

MANAGEMENT BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS OPERATIVES ON CONSTRUCTION SITES AND ITS EFFECTS ON PRODUCTION

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ABSTRACT

Over the years, the construction industry has given much attention to aesthetics, the use of materials, technological developments and impacts of buildings on the external environment. However, how human resource are organized and managed for effective production, has received flimsy attention. Owing to economic and social pressures, there is a tendency for many management decisions in large companies to no longer be the prerogative of individual but then collective opinion of all the people concern. In other words, the direct effort of all the stakeholders of a project will leads to achieving the set goals. The research aimed at investigating into problems associated with management behaviour towards operatives on construction sites and its effects on production. Both primary data and secondary information were used as the basis for the research in addition to direct field observation. A total of one thousand operatives from ten construction firms were selected. Sample size of fourteen percent of the population undertaking projects within the Cape Coast Metropolis were chosen and distributed with closed ended questionnaires. The findings revealed that operatives on construction sites labelled their superiors as not being friendly and easily approachable. With regards to human relations between management and operatives on construction site, there were indicators that managers have not properly assessed the way they relate to operatives on site. Recommendations to help improve leadership styles in relation to operatives and their motivations suggest that, managers should take personal interest for the needs of their employees and accept individual differences amongst members of staff. Leadership styles employed on construction site must be such that operatives' suggestions and contributions are valid.

Keywords: Management behaviour, operatives, construction sites, effects, production

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Construction is a widely diverse industry brimming with innovation and change. Its importance and impact is substantial and critically important to our economic viability. Project management and effective leadership continue to impact the success or failure of a project. Furthermore, very little research has been conducted with regard to managers' behaviour towards operatives on construction sites and its effects on production. Ineffective leadership may result in operatives' disengagement and motivation loss (Decision Wise 2009), which according to Ng, Skitmore, Lam, and Poon, (2004) often leads to poor performance and project delays in the construction industry. Poor site management and low speeds of decision making are two of the most common causes of project delays in the construction industry (Chan and Kumaraswamy 1997). According to Pendleton (2011), it is common in the construction industry to work with different sets of workers on each project to which one is assigned. Leadership qualities ought to be identified and understood in early stages of the project to ensure that construction project runs on schedule and produces a kind of quality results.

Management has been defined according to Drucker (2007) as "the art of getting work done through others". Accordingly, it is a set of competences, attitudes and qualities broadly

distributed throughout the organization. Harris and McCaffer, (2002), identified some elements involved in the process of management as "to forecast, plan, and organize, command, coordinate and control".

Construction management, on the other hand, is defined as "a function, performed usually by an agent acting on behalf of the owner, to perform certain agreed-upon services directed principally toward the management of the construction process for a building structure, or a facility. Construction management contracts are generally awarded on large-scope projects where the owner can benefit from effective and efficient project control. Those services according to Ward, Curtis and Chapman (1991) are performed by a construction manager and will include planning, organizing, coordinating and establishment of a general strategy directed toward the administration and management of the project.

Owing to the economic and social pressures at construction sites, there is a tendency for many management decisions in large companies to be no longer the prerogative of one individual, rather the collective opinion of all the people concerned. Alternatively, the direct efforts of all stakeholders on projects lead to achieving the set goals. However, the key factor is that every member in the company ought be involved and committed to work, from top management to the least operative within the organization. The core of every management system is the manager's attitude and actions towards those with whom the manager works. The manner in which managers handle situations operatives find themselves can affect safety and performance within the organization.

Samuelson and Allison (1994) were of the view that, recognitions to operatives for an excellent job done can be a real morale booster, thereby, increasing liking for job and decreasing feelings of pressure. The behaviour of management's towards operatives on construction site is very important in achieving the firms set goals. Management of human resource to enhance effective production has received insubstantial consideration. This resulting in poor communication between management and operatives on construction sites; low productivity as well as poor manager-operative relationship; poor safety measures for operatives; low level of recognition of good efforts and inadequate planning leading to poor performance of work. Preferences in dealing with grievances and disputes between individual operatives on construction sites are some of the results of poor managements' behavior towards operatives. Jeager and Kanungo (1990) emphasized that low level of motivation in the construction industry has not only led to poor performance and low productivity but also, poor employer-employee relationships. It has therefore been realized that performance does not only depend on financial and technological investments. Relatively, workforce motivation and other incentive packages for achieving worker satisfaction improve labour performance. It is against this background that the study seeks to investigate into problems associated with management behavior towards operatives on construction sites and its effects on production.

