successful attainment of project objectives. The predictive nature of the results allows this study propose further research considering other dimensions in Malawian projects.
I want to express my deepest appreciation and gratitude to all those who had a part in helping me complete this dissertation. First, I would like to thank my parents for their support and kind words of encouragement. My siblings, for being the beacons that light my path when lost. I also want to thank, Mr. Alex Chanza, Dr. Peter Ngoma, Mr. Peter Mwanza and Mr. Duncan Grant - who provided me with invaluable advice and direction. Finally, I would like to thank Miss Csilla Foraita because this journey would have been harder without her support and encouragement.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the need to explore national work-related values in project management. It provides background information to the research problem, the objectives of this research, the significance of this research to project managers and the field of project management in general. This chapter also outlines the overall structure of this dissertation.

1.1 Background of the Problem

The International finance corporation finds that only half of its African projects succeed (Associated Press, 2007). A World Bank report found that at a point 75 percent of their African agricultural project were failures (Cooksey, 2012). There is a plethora of information that shows that projects in Africa fail a higher rate than projects on other continents (Webb, 1991). The research behind these failures is conspicuously deficient on the role culture. Granted - Weak public institutions, lack of accountability, corruption, undemocratic environment and lack of technical skills generally overshadow other culprits such as culture in African failed projects (Mpondera, 2014; Dionne, et al., 2013). The failure of projects in Africa has prompted many to start rethinking how to fund projects and the increased need for a people centered approach to projects on the African continent (Japan International Cooperation Agency , 2015; Matsilele, 2015).The introduction of a people focus to projects in Africa inevitably raises issues of culture, cross-culture and management in an extremely aid reliant continent.

Researching culture presents a number difficulties, culture is a dynamic construct that changes with time, context and influences. The problem is particularly prevalent in African context. Africa is the second largest among the continents and with a populous estimated at one billion and is home to diverse cultures languages and customs (World Population Statistics , 2014). Aspects of culture range from marriage, family lineage, belief systems, value orientation and world views. The sheer size of the different cultural identities means there is no identifiable body of traits that can be referred to as “African culture” (Moemeka, 1989). Admittedly, there are many values that African nations have in common, however,
research findings have always been eager to group Africa as a single entity, regardless of the diverse internal and external influences which can vary depending on issues such as colonization, education and economy (Ofori, 2013; Amponsah, 2012).

While there is increased recognition of the diversity that Africa holds; there still persists a habit by some continually group the fifty four countries that make up Africa into one (Kayser-Bril, 2014; Kermeliotis, 2014). This is indicative of the paucity in the area of culture particularly and scholarship in Africa generally (Taylor & Francis Group, 2014). What can be taken from literature is that Africa is growing and so are the projects. This has coincided with an Africa rising narrative that is forecasting Africa as the next source of economic expansion (Becker, 2015; Taylor & Francis Group, 2014). The trend is similar in Malawi despite its designation as one of the poorest countries on earth (Oxfam International, 2014).

In 2012, Malawi managed to attract US$1.2 billion in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) representing 22 percent of the FDI flows to Southern Africa (Malawi Investment and Trade Centre , 2012). Malawi’s Gross domestic Product (GDP) grew 6.10 percent in 2013 according to the Reserve Bank of Malawi (Trading Economics, 2015). Further GDP and FDI growth is was registered in 2014 and the economy is expected to grow in 2015. This growth has been matched by the expansion of major projects in the country from mining to construction which has also spurred projects in other areas of the economy (Dionne, et al., 2013). In addition, project growth has also been assisted by the redirection of donor funding to parallel projects that assist the poor in areas of health, agriculture and education to name a few. These projects are being carried out by the UN, UNICEF, and WFP with managers that are mostly recruited from outside Malawi (Save the Children, 2009; Dionne, et al., 2013).

Malawi has no official record of project failures but the extent can be ascertained by the number of newspaper articles that proliferate in print and web. The most recent and most famous being a failure of to break ground on Madonna’s multimillion dollar girl’s school which took center stage internationally in previous news cycles (AFP, 2011). The economic growth in the country means that projects are likely to be managed by Malawians and non-Malawians; which raises interesting questions about culture in project
management in the country. Parallel to the growth in projects has been the long interest in work culture values and its effects on management practice; researchers have long established the importance of culturally sensitivity in management. Numerous authors state that it is folly to blindly transplant cultural management values from one nation to the next and expect success (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997) (Hofstede, 1993). Culture dimensions on which national cultures differ have been measured by a number of researchers (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997; Hofstede, 1993; Mlnkov, 2007). The popularity of culture dimensions have taken hold within management and in cross cultural studies. The study of cultural influences has used typologies or dimensions to analyze behaviors, actions, and values of individuals. These dimensions are the frameworks that espouse assumptions a particular society have about reality. In doing so the concept of culture becomes eligible for analysis regardless of the context (Brewer & Venaik, 2012). Management techniques used in different nations have garnered different results and culture has been implicated as contributing factor in management. More importantly, the prominence of cultural dimensions has also resulted in the systemization of culture despite its apparent complexity (Pheng & Shi, 2002). The trend of cultural work values is a more recent in the project management sphere and coincides with increasing globalization of projects and project managers.

While the main use of cultural values has been cross comparisons of work values between nations, few studies have assessed the impact of the cultural values on project success (Zwikael, et al., 2005). Questions surrounding culture work values in project management still persist. Can project managers with different national culture work values manage a project successfully without having to be cognizant of the host countries national culture? Are national culture work-related dimensions relevant to the project environment? The question is particular pertinent in the project management sphere. A project is defined as a temporary endeavor with a specific goal/s that is constrained by time and resources (Besner & Hobbs, 2012; kutsch & Hall, 2010). In view of the limitation, aspects of a manager’s attention will likely be drawn to those things that are likely to affect the project goals. Therefore, ultimately, the role of culture in a project environment will be judged and can be judged by how much it contributes to project success.
The answers to the questions are likely to be different given each particular context/nation, particularly when talking about issues of culture. There are many intervening factors, on one hand, it has been shown that projects have been affected negatively because managers did not fully appreciate the role of work culture (Salacuse, 1991). On the other hand, the role of globalization and the standardization of teaching has shown that projects can be successfully managed despite differing national cultures (Yoo, et al., 2011). This narrative forms the motivation for this study, exploring the national culture work-related values in Malawian projects and whether national culture values should be considered a critical to the success of projects in Malawi. Given the debate about the veracity of work-related values as a going concern; the stand seems to indicate that the absence of evidence regarding cultural values on project success should not be construed as evidence of absence.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There is an increasing trend to explore national work-related values in project management. There are underlying beliefs that project managers from a particular nation are regarded as having one homogenous set of work values and that they intrinsically hold the ideal national culture values for their own countries (Gentry & Sparks, 2012). The position, is especially contentious in the national work related values debate and supports the examination of the underlying assumptions in Malawi. Despite the disagreement, the subject of work related values still attracts the interest many of researchers. Adair and Jaeger (2013) found that cross cultural influences in projects are likely to have an effect on project goals. Research based on 15 case studies conducted by Maverick-Will and Levitt (2014) found that cultural issues such as relationships social norms were ranked among the most important areas for managing international construction projects. The research also shows that 90% percent of large companies that conduct transnational projects, less than a third of these companies have established practices and to help their projects managers deal with projects in a different culture (M2 Communications Ltd, 2007).

Work-related culture dimensions have become practical way of comparing different nations. Questions still remain in its application in the field of project management. The gap of knowledge has contextual as well as practical relevance. The contextual aspects
are concerned with exploring work values in particular countries such as Malawi. The practical relevance of work related values refers to the contribution of work-related values to project success.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this cross-sectional survey is to explore the national culture approaches of individuals in project management positions with experience working on projects in Malawi in 2015.

1.4 Significance of the Study

There has been a call for a greater focus on soft skills in the area of project management. Soft skills are considered to be relatively undefined compared to the traditional ‘Hard Skills’. They include issues such as communication, problem solving, leadership and culture. In an increasingly competitive global environment project management has become a tool for gaining a competitive advantage (Becker, 2015).

The results of this study will enlighten all stakeholders to the theory of work related cultural dimensions and assist both Malawian and non-Malawian project managers in their management of people. Beyond this, it is suggested that this study will contribute to the wider theoretical knowledge about work related cultural values by adding knowledge and perspectives of Malawian practitioners to the field.

An increasing realization of the significance of culture on projects has spurred a number of authors to research the topic. The research has been overly reliant on making cross cultural comparisons of generalized work values between different nations. This study is designed to determine what if any national culture dimensions exist in the Malawian context and whether any of these values provide tangible benefits to project success in Malawi. In doing so, it adds to a growing body of literature on culture and project management, but also provides project management practitioners with a greater understanding national culture in Malawi, and perhaps, importantly the value of national culture in projects.
1.5 Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following questions:

1.5.1 What are the national culture work-related values among project management professionals in Malawi?

1.5.2 How important are work-related values to project success in Malawi?

The objectives of this study are:

1. To identify a pattern of cultural dimensions in Malawi.
2. To identify cultural factors that influence projects.
3. To assess the importance of culture dimensions on project success.
4. To provide recommendations and insights into culture dimensions and project success

1.6 Research Philosophy

This study adopted pragmatism as its epistemological position with a heavy emphasis on subjectivism as its ontological position. A detailed discussion on methodology is dealt with in chapter 3.

