

ABSTRACT

Globalization has reduced geographical and cultural boundaries, making culturally diverse work teams necessary. Furthermore, due to basic disparities in the opinions of team members, culturally diverse work teams often lack cohesiveness, which can result in subgroup formation and conflict. This study aimed to explore the role of cultural empathy in managing conflicts among culturally diverse work teams in universities in Kenya. This study used a descriptive study design, and the target population included permanent employees of three universities: Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kirinyaga University, and Daystar University. Qualitative data were subjected to content analysis. In addition, quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis. The study established that there was a weak positive and significant relationship between cultural empathy and conflict Management among culturally diverse work teams in Universities in Kenya. The study implications are that leaders should not be biased or prejudiced, should demonstrate objectivity, acknowledge and appreciate diversity, be open-minded, and listen to the members. Leaders in culturally diverse work teams have the potential to make or break a group. Effective leadership, especially during conflict management, requires skills such as effective communication, problem-solving, and negotiating with a focus on interests. Such leaders should be recruited based on their cultural empathy skills or trained in the job to become proficient in cultural empathy to deliver on their responsibilities as managers.