1.2 Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study was to investigate into management behavior towards operatives on construction sites and its effects on production. The objectives are to

- i. examine the kind of problems confronting operatives on construction site
- ii. identify motivating factors that affect performance of operatives on construction site
- iii. examine the leadership style employed on construction site that affect operative's performance

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Problems Confronting Operatives on Construction Site

The process from inception to completion of any project has become time consuming and expensive. Therefore, there is the need to optimize this process by putting in place an efficient working team. The efficiency of a project team will result from effective leadership style and qualities exhibited with due responsibilities to ensure quality project on the appointed duration. The occurrence of variation during the course of the project is dealt with in the early stages to increase the productivity of work. According to Sabiston and Laschinger (1995), Hatcher and Laschinger (1996), studies have shown that perceptions of work empowerment, job autonomy, and the extent of participation in decision making significantly related to perceived control over work satisfaction and effectiveness. Commitment, according to McDermott et al. (1996) has also been viewed as a dimension of organization effectiveness which contributes to increasing effectiveness through work performance and reducing turnover. Adams' (1994) have identified organizational commitment as a better measure of staying intention than job satisfaction. Hence, Job satisfaction is connected more strongly with intention, whereas commitment had the strongest connection with actual turnover (Ellis and Miller 1994).

2.2 Motivating Factors that Affect Performance of Operatives on Construction Site

Studies carried out by Kreitner (1995), to determine how leadership behaviours can be used to influence employees for better organizational outcome concluded that, effective leadership is associated with better and more ethical performance. According to Morana (1987), Job satisfaction, which is affected by leadership behaviours, is found to be positively related to operative's satisfaction. Intrinsically, management behaviours may possibly be an important indirect contributor to enhance productivity. The effective use of management behaviours is becoming a commitment for construction managers that is desired and considered an important motivating factor for effective performance of operatives on construction site. In the construction profession, leadership may still be in its infancy. Consequently, the authoritarian style of leadership is most often adopted. Although departmental objectives are quickly achieved within and or before a given time-frame, the human aspects relating to employees' levels of satisfaction and morale, which affect productivity and organizational commitment, are inevitably neglected. It must be noted that in times of stress and chaos, leadership styles that seek to transform, create meaning in the midst of turmoil and produce desirable employee outcomes.

Studies conducted by McNeese-Smith (1995) focused on the five behaviours identified by Kouzes and Posner; to explore management behaviours and employee outcomes. In another descriptive study, McNeese-Smith (1997) concluded on effect of management behaviour on job satisfaction, productivity and commitment. Operatives often felt that job satisfaction is most influenced by managers. The motivating factors that affect performance of operatives on construction site include provision of recognition and thanks, meeting operative's personal needs, helping or guiding the operatives, using leadership skills to meet department needs and supporting the team. Operative's performance is due to management not giving department due recognition and support, not being able to follow through on problems and not helping but criticizing in a crisis. In this study, it was found that the absences of management providing recognition and support, to create a positive climate in the work environment does

not helped operatives to be more productive. Conversely, criticizing operatives, especially when they are under stress, caused operatives to be less productive.

2.3 Leadership Style Employed on Construction Site to Affect Operatives Performance

The subject of leadership according to Gastil (1994), is interesting for many people and therefore, the continued search for good leaders has resulted in the development of many leadership theories. There are basically three leadership styles that are considered to be among the "classic" styles used by business leaders throughout. Each has its strengths and weaknesses - here are more details on each of them: Autocratic styles, Democratic styles and Laissez-Faire styles. In Autocratic style, rules, regulations and principles are not subjective to question. Subordinate are requested only to implement what their boss say or do. These styles are there to check lazy employee to be on their toe to work and occurrence of errors are seen by subordinate but never attain to during the progress of work. This point is the demerit and merit respectively.