1.7 Assumptions

The following assumptions were made for this study:

- The participants completing the survey provide accurate and honest information.
- The participants represented cultural values in Malawi.

1.8 Limitations

Culture is a complex phenomenon and comprises of many dimensions, this study uses a restricted definition of culture as elucidated by Hofstede cultural dimensions. In addition, Hofstede’s dimensions have been expanded on by himself and other authors. This study does not deal with the full array of dimensions delineated by these theorists.
This study also discriminates in its sample by assessing the perceptions of project professionals working in Malawi. The criteria for respondents in this study require that:

1. All respondents work in projects in Malawi.
2. All respondents have a minimum of one year working for a projects in Malawi.

Taking into regard time and recollection factors the results may contain unintentional misrepresentations. In addition all respondents will be self-reporting their experiences and this study does not take the additional step of verifying those observations.

1.9 Definition of key terminology

This study examines the following research questions based on Hofstede's measures of work-related national culture values. Hofstede outlined significant, fundamental and common cultural dimensions that are evident in each national culture. The four that will be used in this research are Power Distance, Individualism-Collectivism, Uncertainty Avoidance and Masculinity-Femininity (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede & Minkov, 2011; Hofstede, 1993; Hofstede, 2001).

**Culture** – This study uses Hofstede’s definition of culture which is defined as “the collective programming of the mind, which distinguishes the members of category of people to those from another” (Hofstede, 1980)

**Category of people** – can be a nation, a region or an ethnic group, men or women, old or young, a social class, a profession or occupation, a type of business, a work organisation or part of it or a family (Hofstede, 1980).

**Values** – Culture has four elements, symbols, heroes, rituals, and values. Values represent the broad tendency in categories of people to prefer certain states of affairs over others. These values are represented in the cultural dimensions at elucidated by Hofstede (Hofstede, 1980).

**National Culture** – This study refers to the values that are exhibited by categories of people within a sovereign nation. Work-related values, national culture and national work-related cultural dimensions may be used interchangeably.
1.10 Chapter outline

This dissertation is structured into five chapters as follows:

**Chapter 1** – Introduction

**Chapter 2** – Literature review

**Chapter 3** – Research methodology

**Chapter 4** – Findings and discussion

**Chapter 5** – Conclusion and recommendations

References

Appendices
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction
This chapter outlines the theory and concept surrounding national work-related values. The review begins with an outline of work-related values which is followed by an analysis of discussion surrounding work related values. The review then completes an analysis of work-related values in relation to project management and closes with an analysis of work related values in relation to project success.

2.2 Management and Culture
For many years scholarship and many businesses took a blanket approach in the dissemination of management theories. The present form of management owes its roots to the American tradition which is by implication laden with values that stress a market approach, individualism and focus on the manager rather than the workers (Hofstede, 1993). These management theories were often accompanied by the underlying values of the theorist from that particular society. The emergence of national culture as a topic of business and management coincided with the poor transplantation of western social psychological and business management theories in countries with different cultures (Salacuse, 1991). Globalization and the increasing interaction between people from different nations/cultural contexts brought national culture dimensions to the forefront of management literature and verified that management cannot be “culture free” (Newman & Nollen, 1996) (Zwikael, et al., 2005). All cultures have unique behaviors, values, roles that apply to its members and these behaviors are expressed by employees and managers alike (Chaiyabutr, 2000). For this reason, many scholars have preoccupied themselves with variations in different cultures and the identification of dimensions that one culture exhibits in relation to the other; elucidating culture in the form of variations of value dimensions between cultures with the goal of making the concept of culture more practical. The process of defining variables into measurable factors of culture in management prompted a number of authors to identify dimensions that exist within national cultures. (Fontaine, et al., 2005) (Hofstede, 1993) (MInkov, 2007) (Schneider, 1987) (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997).
Culture generally has been defined as: “the collective programming of the mind, which distinguishes the members of one human group from another” (Hofstede, 2001); “a collective phenomenon, because it is shared with people who live within the same social environment” (Zwikael, et al., 2005); “the sum total of beliefs knowledge, attitudes of mind and customs to which people are exposed during their social conditioning” (Kempner, 1987). Salacuse (1991) defined culture as “the socially transmitted belief, behavior patterns, values and norms of a collection of individuals identified by their rules, concepts and assumptions”. Culture is elusive construct as it hosts aggregated values of a group of people where paradigm shifts are inevitable due to the dynamic effects of “social conditioning” (Kempner, 1987).

Hofstede (2001) suggests that there are three levels of mental programming all human possess, these are individual, collective and universal.

- Individual (personal) - focuses on mental programming exclusive to each person.
- Collective (culture) - focuses on the mental programming that is learned from others (that is specific to a group of people).
- Universal (Human nature) - focuses on all humans e.g. instincts for survival.

*Figure 1: Three levels of human mental programming (Hofstede, 2001)*

The three levels of mental programming are faced by managers in their day to day activities. The collective level is particularly relevant to successful management in an increasing global business environment. Geert Hofstede (1980; 1993; 2011; 2001) in
explaining this Hofstede stated that management theories are inevitably human and express that underlying values of the person proposing the theory. An analysis of major economies found relatively different management techniques were exhibited in an American approach than other western nations. Germans still possessed a strong gilded culture that did not view a manager in the American sense as a lone ranger. The Japanese took a more society perspective that was less concerned with individual employees and more concern with society. Chinese ideas of management focused on personal relations based confucian ideals of thrift and persistence (Pheng & Shi, 2002).

2.3 National culture

Different forms of culture can be practiced within the same city, apartment building and country and literature is filled with studies of many different forms of culture and sub culture (Zwikael, et al., 2005; Hofstede, 1980; Brewer & Venaik, 2012). In the area of management there are many different spheres of culture that influence employees and managers. Tone (2005) outlines the different spheres of culture in business, as national, regional, industry, professional, functional, corporate/organisational and project culture.

Figure 2: Interacting spheres of cultural influence (Tone, 2005, p. 156)

National culture influences all other sub groups of culture and is defined as the beliefs, values and assumptions perceived by people in their early childhood that later distinguish one group of people from another (Beck & Moore, 1985; Hofstede, 1991). The assumption that underlies national culture is it cannot be changed, as it is part of the programming that humans inherit at their inception and keep throughout their lives; In the case of
management, national culture is carried with the manager and influences their decisions and communication in all the spheres of the business (Liu, et al., 2015).

National Culture can be differentiated by its unique characteristics (Schneider, 1987):

- National culture is unconsciously inherited, learned at an early age and carried with the individual throughout the course of his/her life. National culture is generated from universal issues and forces that are the foundations of all cultures.
- National culture refers to the profound belief, values and practices that all nations have but are practiced in different ways.
- National culture influences all other spheres of sub culture within the nation.
- National culture are the dominant values of a sovereign nation.

2.4 Work-Related Values of National culture

In regard to management, national culture has been found to influence the work-related values that are conducive to a particular nation. Dimensions, such as, whether people prefer individualism or collectivism, how people deal with uncertainty and the degree to which people accept inequality (Ofori, 2013). These factors are fundamental to the success of any endeavor and highlight the need understand local conditions to lubricate success.

The pioneer of cultural dimensions in management, Geert Hofstede, first asked the question whether American theories apply abroad in 1980 (Hofstede, 1980). He surveyed employees of IBM through its subsidiaries in 64 different countries. The questionnaire assessed the work related culture values of the 117,000 IBM employees from different nationalities (Hofstede, 2001) (Hofstede, 1993). Analysis of the data revealed that individuals from the different nationalities expressed unique values from their counterparts from other nations. Hofstede found values that represent a broad tendency of managers from one nation to prefer one state of affairs over another. These work related cultural values were rooted soundly in daily life, were relatively impervious to change (Newman & Nollen, 1996) and represented the patterns of thinking; feeling; and choices which are learned throughout their lifetime (Hofstede, 2005). The results were
used to form Geert Hofstede Cultural model that included five dimensions (Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede, 1993) and fifth dimension was added later (Hofstede & Minkov, 2011).

- **Power Distance** – the degree to which people accept inequality as normal. This gauges the level of interaction between subordinates and their superiors. High power distance indicates avoidance in questioning superiors while low power distance allows for the questioning of superiors.

- **Individualism/Collectivism** – the degree to which people in a country prefer to act as individuals rather than groups. In individual countries people prefer to act in their own interest and the interest of their immediate family while in collectivist society’s people are defined by group action.

- **Masculinity/Femininity** – the extent to which values like assertiveness, performance, success and competition (masculinity) prevail over tender values such as quality of life, maintaining relationships, service, care for the weak and solidarity (femininity).

