

ABSTRACT

This research study sought to explore typical organisational structures that are prevalent in South African large construction companies, and investigate their behaviour towards employee involvement. The study proceeded by providing an understanding of the relationship between organisational structures and employee involvement, and draws general deductions of the influence of employee involvement on organisational performance.

The aim of this research was to investigate the level of employee involvement on various organisational structures as employee involvement was felt as one of the contributing factors towards the success of any construction company. It was acknowledged that inappropriate organisational design leads to poor involvement of employees.

The scope of this research is limited to the selected five large construction companies in South Africa. The research approach to the study was quantitative in nature, collected data was statistically analysed and presented through appropriate means. Research techniques employed for data collection were surveys and interviews. Surveys were completed by employees, while interviews were conducted with management level staff using a self-administered questionnaire. A sample population of 71 respondents was obtained from a study response rate of 33%.

The research findings confirmed the existence of a relationship between organisational structures and employee involvement. It was also revealed that from the large construction companies investigated, 60%, use hybrid (a combination of divisional and geographical) structures as their organisational structure. Two of the three (67%) hybrid structured companies achieved the best organisational performance measured over a period between 2008 and 2012.

In conclusion, hybrid structures have proven to be the most appropriate organisational structures that are encouraging to employee involvement. From the findings, companies structured in this manner achieved the best financial results by becoming the first and

second achievers in the overall financial assessment. Companies can be similarly structured, but may differ substantially in their effectiveness because organisational success lies in employee involvement and the quality of the human resources at its disposal.

When implemented properly, employee involvement impacts the customer experience and subsequently, the overall organisational performance by means of high productivity and profitability. This study makes a modest contribution to the understanding of the relationship between employee involvement and organisational performance in the South African construction industry. Similarly to the previous studies in other sectors and countries, the findings of this study provided empirical evidence that employee involvement has an influence on organisational performance.

The implications of this study to the South African construction industry are as follows: construction companies must constantly seek for opportunities to participate on projects outside the country. There are substantial work opportunities that are available in other developing economies such as: Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Congo, etc. At this point in time, the South African construction industry is not able to sustain all its role players.

The South African government has to finally unlock the infrastructure expenditure plans that have been on the pipeline for a long time. This country as a developing economy still reflects huge infrastructural backlogs, and this expenditure could ignite the much needed growth and development for the entire economy.

South Africa's large construction companies are to expand and show real growth in as far as competing at global stage with some of the biggest construction firms in the world. This would lead to growth and expansion of all construction companies and effectively the development of the entire construction industry. The attempt to attain best practise international standards will also lead to improvements in poor performances that have constantly plagued the industry in the recent past.

Keywords: Organisational Structures, Employee Involvement, Organisational Performance, Construction Industry, South Africa