Democratic Style is where subordinate are involved holistically in every decision making. The consent of the subordinate is very paramount in both the project and welfare matters to increase productivity. The merit is quality of work and minimization of error is assured. Demerit is that it takes a longer period to arrive on decision. On the other hand, Laissez-Faire Style explain how every human have conscience to execute his duties and responsibilities freely. At project site, the employer's duties is to pay whiles the employee is expected to execute his duties without stress. The leader believes every worker knows what to do at site without being instructed around. Merit has been that, workers has the duty to work freely and demerit been delay in work.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Research Approach

The research approach adopted as the basis for the study was descriptive survey and case study approaches. According to Bubin & Babbie (1997), the underlying principle for using the case study approach ought to be the availability of a special case that seems to merit intensive investigation. Furthermore, a case study is conducted of event and its impact as a way of informing similar policy considerations in other areas. One of the techniques that seek to address the issues on low level performance on the part of operatives, and help to provide the basis for career recognition and motivational prospects for operatives, thereby preventing disillusion of able workers is the behaviour of management towards operatives on construction sites. Therefore the case study approach becomes appropriate for the study.

3.2 Population

The population of the study covered management and operatives of the ten (10) construction firms under study within Cape Coast Metropolis. The total population for the study was one thousand (1000). This was obtained based on the workforce of the selected construction firms under study. In all, ten (10) Construction firms who were actively involved in construction work at the time of research, and having a workforce up to one hundred (100) were used. Accordingly, a total of one thousand (1000) work forces from all the ten (10) selected firms were used as the population for the study.

3.3 Sampling and Sampling Procedure

In achieving the objectives of the study, a purposive sampling was used to determine the sample size. It is also a non-random technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of information for its use.

The researcher decides on what needs to be known and set out to find people who can and are willing to provide the needed information by virtue of knowledge and experience (Bernard, 2002; Lewis & Sheppard, 2006). The population was first stratified into two (2) groups: the management and the operatives, as the subset of the population. Purposive sampling was then employed to select the general managers and operation managers from each of the two sub-groups. Reason for the choice was that, managers mostly owns the firms, manages and also provides all resources needed for the firm. The operatives on the other hand see to the day-to-day running of the firm's and also work to ensures generating of profit. These categories of people were considered as the respondents for the study. According to Stoker (1985), to have the right representation for a population of one thousand (1000), fourteen percent (14%) was chosen as the sample size. Hence, a total of one hundred and forty (140), made up of management and operatives from the ten selected construction firms was considered as sample size for the study.

3.4 Data Collection

Both primary data and secondary information were used. Secondary information were collected through review of journals, articles and books. The review was based on management behaviour towards operatives on construction sites and its effects on production. Primary data were collected from respondents using questionnaire and unstructured interviews. This data was intended to reveal the background information of respondents and find out whether Management behaviour towards operatives on construction sites will help to provide basis for career recognition and motivational prospects for operatives to prevent disillusion of able construction site workers in the Metropolis.

3.5 Research Instrument

A closed ended questionnaire were administered by the researchers and field assistants to the management and operative of the various selected construction sites to collect necessary data required for the study.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

Operatives who were engaged in groups based on their trades were interviewed. Zeisel (1981) emphasized that, interviews carried out in groups is useful and aimed at identifying the range of definitions of a view in groups that interviewees hold, to find out whether a particular opinion is held at all, and also save time in collecting the information. The intention was first to examine the kind of problems confronting operatives on construction site, identify motivating factors that affect performance of operatives on construction site, and examine the leadership style employed on construction site that affect operatives performance in the Metropolis.

3.7 Data Analysis

The data collected were qualitative in nature and it was therefore analyzed using descriptive statistics. The study made use of frequency distribution to present the data collected. The data collected were presented using tabulation. The analyses were then presented using percentages with descriptive writings.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Presentation of Data from Management

Management expressed their views on how performance of operative on construction site is evaluated.