- **Uncertainty Avoidance** – the degree to which people in a country accept or structure risk. In high uncertainty avoidance cultures people are anxious of unstructured, unclear or unpredictable situations and in low uncertainty avoidance cultures people readily accept those circumstances.

- **Long term orientation** – Gauges a peoples response to instant versus delayed reward.

These national cultures represented the state of affairs within a particular country. This meant that a manager moving from Australia to Malawi will need cognizant of the different work related values that managers and employees in Malawi hold in order to manage as effectively as possible. Hofstede’s work on cultural dimension was the first study of its kind to assess the relativity of management. His work is still used by many researchers to conduct cross cultural comparisons in different nations (Minkov, 2007). Despite the popularity and use of the Hofstede model in management literature, his work has been cited as consisting of a number of limitations. Sampling is highlighted as a main issue in the data collection, his questionnaire only sampled IBM employees and did not consider the effect of organisational culture on the result, and the sampling also excluded the
communist and African nations. The premise of Hofstede’s culture comparison also made each individual representative of their particular nation while discounting issues of influence such as class, income, mode of development to inform the results (Berigiel, et al., 2012). Even with the limitations, Hofstede’s results have been replicated and added to by other authors in the study of cultural values.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997) building on Hofstede’s work commissioned a study on the work values of 30,000 employees from forty three different countries. He proposed the seven dimensions of culture. Some dimensions are similar to the work of Hofstede and others expand on the work of Hofstede.

- **Universalism versus Particularism** - The Universalist approach is roughly what is good and right can always be defined and always applies. In other words, universalism proposes that the law should be put over relationships. While particularism cultures focuses its attention on relativism and places relationships over the law.

- **Individualism versus Communitarianism** - Refers to whether people see themselves as an individual or as part of a group. Individualism only includes making decisions based on ones best interest while collectivism proposes that the decisions of the individual should be in the best interests of the group.

- **Neutral versus Emotional** – refers to the nature of our interactions. Do cultures promote objective and detached interaction or is expressing emotion acceptable.

- **Specific Versus Diffuse** – Are business interactions prescribed by contract or relationships?

- **Achievement versus Ascription** – Achievement refers to being judged on what you have accomplished recently while ascription means you are judged by the status is attributed you by birth, kinship, gender, age, connections and your educational record.

- **Attitudes to time** - Some consider past achievement of no importance while other societies give past achievement more precedence.
• **Attitudes to environment** – Some cultures focus on the world as being more powerful than the individual while others focus on the origins of vice and virtue that reside with the person.

Hofstede and Trompenaars are not the only theorists on cultural dimensions, other authors have also tackled cultural dimension in their research, that is either similar in nature or have added to the works of Hofstede. (House, et al., 2004; Fontaine, et al., 2005; Minkov, 2007). Dimensions of culture have been the subject of numerous literature on management and cross-cultural project management.

**Table 1: Cultural dimensions by main authors**

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<th>Cultural Dimensions</th>
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<td>Individualism vs collectivism</td>
<td>• Focus on individual or group</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Uncertainty avoidance</td>
<td>• Attitude toward risk, complexity and ambiguity</td>
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<td>Masculinity</td>
<td>• Differentiation of male female roles</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Neutral vs emotional</td>
<td>• Objective or emotional</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Short term vs Long term</td>
<td>• Perspective of investment and returns</td>
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<td>Achievement vs ascription</td>
<td>• Status performance, assignment of rewards</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Attitudes to time</td>
<td>• Emphasis of past, present or future</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Internal vs External</td>
<td>• Ego vs society</td>
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2.5 **Organisations and work-related national culture values.**

Often apparent in the national culture debate is the role of organisational culture. Previous studies show that organisational culture can have a significant effect on how a company
organizational culture also been identified as having a significant impact upon the values that employees espouse. Successful companies can imprint their values on their employees (Schneider, 1987).

Organizational culture has been defined as “the shared values, beliefs, norms expectations and assumptions which function like a glue holding employees together to stimulate employee performance and commitment” (Schien, 2010). Organizational cultures are created by the business through mission statements and guidelines that direct the conduct of employees. The definition emphasizes the time gap between national culture and organizational culture, with national culture being learned at an early age and organizational culture being subscribed to when a person reaches employment.

The effect of organizational culture on national culture has been mixed. Nazarian (2013) tested the impact of national culture on organizational culture in the private sector of Iran using Hofstede’s four dimensions. The findings revealed that organization culture had insignificant effect on national culture. Melingo et al (1989) found that workers were more satisfied when an organizations culture was similar to their own values. This is line with the assertion by Liu and fellows (2008) who found that organizational cultures can be consistent with a national cultures. Kogut and Singh (1988) also found that organizational cultures were highly influenced by the national culture values of the management teams.

2.6 Theoretical value of work-related values

The popularity of cultural dimensions in the field of management has not been without its limitations. Many authors have pointed to the functional application of the dimensions in their work (Berigiel, et al., 2012; Brewer & Venaik, 2012; Carr & Pudelko, 2006; Newman & Nollen, 1996). The issue lies particularly with the expansive nature of the research involved in obtaining national values. Ultimately, national values are obtained by drawing out pattern from a small sample population in a country. The country may have a high power distance index score but there is likely to be a significant number of cases where people in the country are exceptions to the rule; this provides the basis for those to ask whether any meaningful predictions can be made with national work-related values (Brewer & Venaik, 2012). Authors point fact that many managers from different cultural backgrounds have been successful in a different cultural environments. For example,
Chinese managers have successfully managed projects in America despite the countries having different cultural dimensions. Situations such as these are pointed to as evidence that managers are not slaves to their cultural orientation (Jacob, 2005).

This theoretical opposition to national culture depends on whether a person takes a view of convergence, divergence or crossvergence. Convergence theory is based on the belief that the increasing globalization is bound to bring about a homogenous culture between the management classes and therefore differences in work values are likely to diminish; leading managers from each country to adopt best practices in management regardless of nationality (Carr & Pudelko, 2006). The validation of convergence theory is based on economic imperatives and market forces; managers that do not follow best management practices regardless of national culture will be eliminated by market forces. The convergence of national values are being accelerated by the transfer/ sharing of best practices in technology and education (Gentry & Sparks, 2012). The convergence theory is heavily reliant on the economic imperative of industrialization and growth as propelling national culture convergence. While the theories of convergence are supported on a basis of economic and competitive pressures; divergence theorists state that culture is not driven by economic forces. Divergence theorist state that despite the economic success of a country, the values of the workforce remains the same. Proponents divergence do not fully discount the effect of converge in national values but they say that any convergence in national values would ultimately take a long time to be fully realized between nations. They point to numerous instances where countries that are close to each other and trade frequently, still hold differing national values (Gilmore, et al., 2013). The triumvirate, are those that support cross-vergence theory which states that economic and market factors combine with embedded cultural values to create something distinct and different from both. Literature dealing with convergence also holds an equal footing with the two other theories. All authors in culture and management agree that culture is a dynamic concept and is ever evolving (Carr & Pudelko, 2006; Gilmore, et al., 2013; Gentry & Sparks, 2012).

The theoretical underpinnings of National culture values are important because not all authors agree with the basic assumptions that underlie the national culture context.
Beyond the relatively mild disagreement between followers of convergence, divergence and Cross-vergence lie a greater disagreement with two schools of thought that entirely differ with entire concept of national culture. These schools are referred to as currents. The universalistic current proposes that management has nothing to do with national culture and that managers is governed by objective practices and autonomous actors (Peters and Waterman, 1982). The universalistic current is contrary to the large body of research that has shown the effect of culture on management. The second current, the emic current, suggests that culture is characterized by its uniqueness and that no common dimensions or direct comparisons can be identified between cultures. The limitation of this current only makes its proposition and does not have any tools or indicators to back its assertions (Chapman, 1996).

2.7 Functional value of work related values

However as Jacobs (2005) states that the oft-neglected feature in cross-cultural management is that “cultural diversity can exist internationally or within a single country – the most significant studies in national cultures treat countries as homogenous entities. Jacobs’s statement is part of a call for more research to further functionalize the operation of national values in the field of management. It also marks the deficiency inherent in impact cultural dimensions can have on management. It is entirely possible for dimension to have little predictability in a particular country and therefore the importance to the project managers is minimal at best (Skeenkamp, 2001). Some studies test the difference between national cultures without assessing the impact of those differences and whether they will have any functional value on the project manager (Berigiel, et al., 2012). In the landscape of cultural dimensions and project management in particular, exists an argument within an argument. Firstly, is the aspect of culture dimensions and whether multiple culture dimensions can exist within a country and if so does a foreign project manager gain any relevance from a generic labeling. Secondly, is the relevance/importance that cultural dimension have of the success of the project. These factors ultimately inform a project manager where limited time, resources available in restrict the number of priorities a project manager can handle. Jacobs (2005) highlights the very important aspect of getting the opinions and perceptions of project managers
from the host country to assess whether there are patterns exist. Hofstede (2011) admits the short comings national work related values as a predictor of what is going to happen but states that the dimensions can predict on is likely to encounter in a given nation.

