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Motivation of the skilled workforce in the construction industry of South Africa

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CHAPTER ONE
BACKGROUND TO RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction

In order to get the employees to give an honest day's work, the construction industry simply need to realize how important people are to the success of the organization (construction industry). If this is realize, the focus changes from thinking of workers as tools and concentrate on growing them as valuable resources (Dell, 1988).

"Work motivation results from willingness to make an effort in pursuit of certain objectives that satisfy both the needs of the individual worker and of the employer" (Biesheuvel, 1984).

Motivation of employees is somewhat complex more than achieving high productivity. Construction site managers and site supervisors can only create a climate of motivation which means the skilled workforces which include carpenters, bricklayers, architects/draft men, quantity surveyors and the like must motivate themselves. Motivation is therefore characterized as a group of influences that causes the workforce the enthusiasm to perform a given task. Motivation to do something is present in everyone, to some degree, all the time (Warren, 1989).

1.1.1 Concept of motivation

The concept of the study is to understand why people behave as they do. What motivates them to work? Why do some people work harder than others?
(Naoum, 2001).

How well a construction manager motivates people at work is an important factor in influencing work performance (Newcombe et al, 1990).

The study mainly looks at how site managers/agent can increase productivity by motivating the skilled workforce, which includes; carpenters, masons (brick layers), electricians, plumbers, quantity surveyors, architect (draftsmen), etc.
The study of skilled workforce motivation is of fundamental important in the management of people in the South African construction industry. The main purpose for undertaking this study is to:

- Evaluate the various motivational theories with regards to the South African construction industry's productivity.
- Giving a clear and proper understanding of the relationship between motivation and productivity.
- Identifying and linking up key parameters which influence motivation in the construction industries work environment.

Although construction is one of the most labour intensive industries, people management issues are given inadequate attention.
The construction companies deal with people. Whatever approaches are adopted in construction, the industry comprises of people and those people have to be managed. Human resource Management is therefore the effective management of people in such a way that they help the construction industry to achieve its objectives (Cushway, 1994).

1.2 Definition of motivation

The term motivation derived from the Latin word '*movere'*, meaning to move**.**
Motivation represents "those psychological processes that cause the arousal, direction, and persistence of voluntary actions that are goal oriented" (Kreitner and Kinicki, 1998).

Motivation as defined by Robbins (1993) is the "willingness to exert high levels of effort towards organizational goals, conditioned by the efforts and ability to satisfy some individual need". A need in this context is an internal state that makes certain outcomes attractive. An unsatisfied need creates tension that stimulates drive within the individual. These drives then generate such

behaviour to find particular goal that, if attained, will satisfy the need and lead to the reduction of tension.

Hodge (1970) define motivation as “total propensity or level of desire of an individual to behave in a certain manner at a certain time”.

Motivation according to Steer and Porter (1975) is defined as “that which energizes, directs and sustains behaviour.”

The purpose of the study is to look into motivation as a factor, which increases output in terms of productivity.
Service is given to people by people. To give excellent service, it is essential that people feel good about themselves and their jobs (Dell, 1988).

In addition to the need for financial and physical resources, every organization requires people in order to function. More specifically, Katz and Kahn have posited that organizations have three behavioural requirements; these are:

1. People must be attracted not only to join the organization but also to remain in it;
2. People must perform the tasks for which they are hired, and must do so in a dependable manner; and
3. People must go beyond this dependable role performance and engage in some form of creative, spontaneous, and innovative behaviour at work

(Katz, 1964; Katz and Kahn, 1966).

For construction industry to be effective, according to this reasoning, it must come to grips with the motivational problems of stimulating both the decision to participate and the decision to produce at work.
In general terms, motivation can be described as the direction and persistence of action. It is concerned with why people chose a particular course of action in preference to others, and why they continue with a chosen action, often over a long period. (Krech et al, 1962).

A brief selection of representative definitions indicates how the term has been used:
"…the contemporary (immediate) influences on the direction, vigour, and persistence of action" (Atkinson, 1964).

"…how behaviour gets started, is energized, is sustained, is directed, is stopped, and what kind of subjective reaction is present in the organism while this is going on" (Jones, 1955)

"…a process governing choices made by persons or lower organisms among alternative forms of voluntary activity" (Vroom, 1964).

A motive is an inner state that energizes, activates, or moves (hence, "motivation"), and that directs or channel behaviour toward goals (Berelson and Steiner, 1964).