Majority of the respondents representing 82% evaluated performance of operative on site as high; whereas very high and average performance were on the minor side, representing 10% and 8% respectively. Management's view on operative's quality of work without supervision was sought. In most of the selected construction firms visited, management reported that 70% of operatives produce quality work without supervision while 30% of the firms, operatives required supervision to producing quality work. In firms where workers does not required supervision to produce quality work, most of them attributed it to experience in performing same task over the years. The status of a worker does not make him or her to produce quality work. In terms of motivation, 40% of management from various construction firms used promotion as a means to motivate operatives; 30% give praise and recognition to operatives who do good job on site; 20% use financial means while 10% use end of year get – together as motivation.

The study also revealed that almost all the management of the construction firms visited were said to be friendly and approachable by operatives because they viewed it as very important for improving performance and increasing production. Management of most of the firms representing 90% adopted democracy as the leadership style for running the affairs of their firms while 10% adopted genuine Laissez-Faire as their leadership style. Management maintained democracy as the style of leadership as the best style for increasing performance and productivity on the construction site. The study also found out that management sometimes involved operatives in decision making, depending on the issue at hand. 40% involved operatives in decision making while 20% do not involve operatives in decision making at all. Some of the management representing 40% also sometimes involved operatives in decision making because they felt that total responsibility rested solely on the management itself.

From the above data presented, Management was of the view that involvement of operatives in decision making helped improve performance on site and that the communication between them and operatives has been effective.

4.2 Presentation of data from Operatives

Views of operatives on the same construction sites as their managers were also solicited for the study. 60% of the operatives claimed their superiors were not friendly and easily approachable while others, 40% claimed otherwise. According to operatives, the unfriendly nature of their superior has not really helped in terms of performance and productivity. Due to unfriendly nature of management as claimed by the operatives, 60% claimed their performance has greatly been on the average, 30% with high performance and 10% low performance. 70% of operatives said they were able to work productively with no supervision due to their experience in performing the same task while 30% of the operatives said otherwise. Consequently, when motivated could help boost their performance to increase productivity. 60% of the operatives revealed that they are not motivated as required while 40% claimed otherwise. Accordingly, 40% of the operatives were of the view that they are given praise and recognition as motivation for a good work done while 20% claimed financial incentives. Promotion and others means of motivation such as end of year party and etc. covers 40%. Operatives were asked to describe leadership style used by their managers

on construction site. To this, 60% reported that management adopted autocratic style of leadership on site while 40% were said to be practicing democracy. The study also revealed that 40% of operatives' opinion on problems involving their work were appreciated by management.

The majority representing 60% claimed that their opinions were not appreciated. 50% of the operatives claimed that they were not involved in decision making at all, while 20% said they were sometimes involved in decision making and 30% claimed they were involved in decision making. 60% of the operatives were of the view that due to their personal experience, their performance were not affected even though they were not involved in decision making, while 40% purported that their performance were affected as a result of them not being involved in decision making. A clear majority of the operatives 70% purported of poor effective communication, while 30% were of the view that, communication was effective.

4.3 Effects of Management Behavior on Productivity

From the above findings, 80% of managers on construction site describe themselves as being friendly and easily approachable while 20% was the exact opposite. When the reasons of either being friendly or otherwise was raised, it was revealed that some managers by nature, were friendly and approachable to operatives which actually help operative to be open and interact freely with management on issues concerning their work. Some of the managers on the other hand, were of the view that, not being easily approachable/friendly indicated some level of seriousness which must not be the case of managers. On the contrary, 60% of operatives described their superiors as not being friendly and easily approachable as opposed by 40%, who were of the view that managers on site were friendly and easily approachable. 60% of operatives perceive leadership style practiced on construction sites as autocratic since workers are being given instructions as to what to be done on site each day. Operatives were of the view that genuine laissez-faire style of leadership is less employed on construction sites. From the above result, it is obvious that what should prevail mostly on construction sites is the participatory leadership behaviour. However, some managers are dictators in behaviour which does not help in improving performance. The result also indicated that leadership style employed on construction sites cannot be described as being supportive in behaviour, in that, workers are not made aware of what to be done to achieve set goal so that they can work towards those targets with managers providing help promptly when needed.