2.8 Work-related values in project management.

Disagreement over the progress of national culture work values has not stopped its use nor its emergence in project management literature (Tone, 2005). Projects of all different sizes and scopes are now done by people that come from different cultures and the literature on national cultures in project management is growing (Javernick-Will & Levitt, 2009). The bulk of the literature in cross cultural project management issues has been concerned with comparing two or more project from different nationalities and usually from the perspective of global national projects.

Adair and Jaegar (2013) researched cross cultural project management in in the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries (GCC) by exploring the influence of western project parties from the hosts perspective; finding that despite the differences in cultures host perceived the found a positive influence of western project parties.

Shore and Cross (2003) studied two major large scale projects by exploring the role of politics and culture. Findings conducted through interviews at project sites in Europe and the United States found that Hofstede’s culture dimensions were significant project management factors. “They influenced issues that included management structure, leadership style, geographic distribution of work, long-term budgetary commitment, benefit/cost management, eligibility of participants, family and educational issues, facilities location, and data access”.

Reese-Caldwell and Pinnington (2013) investigated the national culture and integrity of planning processes between British and Arab project Managers in the United Arab Emirates and highlighted working relationships, communication and collaboration as influencing project success.

Chao (2007) examined the impact of managing technology transfer from the U.S to china in the face of rapidly growing global competition; Communication, leadership and understanding were cited as hurdles to project success.
Tone’s (2005) focus was the investigation of the impact of cross cultural-communication on construction projects from the perspective of foreign project managers working in Samoa. He found that there were significant differences that required project managers understand the social and community lives of native Samoans. Factors such as community interaction, conflict resolution, communication and leadership styles were essential to the project.

Ranf (2010) focused on the importance of cultural differences in project management and found that multicultural teams face the challenges when operating across borders in a dynamic business environment characterized by high levels of uncertainty.

A number of authors have also researched national culture dimensions as a variable that affects project aims in project management:

Liu and Meng (2015) explored how culture influences a contractor's risk management in a case study of four companies in China. The findings revealed that project risks were perceived and managed differently in different national cultures and emphasized the need to incorporate national culture into risk management practices.

Milosevic (2002) drawing on the old adage “when in Rome, do as the Romans do” highlighted the importance of project managers recognizing their managerial style in relation to counterparts of a different culture. The study highlighted avoidance, resistance or rejection that can occur if project managers are not properly in tune with their counterparts. Their research suggests strategies to ensure that time was not wasted on misunderstandings and missed opportunities.

National culture dimensions have affected issues such as effective teamwork; which is essential to all phases of the project life cycle, teamwork requires constant communication between all project stakeholders from different cultural backgrounds (Zulch, 2014; Besner & Hobbs, 2012). Studies on national culture dimensions also state that differences in values can lead to problems of integration and cooperation. While
working with people in the same values promotes trustworthiness, differences can lead to negative associations in the form of confrontation (Sarala & Vaara, 2010; M2 Communications Ltd, 2007). Cultural values are deeply held by peoples of different nations, the mishandling of these differences can affect motivation, trust and failure to build sustainable sources of competitive advantage (Smirich, 1983).

Rarely have work-related values been couched in the form of project success. Taking into account the underlying theoretical debate that is inherent in the discussion of worked related values and its practical uses.

Jetu and Riedel (2013) researched cultural values influencing project team success. Their research purpose was to identify relationships between cultural values and factors of project team success of information systems in Ethiopia. They suggest that project managers should give priority to:

- Personal focused values to enhance project team performance and/or
- Socially focused values to improve team atmosphere.

Chipulu et al (2014) explored the impact of cultural values on the importance individuals assign to project success/ failure factors. Their research respondents were practitioners from Brazil, China, Greece, Nigeria, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Their findings confirmed the importance individuals assign to project success and failure factors are dependent on age, gender and cultural values measured by Hofstede’s individualism masculinity, power distance and uncertainty avoidance dimensions.

Eberlein (2008) explored culture as a critical success factors for global project managers in multi-national IT service projects. Though his findings did not use national cultures as a framework it did confirm that communication and culture management are essential to the understanding in international projects. Further findings illuminated, that while culture was important it did not automatically increase project success. The author suggests further research should avoid using a single entity and a single sector in the analysis of culture.
The trend linking cultural values and project success is essential if project managers are going to subscribe to the idea. The limitations of time and resources require that some sort of value be attributed to work-related dimensions.

Table 2: Cultural factors influencing projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Project Management Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adair and Jaegar (2013)</td>
<td>positive influence of managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Shore &amp; Cross, 2003)</td>
<td>management structure, leadership style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Rees-Caldwell &amp; Pinnington, 2013)</td>
<td>working relationships, communication and collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Chao, 2007)</td>
<td>Communication, leadership and understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Liu, et al., 2015)</td>
<td>risk management perceptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Jetu &amp; Riedl, 2013)</td>
<td>team atmosphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Eberlein, 2008)</td>
<td>communication and culture management</td>
</tr>
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</table>

2.9 Work-related values as a critical success factor

Project success like culture has been a source of ambiguity as neither project managers nor researchers agree on what constitutes project success. According to Pinto and Slevin (2006, p. 57) project success has “remained ambiguously defined both in the project management literature and, indeed, often within the psyches of project managers”. The ambiguity stems from the multitude of stakeholders and their perceptions of success.

Traditionally project success was subscribed by technical factors and represented in the triangular objectives of time, cost and quality targets. The popularity framing project success within the triangle of factors are a victims of convenience rather that unquestionable truth (Boyton & Zmud, 1986). The change is reflected in the way project success has been understood over time. Turner and Muller (2005, p. 58) describe the movement in perceptions of project success, “the 1970s project success focused on implementation, measuring time, cost…..functionality improvements and systems for delivery. The 1980s and 1990’s saw the incorporation of quality of planning, critical
success factors and hand-over which took into account organisational and stakeholder perspectives that are still popular and used today”. Critical success factors are a main tool of project management professionals today in ensuring that a project is completed on time and within budget. To a project manager project success can be taken as a uni-dimensional construct concerned with meeting budget, time and quality or; a complex, multi-dimensional concept encompassing many more attributes (Prabhakar, 2008).

It is now generally accepted that measures of success should go beyond this traditional approach and encompass a more holistic approach to framing project success. Recognizing that project success needed more than just the time quality and scope objectives were illustrated by Eberlin (2010) when he said

“If a project fails to meet an impossibly tight budget, but is efficiently delivered without wastage, to what extent should it be said to have ‘failed’? Equally, a project which was completed ahead of schedule, but involved frequent delays and much rework may be represented as successful, but has in reality cost more than it should and tied-up precious resources which could have been diverted for use elsewhere” (p. 243)

Boyton and Zmund (1986, p. 17) describe critical success factors as “those few things that must go well to ensure success for a manager or organisation and therefore they represent those managerial or enterprise areas that must be given special attention to bring about high performance”. Critical success factors have also been defined as a limited number of characteristics or variables “that have a direct and serious impact on the effectiveness, efficiency and viability of an organisation’s program, or project” (Business Dictionary, 205). Westerveld (2003) describes a critical success factor as a factor that project managers can pull to increase the likelihood of achieving a successful outcome.

The generation of a critical success factor requires a three step process according to (Prabhakar, 2008)

1. Generation of critical success factors - what does it take to be successful?
2. Refinement of critical success factors- What should the organisations goals be in respect to the critical success factors?

3. Identification of measures - How will the organisation know if it has been successful?

In line with findings of Eberlein (2008) critical factors themselves do not directly affect project outcomes, usually a combination of factors through the project life cycles result in project success or failure. Further, the uniqueness of projects means that not all factors are applicable to each project (Belassi & Tukel, 1996).

In regards to cultural values, Scott- young and Samson (2004) in their research, found that people management drives project success more that technical issues. This is in line with a number of project management literature that highlights; that despite project managements attempt to define project success, numerous project fall short of their objectives and sometimes fail completely (Amponsah, 2012). People are the ultimate drivers of project success and therefore the triangular objectives of project must be incorporated with the personal objectives and feeling of the people involved. Management attention should be focused on creating the kind of environment that facilitates successful project outcomes.

The result of globalization and interaction has exposed the longs standing task focus v people focus approach to project management and project success. Highlighting the role of the project manager as a critical success factor himself. Turner and Muller (2005) states that despite the recognition of the central role the project manager holds, the project manager rarely appears as a critical success factor. “This may be because most of the studies ask project managers their opinion and the respondents have not given due consideration to their own impact on project success” (p. 55).

Yazici (2009) proposes that “This means increased employee empowerment and participation & involvement of the teams, more cross-functional teamwork, more horizontal communication and caring climate, and more recognition for employees will have a positive influence on how projects successfully completed”. Meng (2015) concurs with this assertion in his research exploring the effect of relationship management on project performance in construction lamenting that the shift in management focus is in
line with the ongoing change movement from traditional ways of working to collaborative ways of working in the whole industry.