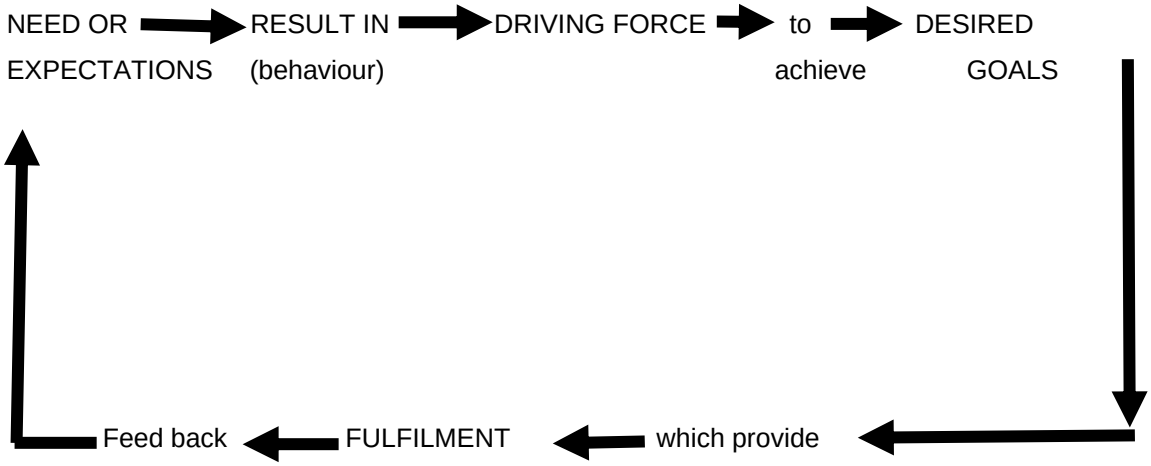
The above definitions have three common denominators, which characterize the phenomenon of motivation. These are primarily concern with:

1. What energizes human behaviour;
2. What directs or channels such behaviour; and
3. How this behaviour is maintained or sustained. These three components represent an important factor in understanding of human behaviour at work.

The above conceptualisation firstly points to an energetic force within individuals that "drive" them to behave in certain ways.
Secondly, there is the notion of goal orientation on the part of individuals; their behaviour is directed towards something and thirdly, the way of viewing motivation contains a systems orientation; that is, it considers those forces in the individuals either to reinforce the intensity of their drive and the direction of their energy or to dissuade them from their course of action and redirect their efforts (Steer and Porter, 1975).

1.2.1 Underlying concept of motivation

The underlying concept of motivation is some driving force within individuals by which they attempt to achieve some goal in order to fulfil some need or expectation. The illustration below shows the concept of basic motivational model (Mullins, 1993).



(VROOM & DECO, 1970)
Figure 1.1

People's behaviour are determined by what motivate them. Their performances are product of both ability level and motivation (Vroom, 1970).
The above equation has more recently been added to by a third factor – "role perception" – which is concerned with the expectations of what one is supposed to do; knowing what to do as working hard and ably at what you are doing (Newcombe et al, 1990).

Performance = function (ability x motivation)
Questions we need to ask are: what is the driving force behind motivation? What are people's needs and expectations, and how do they influence behaviour and performance at work?
Motivation is a complex subject and influenced by many variables. Individual have a variety of changing and often conflicting needs and expectations, which they attempt to satisfy in a number of different ways (Mullins, 1993).

If the equation is true then, performance can be improved by changing the "ability" by embarking on more training of the skilled workforce, or the motivation under which these activities are exercised. If motivation is shaped by the environment in which both stake holders live, then changing the motivation may be seen as an easier route to better performance than changing the individual traits. The work task, the individual, and the environment in which these come together are likely to influence performance.

There are variations in terms of needs and desires of the different skilled workforce, which means a reward system, which reflects different aspirations, are more likely to be effective than unitary systems. These needs and desires include:

1. The skilled workforce will work hard for something they value.
2. Motivation increases when the objectives of the construction industry are clear. If the skilled workforce has a known performance target then the workers are more likely to be motivated to achieve it.
3. The rewards for good performance, and the penalties for poor or non – performance, must be known and accepted by both the employer and employees.

Many motivational theories accept these factors but differ in the weight given to each (Ramlall, 2004).

1.3 Needs and expectations at work

There are two kinds of motivation at work; these include extrinsic and intrinsic motivation.

Extrinsic motivation is related to ‘tangible’ rewards such as salary and fringe benefits, security, promotions, contract of service, the work environment and conditions of work. Such tangible rewards are often determined at the organizational level and may be largely outside the control of individual managers.

Intrinsic motivation is related to ‘psychological’ rewards such as the opportunity to use one’s ability, a sense of challenge and achievement, positive recognition, and being treated in a caring and considerate manner. The psychological

rewards are those that can usually be determined by the actions and behaviour of individual managers. (Rudolph and Kleiner, 1989).

1.4 Classification of motivation

There are three – fold classification for motivation at work according to Bennet (1981). These are:
Economic rewards – such as pay, fringe benefits, pension, material goods and security. This is an instrumental orientation to work and concerned with 'other things'.
Intrinsic satisfaction – which is derived from the nature of the work itself, interest in the job, and personal growth and development. This is a personal orientation to work and concerned with 'oneself'
Social relationships – such as friendships group working, and the desire for affiliation, status, and dependency.

1.4.1 The outcome of motivating employees

Motivation recognizes the importance of the human element in an organization. The positive outcome of the effective application of motivation theory at the work place results in improved productivity and work satisfaction.
Lack of interest in building worked motivation results in unhappy, unproductive workers who do not fully utilize their potential. Motivation is one of the prime determinants of productivity (Yoganathan, 1994).