Inadequate motivated incentives to operatives also affect productivity. The data obtained revealed that, One of the means of motivating workers on site was through financial incentives either by bonus payment, overtime payment, or other forms of financial incentives. 40% emphasized that, giving praise or recognition to workers actions as expected of them to work more productively motivate them. Additionally, operatives indicated that good working conditions and extra holidays motivates them to be productive on site. Results indicated that 60% of managers often involve operatives in decision making as against 30% who sometimes include operatives in decision making while 10% do not involve operatives at all. With regards to taking part in decision making as a means of motivation, majority representing 60% of the operatives indicated that when they are involve in taking decision, they see the decisions taken as their own and therefore, work hard toward achieving the set goals. 20% of operatives however, stated that although they are sometimes involved in decision making that is not the main motivator for them and does not affect their performance in any way. A general look of these findings shows that, money is not the sole motivating factor for most

operatives. From the above data, it has been clear that majority of the operatives are motivated by feeling they are part of whatever decision being taking on site, and work towards achieving the set goals correctively with management. Accordingly, from the results, managers were of the view that operatives feel good when their efforts are being appreciated and recognized, as this statement reflected in the responses from majority of the operatives. McNeese-Smith (1997), has defined productivity as the contribution made towards an organizational end result in relation to the amount of resources consumed. It measures both quantitative and qualitative factors such as goal attainment and work accomplished. Lamka et al, (2014) emphasized that, what has been perceived to have the highest productivity when compared to other tasks based on operations like block walling and tilling having lower productivity is due to the higher manual and mental effort required. The workers output as attested by Ashworth, (1988) increases due to the straightforwardness of works and the ease of supervision. Therefore the above data presented indicates that leadership style employed by management, can influence the labour output and hence, the democratic style, thus 80% has helped improve workers performance. From the above result, one can conclude that on the average, the extent of human relations on construction site is laissez-fair comparing managers' response to those from operatives. The inequality between management's response and that of operative on the issue of human relations on construction site indicates that, managers have not properly assessed the way they relate to workers on site.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The study attempted to show the situation concerning management behaviour towards operatives on construction sites and its effects on production. Construction management rarely appreciates the kind of problems confronting operatives which do not actually encourage them to exhibit their creative ideas. Operatives are not properly motivated as some management has little knowledge about various motivating factors while others ignore their obligation of motivating operatives.

The use of money to encourage operatives to work harder had been management priority, the provision of some social activities such as provision of good working condition, giving workers some days off etc. are to a low degree. The leadership style employed by management is said to be of democratic type. All the same management of most construction firms must still do more to affect the performance of operatives. Hence, communication settings on construction site are not appealing as it reflects management's attitude and affect operative's behaviour and their performances in general.

6.0 Recommendation

From the conclusion, it was necessary that certain corrective measures be taken to improve on the current situation of the way management behaviour in general terms towards operatives, to augment improvement in performance on construction sites. These could be achieved by taking personal interest in the needs of operatives and accepting individual differences amongst the workforce.

Management should involve operatives in taking certain key decisions. By so doing, operatives feel more recognized and become responsible for their own decisions, and will always want to ensure those decisions being implemented.

Management should consider extra payment to key operatives with additional skills and knowledge, and those who are prepared to accept high level of responsibilities for doing

quality work themselves. Additionally, the use of non-financial incentives such as provision of meals, social activities, rest day, etc. in as much as financial incentives are considered.

The leadership style employed on site must be such that operatives' suggestion and contributions are valid. Even in case where this is not necessary, operatives must be allowed to work by themselves. Management on no occasion should resorts to violent means in achieving the organizational objectives. The dignity of operatives should always be considered a priority.

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