Kloppenburg and Opfer (2002) lament that there is still very little literature on the people side of project management. They classify this as soft project management which can be contrasted with hard project management. The McKinsey 7S Framework places hard skills or "Hard" elements as strategy, structure, systems that are easier to define or identify and management can directly influence. Soft elements such as shared values, skills and style are less tangible and can be more difficult to identify; these soft elements are as important as the hard elements if the organization is going to be successful (Hanafizadeh & Ravasan, 2011).

Cultural dimensions voice what is appropriate in the given context and project managers have to be aware of this to assist them in managing relationships, which in turn are linked high performance outcomes. Liu and fellows (2008) state that it is widely believed that culture impacts performance, what is less well understood is the impact mechanisms and consequences and their causal relationships are yet to be determined; which are limited by typologies and dimensions that can be restrictive.

Critical success factors are not an end in themselves; the evolution of project success is not a finite science. The goal is assessing and attempting to define project success is a sort of utopia. Taking this into account should remind managers to avoid being complacent with how they choose to assign project success. However, what can be taken from literature on project success is the clear and concise movement to include the people that carry out the project. Cultural dimensions are one way of understanding the values that those people hold, in turn, giving the manager a tool to create and conduct an environment that promotes and fosters project success.

2.10 Summary of literature review

The literature has shown the debates around national culture values and its emergence in project management in particular. Cultural dimensions remain a popular way of comparing cultures of different nations despite their inherent flaws. The stance seems to indicate that while the concept is not perfect it is the best we have to make culture more
practical to the project manager and project members. The first gap that is elucidated in the literature is the limited application of dimensions some countries, Malawi included. The second aspect is the value that these dimensions hold are still up in the air on the list of the project manager and this requires analysis in each specific context.

This forms the motivation to explore cultural values in a Malawian project management context. The breadth of cultural dimensions means this research will only deal with four of Hofstede’s dimensions

- **Power distance** – the degree to which people accept inequality as normal. This gauges the level of interaction between subordinates and their superiors. High power distance indicates avoidance in questioning superiors while low power distance allows for the questioning of superiors.

- **Individualism/Collectivism** – the degree to which people in a country prefer to act as individuals rather than groups. In individual countries people prefer to act in their own interest and the interest of their immediate family while in collectivist society’s people are defined by group action.

- **Masculinity and femininity** – the extent to which values like assertiveness, performance, success and competition (masculinity) prevail over tender values such as quality of life, maintaining relationships service care for the weak and solidarity (femininity)

- **Uncertainty avoidance** – the degree to which people in a country accept or structure risk. In high uncertainty avoidance cultures people anxious of unstructured unclear or unpredictable and in low uncertainty avoidance are tolerant, unemotional and less aggressive.

This study will also take into account the cultural factors that have been found to influence project success as expounded by the literature review. The factors that will be taken into account are:

- Leadership styles
- Management structure
- Communication
• Team atmosphere
• Risk management
• Working relationships

Cultural factors are informed by the work related dimensions. An understanding of the generic preferences of individuals engaged in Malawian projects can assist with an informed view on how project managers can conduct themselves to foster an environment that can contribute to successful project outcomes

Figure 3 Conceptual Map
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology used in this dissertation. It outlines the research philosophy, purpose, research strategy, research methods, the data collection and analysis. This chapter also deals with the validity, reliability and ethics of the results.

3.2 Research philosophy

Epistemology as Saunders et al (2012, p. 132) describes, concerns “what constitutes acceptable knowledge in field of study”. Epistemology goes right to the heart of the cultural research with principles on which researcher’s base methodologies. Contemporary research on culture in the field of project management highlights the emphasis on making culture and other similar concepts such a leadership operational to the project manager. The operationalization of culture has meant many researchers have taken a positivist stance to problems involving culture (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997; Hofstede, 1980). In positivist research strategy sphere adopts the philosophical stance of a natural scientist and assumes culture is as an independent, objective phenomenon that can be accurately observed and investigated. Researching culture from a positivist perspective presents a number of philosophical difficulties particularly for those who advocate a strict demarcation between natural and social sciences (Lee, 1991).

Hermeneutic researchers maintain there is a clear distinction between natural sciences and social sciences and, the adoption of natural science methods are unsuitable in social domains. To the hermeneutic concepts such as culture are too blurred to import deterministic variables and make law like generalizations. Because culture is an ongoing interpretation process rather than a stable structure of values and norms that should be analyzed in the social context (Noy, 2011). Approaching culture from a positivist stance distorts the concept which in turn affects the reliability of results. However, Acheampong and Mkasi (2012) warn that taking rigid stances in can constrict research instead of
enriching knowledge and students should be wary of taking a flexible philosophical approach.

The trend surrounding work-related values is to treat the concept as a tool that can be used assist performance and efficiency of management. Underlying this is pragmatic approach. The value of the knowledge exists in the practical value of the approach (Saunders, et al., 2012). This study accepts the pragmatism as its epistemology with a heavy leaning to subjectivism as its ontology. Saunders (2012) does state that ontology in the pragmatism sphere does allow for both subjectivism and observable phenomena as acceptable knowledge depending on the value that each approach brings to the information. In doing so it allows for a mixed methodological research including both quantitative and qualitative design.

3.3 Research purpose

The purpose of this study is mainly exploratory as it asks open questions to gain insight into the cultural factor that the participants are exposed. The research is also partly descriptive because one of the objective is to gain a profile of the research participant's cultural dimensions.

3.4 Research design

The study uses a single stage cross sectional survey questionnaire. This approach contain a number of advantages. Cross sectional surveys are an appropriate strategy because it saves time, protects the participants and their privacy and allows for data to be collected from directly from the target population (Saunders, et al., 2012). The effectiveness of the response rate of the cross sectional survey was increased by dispersing questionnaires through email and employing a drop of and pick up techniques. Despite these benefits there are a number of limitations to the surveys. The approach carries the risk that the participant will not understand the concepts and it ultimately relies on the goodwill of the respondent (Noy, 2011). To accommodate for these limitations the survey included the contact details of the researcher and an invitation to ask for guidance where needed. The mode is collection was manual and the used of Surveymonkey.com.
3.5 Instrumentation

The questionnaire or survey was chosen with the aim of gaining perspective from a variety of project managers across various industries in the Malawian context. The pragmatic research philosophy allows for both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. This means that the information gathered will largely be quantitative in section B with a deductive approach taken. While section C will take a more inductive approach with the analysis of the phenomena being studied (Saunders, et al., 2012). The questions are partially taken from Hofstede’s Value Survey Module (2013) that assess the cultural dimensions in this study.

The survey questionnaire has the following structure:

1. Section A:
   a. Introduction- explaining the researcher and the purpose of the research.
   b. Definitions- explained the pertinent terms that were used in the questionnaire

2. Section B:
   a. Contained questions used to assess the cultural dimensions as elucidated by Hofstede in the VSM 2013. The questions were limited to the four dimensions.

3. Section C
   a. Contained questions assessing the importance of cultural factors in regard to project success as found through the literature review.
   b. Included open-ended that requested the opinions of the survey participants

3.6 Reliability and validity

This study used a multi section researcher designed questionnaire that included questions used in from Hofstede’s and Minkov’s (2013) VSM to increase validity and reliability. The sample of respondents were carefully chosen to represent the purpose of this study. Although questionnaire was designed to be self-administered some questionnaire were administered face to face to check from validity and relevance of the data being collected. The survey allowed for the collection of a large number of
respondent for little to no cost. The researcher requested the participation of respondents by visiting workplaces and requesting the participation of individuals in project management positions. Participants were asked whether they preferred hard copy or soft copy questionnaire to facilitate compliance.

3.7 Data analysis methods

Question 1 – 5 measures central tendency of demographics using descriptive statistics. Questions 5 – 20 are the question measuring the work related value dimensions as elucidated by Hofstede in the VSM 2013 (Hofstede & Minkov, 2013).

3.7.1 Power Distance (PDI)

Power Distance is defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a society expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.

Questions assessing power distance are as follows:

- Q5 -How important would it be to you to be consulted by your boss in decisions involving your work?
- Q6 -How important would it be to you to have a boss (direct superior) you can respect?
- Q7 -How often in your experience, are subordinates afraid to contradict their boss?
- Q8 -To what extent do you agree or disagree: An organisation structure in which certain subordinates have two bosses should be avoided at all costs.

The Power Distance index formula is

\[ PDI = 35(mQ5 - mQ6) + 25(mQ7 - mQ8) + C(pd). \]

In which \( mQ5 \) is the mean score for question 5, \( mQ6 \) is the mean score for question 6 etc. \( C(pd) \) is a constant (positive or negative) that depends on the nature of the samples.

3.7.2 Individualism Index (IDV)

Individualism is the opposite of Collectivism. Individualism stands for a society in which the ties between individuals are loose: a person is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family only. Collectivism stands for a society in which people
from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which continue to protect them throughout their lifetime in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.

Questions assessing Individualism vs. Collectivism are as follows:

- Q9 - How important is it to you to have security of employment?
- Q10 - How important is it to you to have sufficient time for personal or home life?
- Q11 - How important is it to you to have a job respected by your friends and family?
- Q12 - How important is it to you to do work that is interesting?