Treating employees' better means finding ways to get them excited about their jobs. When employee satisfaction improves, the commitment gap begins to close. Expectations become positive. The pace quickens, people act with vigour and purpose. Morale rises. (Dell, 1988).

Limerick (1974) stated that Maslow's hierarchies of needs can be use to adequately explain the behaviour of workers in South Africa. It is expected that

people earning below the poverty line would be motivated by basic physiological requirements.

Warren (1989) gave a practical guidance in developing a motivational climate for the construction craftsmen that will permit productivity to increase and the overall project costs to decrease. The relationship between motivation and productivity is such that improvement in one causes an improvement in the other.

Morris (1968) mentions ways and means of achieving collective motivation. Collective motivation to him consists of ways of replacing individual goals with goals of group objectives in such a manner as to achieve co-operative teamwork.

1.5 Problem statement

The question that begs an answer is: “what motivates the skilled workforce and stimulate them positively to increase productivity in terms of work output”?
The problems addressed in the research includes the method of how to handle the construction industry’s workforce through:

- Motivation and work output (productivity)

1.6 Definition of Terms

1.6.1 Productivity

Productivity is defined as output divided by input. The output includes; turnover; labour utilization, capacity and efficiency; staff morale, motivation and attitudes. The inputs includes expenses related to materials, labour and machinery; time, volume and quantities used; planning, effort, details and decision making (Productivity South Africa, 2001).

1.6.2 Job satisfaction or employee satisfaction.

Job satisfaction is defined as the difference between the amounts of rewards workers received in comparison to the amount they believe they should receive. Employees with a high level of job satisfaction holds positive attitude toward the job (Robbins, 1998).

Spangenberg (1994) argued that satisfaction is caused by elements such as Work achievement, receiving recognition, getting promotion while dissatisfaction is caused by organizational constraints such as salary, policies and procedures, equality of supervision.

1.6.3 Job enrichment and Job enhancement.

Job enrichment involves vertical job enlargement. It arose out of Herzberg two factors theory. This two – factors theory attempts to enrich the job by incorporating, motivating or growth factors such as increased responsibility and involvement, opportunities for advancement and the sense of achievement. (Naoum, 2001).

1.6.4 Job enlargement

Job enlargement is the horizontal expansion of job. When there is an increase in the number and variety of work tasks, which an employee performed, result to jobs with more diversity. Job enlargement is horizontal to job design; it makes job somehow structurally bigger (Robbins, 1998).

What provides the workforce with job outcomes or rewards and compensations are what the employees consider relevant for satisfaction of their needs. Not every reward is effective in inducing greater work motivation among workers. Rewards valued highly by employees are more effective than less valued rewards. Employees who values job promotion more than increased salary will not be motivation by more money (Kanungo et al, 1994).

1.7 Objective of the Research

The objective of the study is to determine how workers in the construction industry can be motivated to give their maximum labour potential at the disposal of the employer for some form of remuneration.

In light of the above discussions the study is design to test the following hypothesis:

Ho: That, the motivation of the skilled workforce by site managers/agents will improve productivity.

Ha: that a demotivated workforce negatively affects productivity.

1.8 The objective of the study

The study focuses on the skilled workforce in the construction industry. The objective of the study is to investigate: the productive impact of motivation on the construction industry's skilled workforce in South Africa.

1.9 Research Methodology

The objective of the above will be attained by:

1. Literature search and review – A review of literature relating to motivation of the skilled workforce of the construction companies.

1a. The use of Internet search engines, journals, magazines, and directories. Sources accessed and retrieved will be used together with books on related subject to write the literature review.

2. Analysis of motivation and how they affect labour output of the skilled workforce through interviews with leaders in the construction industry.

3. Meaningful conclusion and recommendation will be done on research report.

1.10 Research Limitation

This research report will be limited to:
Skilled workforce of the South African construction industry.
A small sample size of Construction Companies will be studies by the use of non – scientific techniques due to small size of the formal identity which may limit generalizations and inferences from the findings.

1.11 Structure of research report

The research report is structured into five chapters.

The first chapter is introduction to the research report, which discusses background information, concept and definition of motivation, definition of terms, statement of the research problem, research objectives, hypothesis and research limitation.

The second chapter dwells on the literature survey and review, which discusses motivation and productivity and the link to the construction industry and summary of literature review.

The third chapter presents the research methodology used, which include the research method adopted, data gathering (interviews) and summary.

The fourth chapter deals with the discussion of findings and research problems.

The fifth chapter is on summary, findings and recommendations. It also presents summary of the key research findings.

At the end of the report there are references and appendices.

1.12 Summary

Chapter one introduced and gives highlights of the background to the research report.

It gives the opinion of various writers/authors in the field of motivation and motivation as a significant factor in increasing work output in terms of productivity.

Construction industries suffer as a result of site managers/agents not motivating their skilled workforce.