The Individualism vs. Collectivism index formula is

\[
IDV = 35(mQ9 - mQ10) + 35(mQ11 - mQ12) + C(ic)
\]

In which \( mQ9 \) is the mean score for question 9, \( mQ10 \) is the mean score for question 10 etc. \( C(ic) \) is a constant (positive or negative) that depends on the nature of the samples.

### 3.7.3 Masculinity Index (MAS)

Masculinity is the opposite of Femininity. Masculinity stands for a society in which social gender roles are clearly distinct: men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success; women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. Femininity stands for a society in which social gender roles overlap: both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life.

Questions assessing Masculinity vs. Femininity are as follows:

- Q13 - How important is it to you to live in a desirable area?
- Q14 - How important is it to you to have pleasant people to work with?
- Q15 - How important is it to you to have chances for promotion?
- Q16 - How important is it to you to get recognition for good performance?

The index formula is

\[
MAS = 35(mQ14 - mQ16) + 35(mQ13 - mQ15) + C(mf)
\]
In which mQ14 is the mean score for question 14, mQ16 is the mean score for question 16 etc. C(mf) is a constant (positive or negative) that depends on the nature of the samples.

3.7.4 Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)

Questions assessing Masculinity vs. Femininity are as follows:

- Q17 - All in all, how often would you describe your state of health?
- Q18 - How often do you feel nervous or tense?
- Q19 - To what extent do you agree or disagree: One can be a good manager without having a precise answer to every question that a subordinate may raise about his or her work.
- Q20 - To what extent do you agree or disagree: A company's or organization's rules should not be broken - not even when the employee thinks breaking the rule would be in the organization's best interest.

The index formula is

\[
\text{UAI} = 40(mQ17 - mQ18) + 25(mQ19 - mQ20) + C(ua)
\]

In which mQ17 is the mean score for question 17, mQ18 is the mean score for question 18 etc. C(ua) is a constant (positive or negative) that depends on the nature of the samples.

Questions 20 to 30 were analyzed using a qualitative deductive approach of pattern matching. Pattern matching involves predicting a pattern of outcomes using theoretical propositions.

3.8 Ethical considerations

This subject of this study was not constructed in a sensitive manner. The subject does no damage the respondents of the survey in a physical emotional and intellectual manner. The study ensured that the confidentiality of the respondents was paramount by guaranteeing not to disperse any personal information collected. The measure taken fall into the four main research ethics principles elucidated gray which are

- Avoid harm to participants
• Ensure informed consent
• Respect the privacy of participants and
• Avoid the use of deception

3.9 Chapter summary

This chapter addressed the design and methodology of the research. The study adopts a pragmatist epistemological position and a subjectivist ontological position. The research purpose is exploratory and party descriptive. The research strategy is both deductive he data analysis is both quantitative and qualitative. The next chapter presents and discusses the data findings.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the information and data obtained from the research participants. The findings follow the structure of the distributed survey questionnaire. This chapter is divided into three main groups as presented in the questionnaire: **Section A** - deals with the demographic information collected from the sample respondents; **Section B** - deals with the findings of the cultural dimensions as elucidated by the VSM model 2013; **Section C** - deals with the importance placed on cultural values and project success in a Malawian context as answered by the research participants. The data provided in section C includes both quantitative and qualitative data.

A total of 84 invitations were sent, 38 responses were received of which one was incomplete.

*Figure 4: Invitations and total responses*

4.2 Section A – Demographic Findings

The demographic information is an essential part of any research study. The information gathered allows for comparisons between studies conducted in different contexts. The demographic information gathered here was tailored to this particular study and sought to identify factors relevant to cultural dimensions and project management. This study was concerned with finding four demographic factors. The nationality of respondents, the
amount of experience the respondents had working on projects in Malawi, the education level of respondents and the business sector of the respondents.

**Figure 5 Demographic - Nationality**

![Graph showing the nationalities of respondents with a response rate of 97.39% for Yes and 2.61% for No.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choice</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 1 identified the the nationality of the respondents. This was pertinent because cultural dimensions are ultimately rely on national cultures that are learnt at an early age. The inclusion of non malawians can skew the analysis of the results and findings of the cultural dimensions. Non-malawians they were left out when calculating the cultural dimensions. The response rate was in line with the VSM 2013 response rate of not less than 20 participants.
Question 2: ascertained the amount of experience the participants had working on projects in Malawi. This was an important factor because the respondents were questioned on their experience and perceptions in Malawian projects. The largest experience tranche was 1-5 years with 45.95%. Respondents with more than 6 years of experience accounted for 35.13%.
Question 3: Respondents represented a wide variety of sectors in the economy.
Questions 4: requested information on educational attainment. Questions surrounding educational attainment are pervasive they have no direct theoretical relevance, however they still remain valuable because they serve as a proxy for the skill and competencies. Exposure to higher education is theorized to have an influence on an individual’s knowledge and horizon of experiences and therefore becomes an important part of the research outcomes. The majority of the respondent in this study have completed higher education. A completed Bachelor’s degree amount to 41.67 percent and 30.36 percent have completed a Master’s degree.
4.3 Section B – Cultural dimension findings

The following section presents questions and calculations required to find the cultural dimensions of this study.

The Power Distance index formula is

\[ PDI = 35(mQ5 - mQ6) + 25(mQ7 - mQ8) + C(pd). \]

In which \( mQ5 \) is the mean score for question 5, \( mQ6 \) is the mean score for question 6 etc.

\[ PDI = 35(1.49 - 1.70) + 25(3.59-2.30) + 0 \]

\[ = 24.15 \]

The power distance is the extent to which people accept or expect power to be distributed equally. The range is between 0 and 100; the lower the score the greater the equality demanded by society and the higher the score the greater the inequality accepted by the person. In this study the respondent exhibit a score of 24.15 showing that there is greater equality demanded by subordinates in the work place.
Figure 9 Question 5 responses

Q5 How important would it be to you to be consulted by your boss in decisions involving your work?

Answered: 37  Skipped: 6

![Bar chart for Question 5 responses]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Weighted Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(no label)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1.49</td>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Of utmost importance</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>54.25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>43.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of moderate importance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of little importance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of very little or no importance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 10 Question 6 responses

Q6 How important would it be to you to have a boss (direct superior) you can respect?

Answered: 37  Skipped: 6

![Bar chart for Question 6 responses]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(no label)</td>
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<th>Weighted Average</th>
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</thead>
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<td>10</td>
<td>51.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>32.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of moderate importance</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of little importance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of very little or no importance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 11: Question 7 responses

Q7 How often in your experience, are subordinates afraid to contradict their boss?

Answered: 37  Skipped: 0

![Bar chart for Q7 responses]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Usually</th>
<th>Always</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(no label)</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
<td>13.51%</td>
<td>21.82%</td>
<td>55.76%</td>
<td>8.11%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 12: Question 8 responses

Q8 To what extent do you agree or disagree: An organisation structure in which certain subordinates have two bosses should be avoided at all costs?

Answered: 37  Skipped: 0

![Bar chart for Q8 responses]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>strongly agree</th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>undecided</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>strongly disagree</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
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<td>35.14%</td>
<td>32.43%</td>
<td>10.81%</td>
<td>10.81%</td>
<td>10.81%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Individualism-collectivism index

The index formula is

\[ IDV = 35(mQ9 - mQ10) + 35(mQ11 - mQ12) + C(ic) \]

\[ IDV = 35(1.54 - 1.95) + 35(2.27 - 1.54) + 0 \]

\[ IDV = 11.2 \]

The Individualism index shows the degree to which Individualism stands for a society in which the ties between individuals are loose: a person is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family only. Collectivism stands for a society in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which continue to protect them throughout their lifetime in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.

The range similarly is between 0 and 100; the lower the score the more collective the society is and the higher the score the more individual the society. In this study the respondents a score of 11.2 showing that they have an extremely collective leaning.

Figure 13: Question 9 responses
Figure 14: Question 10 responses

Q10 How important is it to you to have sufficient time for personal or home life?

![Bar chart showing responses to Q10](chart.png)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Little importance</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate importance</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of utmost importance</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Weighted Average: 1.95

Figure 15: Question 11 responses

Q11 How important is it to you to have a job respected by your friends and family?

![Bar chart showing responses to Q11](chart.png)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Least important</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little importance</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate importance</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of utmost importance</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Weighted Average: 2.27
Masculinity femininity index

The index formula is

\[ \text{MAS} = 35(mQ14 - mQ16) + 35(mQ13 - mQ15) + C(mf) \]
\[ \text{MAS} = 35(1.76 - 1.62) + 35(1.70 - 1.71) + 0 \]
\[ \text{MAS} = 4.55 \]

Masculinity is the opposite of Femininity. Masculinity stands for a society in which social gender roles are clearly distinct: men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success; women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. Femininity stands for a society in which social gender roles overlap: both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life.

The range is between 0 and 100; the lower the score the more feminine traits the society hold the higher the score the more masculine traits the society holds. In this study the
respondent exhibit score of 4.55 which suppose feminine traits of modesty, tenderness e.t.c.

**Figure 17: Question 13 responses**

**Figure 18: Question 14 responses**
Figure 19: Question 15 responses

Q15 How important is it to you to have chances for promotion?
Answered: 36  Skipped: 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance Level</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Weighted Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(no label)</td>
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<td>1.47</td>
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<tr>
<td>of utmost importance</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very important</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of moderate importance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of little importance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of very little or no importance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 20: Question 16 responses

Q16 How important is it to you to get recognition for good performance?
Answered: 37  Skipped: 0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance Level</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Weighted Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>very important</td>
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<tr>
<td>of little importance</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of very little or no importance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Uncertainty avoidance index

The index formula is

\[ UAI = 40(mQ17 - mQ18) + 25(mQ19 - mQ20) + C(ua) \]

\[ UAI = 40(1.53 - 3.00) + 25(2.30 - 3.16) + 160 \]

\[ UAI = 79.7 \]

Uncertainty Avoidance is defined as the extent to which the members of institutions and organizations within a society feel threatened by uncertain, unknown, ambiguous, or unstructured situations.

The scores are between 0 and 100; the lower the score the more comfortable the society is with unstructured ambiguous and situations. The higher the score the more threatened the society feels in those situations. A score of 79.7 indicates the respondent have a high uncertainty avoidance showing that they try to avoid uncertain, unknown and ambiguous situations.

*Figure 21: Question 17 responses*
Figure 22: Question 18 responses

Q18 How often do you feel nervous or tense?

Answered: 37    Skipped: 0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>always</th>
<th>usually</th>
<th>sometimes</th>
<th>seldom</th>
<th>never</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Weighted Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(no label)</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>18.92%</td>
<td>62.16%</td>
<td>18.92%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 23: Question 19 responses

Q19 To what extent do you agree or disagree: One can be a good manager without having a precise answer to every question that a subordinate may raise about his or her work?

Answered: 37    Skipped: 0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>strongly agree</th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>undecided</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>strongly disagree</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Weighted Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(no label)</td>
<td>27.03%</td>
<td>45.95%</td>
<td>2.70%</td>
<td>18.92%</td>
<td>5.41%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4 Section C – Importance and aspects of Malawian work Culture

Figure 25: Question 21 responses
Figure 26: Question 22 responses

**Q22** In your experience: How important is people management in regard to meeting a projects goals in Malawi?

Answered: 36  Skipped: 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>of utmost importance</th>
<th>very important</th>
<th>of moderate importance</th>
<th>of little importance</th>
<th>of very little or no importance</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Weighted Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(no label)</td>
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<td>50.09%</td>
<td>2.78%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 27: Question 23 responses

**Q23** How important is it for foreign managers to understand Malawian culture?

Answered: 36  Skipped: 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>of utmost importance</th>
<th>very important</th>
<th>of moderate importance</th>
<th>of little importance</th>
<th>of little or no importance</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Weighted Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(no label)</td>
<td>36.11%</td>
<td>61.11%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>2.78%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1.69</td>
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</table>
The measurement of project success is an essential aspect of whether soft skills are taken into account in Malawian projects. Softs skill are relatively undefined are considered to be just as important as technical measures. The responses show that while there is a significant portion of project accounting for the soft aspects of project management; the majority 63 percent still only take into account technical hard aspect in their consideration of project success.
The factors here were collected from the literature review and past research findings that considered cultural dimension and how they affected projects. The goal was to judge how important each factor was to project success. On a scale of 1-5 with one being the most important and five being of little importance. The responses from the participants show that culture is very important to project success in Malawi. The average mean of all the factor is 1.59 and most important risk factor is communication with a mean of 1.83.
Mission statements, policies, and procedures are some of the tools used to create an organisation's culture. This question was rendered too assess the effectiveness of organisational culture in Malawian projects. There is a distinct difference between national cultures and organisational cultures. The literature suggests organisational cultures are embedded in national culture. With a mean of 2.91 the respondents regarded the mission statement policies and procedure as having minimal effect in creating an organisation's culture.
The definitions of best practice management techniques was given in the preamble to the questionnaire. The question assessed the malleability of Malawian to the new and different techniques. 67 percent of the respondents said they had difficulty implementing management techniques in Malawi. The response to this question was supplemented by an open ended question that requested the participants to give their opinions on why they thought this was the case.
This question was framed in this manner to allow respondents to canvas their experience working in Malawi. 74 percent of the respondent either strongly agreed or agreed with the assertion that Malawian culture should be a critical success factor for a foreign project manager.
**Q29 Are there any cultural factors you think that would be important to a foreign project manager in Malawi?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>respect there beliefs and way of life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>prayers, rituals, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The passive and overly respective and nice nature of our culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Not sure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>It is about working together. A joint effort and allowing your employees to understand that &quot;we&quot; are a team and each member is a vital and valued component. Unfortunately, in most cases foreign project managers may come off as more superior, more knowledgeable, overbearing and unapproachable. I think overcoming some gender role problems also play an important factor, evaluating the work structure and providing equal opportunities to female and male employees. Encouraging an open and transparent work atmosphere, the Malawian culture allows people to be submissive at time and afraid to voice their concerns. Importance of work ethic, helping people understand what is expected of them and how that is measured and rewarded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Language and how to address locals Locals perception of foreign managers and to always respect locals especially if they are subordinate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>A foreign Project Manager just needs to understand how people make up decisions pertaining to their cultural beliefs as these beliefs build up a person and contribute to their reaction to different situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>must embrace our malawian culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Malawian are not assertive or proactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Tribal family values and language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Malawians are very easy to work with and take direction well which I think would be important to a foreign project manager. It does however mean that they less likely to take initiate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The open ended question allowed respondents to voice their opinions on what other cultural factors would be important to a foreign project manager provided some surprising insight. Issues that were canvased by the participants included:

**Leadership style**

- The way he/she speaks to people, respondents highlighted the need for a manager to take a diplomatic approach and not be to bossy or brash in their encounters with Malawians. Some respondents suggest that messages conveyed in a wrong manner will not be heard and might result in frustration.
• Being respectful of other people was mentioned, so were the managers need to be aware of ritual and belief systems in Malawi.

• Respondent number 6 states that the most foreign managers think of themselves as more superiors and can be overbearing and unapproachable – which directly fits in line with the need for a project manager to relate to subordinates.

Death and extended family

• An understanding of the way death is dealt with by employees. Many Malawians have extended families and death usually requires that people are seen to support the bereaved. This may mean that employees are absent from work for a period of time. This may occur in even in the case of sickness to an extended family member.

Gender roles

• Gender roles are different from western counterparts. One respondent laments about the way women dress in the workplace. Beyond that making sure there are equal opportunities for women in the work place. Respondent 19 states there persists an attitude in Malawi that women can’t be good bosses or project managers.

Rewards and motivation

• A number of respondents highlighted that compensation of employees are directly related the low motivation of employees on projects.

Passivity

• A number of respondents lament that Malawians are not proactive, usually passive and do not take initiative. Respondent number 3 describes Malawian culture as passive and overly respectful. Respondent number 6 expands on this and says because Malawians are submissive they are afraid to voice their concerns.
Question 30 asked respondents for any suggestions regarding the research. While most supported the research with the research topic other reiterated pointed that had been espoused in the previous question. The most telling response was number 11 who said that cultural structures need to be followed otherwise projects will be frustrated.

4.5 Chapter summary

The results of this chapter were presented in line with the methodology outline in chapter 3. Over 90 percent of the respondents were Malawian. 81 percent of the respondents had between 1- 10 years working on project in Malawi. The sample size was representative of a wide range of business sectors in the country.
The cultural dimensions exhibited by the respondents include a low Power Distance Index. An extremely high collective stance, exhibiting feminine society characteristics and high uncertainty avoidance.

Respondents regard cultural factors of very importantly. All factor score very low mean averages. They also view cultural and people management as essential to project management in the country. Beyond that they suggest other cultural factor that are critical to project management in the country.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Culture remains the chasm that separates the way humans choose to act. In management the culture has taken center stage in ensuring that managers are cognizant of cultural aspects of different nations. The narrative has been that conducting oneself in a culturally sensitive manner can contribute to the success of the endeavor (Eberlein, 2008). The expectation of economic growth coinciding with the expansion of project growth in Malawi is likely to coincide with increasing interactions between people of different cultures. Malawi is not an exception to the little research that has been done to codify the cultural values in African counties (Amponsah, 2012).

Recommendations work-related values in Malawi

The shortfall of all cultural dimensions has been the predictability. This study sought to identity the four dimensions of national culture as power distance, Individualism, Uncertainty avoidance and Masculinity in Malawian projects (Hofstede & Minkov, 2011). Impliedly, this research sought to prove whether these dimensions were useful anticipating the work related behavior of project professional in Malawi. The findings show that project professionals in Malawi show low power distance highly collectivist, feminine societies with high uncertainty avoidance. This is in line with the responses given by the questionnaire participants.

Power distance in Malawian projects

Power distance is closely related to leadership styles and management structures. Project managers must expect that employees prefer to work as cooperative where conflict resolution is done through compromise and negotiation. Management structures tend to be decentralized where employees only report to one supervisor. There is a democratic emphasis placed on leadership style where subordinates value participation and consultation in the decision making of their superiors (Elena, 2010; Hofstede & Minkov, 2011). Some respondents referred directly to these aspects in the questionnaire when they pointed to foreign project managers seeing themselves as superior, overbearing and unapproachable. Other respondents also concurred with the finds by saying that foreign project managers must handle issues diplomatically and not be brash.
Collectivism in Malawian projects

Respondents also show a high degree of collectivism. They value jobs that allow for sufficient personal and family time. Extended family and friends hold a large influence on their employment life and the security of their jobs is ultimately tied to external family (Berigiel, et al., 2012; Hofstede & Minkov, 2011). Respondents showed that collectivism by mentioning the need for managers to be cognizant of tribal family values and understanding the needs of employees when it comes to the sickness or death of relatives and other extended family members.

Femininity in Malawian projects

Respondents show more feminine than masculine traits as elucidated by Hofstede. These traits are manifest themselves as modesty, tenderness and concern with the quality of life (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede & Minkov, 2011). Employees will place high importance on recognition for their job performance, working relationships with other employees are given high priority. Therefore communication in the respectful manner is essential to the maintenance relationships. Employees will exhibit a passive nature in an attempt to avoid confrontation with peers or superiors. A number of respondents referred to passivity in Malawian projects particularly when it comes to voicing concerns.

Uncertainty Avoidance in Malawian projects

Malawian project participants show a high uncertainty avoidance which indicates that they feel uncomfortable with unstructured, unknown or unusual situations. High uncertainty societies will try to minimize unstructured situations with strict rules and on a philosophical and religious level, by belief in absolute truth (Chao, 2007) (Fontaine, et al., 2005). Respondents to the survey state religious prayers and religion and rituals as important aspect of work values. Employees will follow the company’s rules strictly but feel tense about the work tense and insecure in the work environment. Competition between employees in the workplace can exasperate insecurity that can manifest itself in the form of jealousy and back biting. A number of respondents refer to jealousy as an aspect that a foreign project manager should be aware in Malawian projects.
The cultural values in project management are considered of utmost importance to the success project in Malawian environment. That is not to say that projects will fail if the not followed to the letter but as one respondent puts it is likely to “frustrate” the intended goals and objectives (Eberlein, 2008). A project manager will have to focus on more than just technical aspects of time cost and scope. Respondents show that non-technical measures of project are still not widely used as measures of project success. An important aspect is that all cultural factors generated from the literature review received low mean score that indicate the priority that should be accorded to them. There are some salient cultural traits that can be extracted from the responses. Respondents refer to jealousy, passivity and inability to voice concerns.

Cross-cultural project management research

In regard to this studies placement in the field of cross-cultural project management research. This study has validated some of the theoretical stances in regard to organisations culture. Respondents in the questionnaire support the assertion that missions’ statements, policies and procedures have little effect on the implementation of organisational values.

Recommendations

- Cultural management should be a critical success factor for any foreign project manager.
- Project success criteria in Malawi should be expanded to include the soft aspects of projects.

Recommendations for further study

- The limitation of this study is that it does not encapsulate the entire spectrum of cultural dimensions proposed by Hofstede or other authors. Given the findings of this study, it is recommended that further research applies other dimensions to projects in Malawi.
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Chaiyabutr, T., 2000. Work-related values of Indonesian and Thai graduate student. La Verne, California: University of La Verne.


National Work-Related Dimensions and Project Success

1. Exploring national work-related cultural dimensions and project success in Malawi

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Bolton University
Phone: +(265) 994 973 933
Email: Zactembo@yahoo.com

Description
This research aims to explore and consider the work-related cultural influences on project success in Malawi. This research is being conducted as a requirement for a degree of Master of Science in Project Management.

Expected Results
The information from this research will contribute to the knowledge in the area of project management in Malawi.

Confidentiality
Participants will not be identifiable in any way by the data collected. I will be directly involved in each stage of the research process and no identifying characteristic will be used. All data will be pooled into on database, making it impossible for any individual to be identified. The results will be published as part of my final dissertation.

Voluntary participation
Your participation in this questionnaire is completely voluntary. You are under no obligation to participate and there will be no negative consequences attributed to you. If you choose to participate you are free to withdraw from participation at any time during the study. This questionnaire should not take you more than fifteen minutes to complete.

Questions/ Further information
This survey asks you your opinions on the role culture dimensions and project management success. If you have any queries or concerns, please feel free to contact me by the mobile or email provided.

Concerns/Complaints
If you have any concern or complaints about the ethical conduct of this research, you should contact the University of Bolton, Off campus department at the Malawi Institute of Management, Lilongwe.
Thank you in advance for your invaluable participation in my research.
National Work-Related Dimensions and Project Success

2. DEFINITION OF TERMS USED IN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

Culture
The sum total of beliefs knowledge, attitudes of mind and customs to which people are exposed during their social conditioning.

Critical Success Factor
A characteristic or variable that has a direct and serious impact on the effectiveness, efficiency and viability of an organisation program, or project.

Best Practice
A method or technique that has consistently shown results superior to those achieved with other means, and that is used as a benchmark.

Risk Management
The identification, analysis, assessment, control, and avoidance, minimization, or elimination of unacceptable risks.
1. Are you Malawian?
   - Yes
   - No

2. How many years of experience do you have working on projects in Malawi?

3. What line of business do you work in?

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
# National Work-Related Dimensions and Project Success

## 4. SECTION B

### PART A

5. How important would it be to you to be consulted by your boss in decisions involving your work?

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<tr>
<th>Of utmost importance</th>
<th>Very important</th>
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6. How important would it be to you to have a boss (direct superior) you can respect?

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7. How often in your experience, are subordinates afraid to contradict their boss?

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<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Usually</th>
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8. To what extent do you agree or disagree: An organisation structure in which certain subordinates have two bosses should be avoided at all costs?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
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### PART B

9. How important is it to you to have security of employment?

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10. How important is it to you to have sufficient time for personal or home life?

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</table>
11. How important is it to you to have a job respected by your friends and family?

- of utmost importance
- very important
- of moderate importance
- of little importance
- of very little or no importance

12. How important is it to you to do work that is interesting?

- of utmost importance
- very important
- of moderate importance
- of little importance
- of very little or no importance

PART C

13. How important is it to you to live in a desirable area?

- of utmost importance
- very important
- of moderate importance
- of little importance
- of very little or no importance

14. How important is it to you to have pleasant people to work with?

- of utmost importance
- very important
- of moderate importance
- of little importance
- of little or no importance

15. How important is it to you to have chances for promotion?

- of utmost importance
- very important
- of moderate importance
- of little importance
- of very little or no importance

16. How important is it to you to get recognition for good performance?

- of utmost importance
- very important
- of moderate importance
- of little importance
- of very little of no importance

PART D

17. All in all, How often would you describe your state of health?

- very good
- good
- fair
- poor
- very poor
18. How often do you feel nervous or tense?

- always
- usually
- somtimes
- seldom
- never

19. To what extent do you agree or disagree: One can be a good manager without having a precise answer to every question that a subordinate may raise about his or her work?

- strongly agree
- agree
- undecided
- disagree
- strongly disagree

20. To what extent do you agree or disagree: A company’s or organization’s rules should not be broken - not even when the employee thinks breaking the rule would be in the organisation’s best interest.

- strongly agree
- agree
- undecided
- disagree
- strongly disagree
National Work-Related Dimensions and Project Success

5. SECTION C

21. What importance does culture hold in Malawian projects?

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22. In your experience: How important is people management in regard to meeting a project's goals in Malawi?

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23. How important is it for foreign managers to understand Malawian culture?

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24. In your experience: How is project success usually measured in Malawi?

- ☐ By achieving technical objectives (specification, time, quality)
- ☐ By achieving technical and non-technical objectives (team work, communication, participation)

25. From the perspective of culture in Malawi: How important do you think the following factors are to achieving project goals?

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<td>Leadership style</td>
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<td>Management structure</td>
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<td>Communication</td>
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<td>Team atmosphere</td>
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<td>Risk management</td>
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<td>Working relationships</td>
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</table>
26. In your experience: how effective are mission statements, policies and procedures in creating an organisations culture?
   
   extremely effective  very effective  moderately effective  slightly effective  not effective

27. In your experience: Is difficult it to implement "Best Practice" management techniques in Malawian projects?
   
   yes  no

   In a short sentence please explain why?
   

28. To what extent do you agree or disagree: Malawian culture should be a critical success factor to a foreign project manager.
   
   Strongly agree  Agree  Undecided  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

29. Are there any cultural factors you think that would be important to a foreign project manager in Malawi?

30. If you have any comments or suggestions, please state them below

Thank you for your participation