



An Examinations of the various Leadership Skills that enhances Construction Managers` Performance in Anambra State.

BY

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Abstract

Leadership skills is the most important and essential factor in good construction project management, it is very important as it improves managerial capacity, inspires teams, achieves outstanding results, transforms organizations, enhances value creation, creates efficiencies, and develops the requisite employee engagement motivation to deliver better results. The study aim to examine the various leadership skills that enhances Construction Managers` Performance in Anambra State. To achieve this, the study examine the need for Leadership in the Construction Industry and examine leadership Skills as Motivational Strategies for Enhancing Construction Manager's performance. The study adopted descriptive survey design by distributing 60 well-structured questionnaires. The 40 retrieved and analyzed responses shows that leadership skills like Planning for the required Result(4.475), Big Thinking, Being Plan Driven and Visionaries(4.4), Focusing on Processes(4.275), Team Building skills i.e. Motivational, inspiring Teams Skills(4.2), Risk-Taking/Communicating Skills, Listening, and influencing Skills(4.075), Not whining or Blaming but Problem Solving and Opportunists(4.025), Consistency in Confidence(4.0), Flexibility/Not Accepting Failure(3.975) and Setting Objectives(3.925). Also in the result, Table 4.1.2, revealed that the least leadership skills and motivational strategies were: Controlling Group Performance and Planning Skills(3.8), Building Effective Relationships(3.775), Seeking and obtaining accord from Participants(3.725), Gaining information and Sharing knowledge(3.7), Decision Making/ Mentoring Skills and Building Bonds/prioritization and strategic planning (3.625), Interpersonal Skills, Problem Solving and Networking Skills(3.55) and Negotiation Skills and Managing Conflict(3.425). The study recommends that the examined leadership skills metrics be used by construction stakeholders and used as a motivational tool for construction managers in Anambra State to increase productivity and retention of construction employees.

Keywords: Leadership skills, Motivational Tool, Productivity, construction managers, project delivery

1.0 Introduction

The International Institute for Management Development, IMD (2023), identifies the importance of developing leadership skills in managers or any working professional; it improves managerial capacity, inspires teams, achieves outstanding results, transforms organizations, enhances value creation, creates efficiencies, and develops the requisite employee engagement motivation to deliver better results. This development helps to manage employees develop new business opportunities and tackle broader societal issues. The

Institute identifies eight (8) benefits of leadership skills development and 3 Key career stages where leadership skills developments are important. The stage includes early, mid-career leadership skills training and top-level leadership skills training. Their study suggests that deciding what leadership skill to be developed is the foundation for what training is to be administered. Every organization must motivate its management team through financial, non-financial, and leadership skills development training incentives. The term “motivation” is derived from the Latin word ‘*movere*’; a psychological process that provides direction drives project-



based efficiencies, and enhances the employee's positive behaviour to achieve organizational goals. Construction Managers, as key employees, play an important role in maintaining craftsmen's performance and achieving project-based objectives. An unmotivated construction manager will lead unmotivated craftsmen; leading to unaccomplished organizational objectives. An intentional development of a leadership skills framework will ultimately enhance the development of the construction industry as well as the national outlook. To be motivated is when one has the encouragement to carry out an assigned task. Such courage inspires task completion; this developmental strategy enhances motivation and the ability to lead. For any construction manager to motivate, manage, develop task based-systems, and achieve work-based results, such managers must have developed requisite leadership skill requirements. It is therefore every organization's top-level management's sole responsibility to implement. The experiences on most construction sites in Anambra state show the prevalence of industrial/ site-based disputes, projects abandonment, subletting of jobs to expatriates, and other scenarios that deviation from what should be in a standard workplace where everyone is fully kitted to know and do what's expected for project success. These problems have been attributed to lack of awareness and an examinations of the various leadership skills that enhance Construction Managers' Performance. This would have guided construction managers' progressive leadership development, illiteracy on the necessary leadership skill need as well ensure the right use of managerial social job-based non-financial motivators like leadership skill development. This study aims to examine the various leadership skills that enhance Construction Managers' Performance in the study area to improve effective project delivery in Anambra State. The research questions are

1. What is the need for Leadership in the Construction Industry
2. What the various Leadership Skills use as Motivational Strategies for Enhancing Construction Managers' Performance in Anambra State.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 The Need for Leadership in the Construction Industry.

According to Bhangale and Rajanikant (2013), leadership is the most important and essential factor in good construction project management, he defines the concept as not just managing people or projects but largely the art of affecting team members' behaviour or motives to achieve the organization tasks success and personal goals. In the study about 56 leadership skills were identified with personal skills in communication, decision-making in knowledge, decision-making in problem-solving while empathy in (Socio)-political awareness, empathy in leveraging diversity, and team-building in compassion as the three least important leadership skills. There are several reasons for the relatively low volume of work on construction leadership and two reasons are outlined here. First, social scientists researching on leadership

have little or no knowledge about the construction industry, Second, considering that the industry has tended to focus on the management of projects and organizations, there had been less emphasis on the importance of leadership, thus, the subject has not emerged as a worthwhile study(Langford, Fellows, Hancock, and Gale(1995).In the construction industry, high productivity which means seeing the final result sooner often creates satisfaction. Work-based dissatisfaction will increase costs, produce time delays and reduce productivity on construction projects. To influence a construction manager's productivity is to determine how smoothly the construction project is desired to flow and how much work can be accomplished and motivate or influence the construction manager's productivity first who will then be equipped to influence his worker's attitude The study identifies the effect of leadership on construction operatives productivity improvement while focusing on leadership skills and styles as a productivity improver. It measures a decrease in overhead costs and time as an indicator of project performance (EmadAbd-El Hamied El-Maghraby,2014).

2.2 Leadership Skills as Motivational Strategies for Enhancing Construction Managers' Performance

According to Adrian (2004), the reasons for reduced construction productivity are, Clients or the industry focus on short-term results rather than long-term results. This focus on the short term is due to the industry's focus on project profits. Such a focus may lead to frustration if efforts are not made to improve productivity; it is important to note that productivity improvement is often a long-term result. Secondly, the belief that for a new program or effort to work; "top management or top leadership" have to support the program and drives the program whereas the "Managers", not "leaders", frequently are the ones that administer productivity improvement programs but the top leadership must develop important leadership skills like planning, directing, measuring, and monitoring. A construction manager must possess vision, motivation, team building, pride, and trust in administering these productivity programs. Adrain (2004), explains how a construction manager with developed "leadership skills" will have enhanced construction productivity, he identified such skills and requirements like:

1. Idea Driven and are Visionaries
2. Focus on Processes and Planning for the Desired Result
3. Being a Team Builder; Seeking and Obtaining Consensus from Participants
4. Consistent, But Flexible
5. Not Accepting Failure, Not Whiners or Blamers but Problem Solvers and Opportunists.

According to Gharehbaghi and Mcmanus (2003), good leadership in construction is a result of the effective use and implementation of important skills such as: Understanding the needs and characteristics of the post, Knowing and using the resources of the group effectively, effective communication and planning, and controlling team performance. According to Sousa and Rocha (2019), there are many leadership styles,

and skills expected of a construction manager; the study recommended the use of game-based learning (GBL) because of how it boosts learning and knowledge development. They identify that under a collaborative adoption of GBL; primary, and leadership skills like motivation, facilitation, coaching, mindset changing, and communication are easily passed to the construction managers; the study related game's situations with organizational life as a form of simulations. Radhika (2020), identifies common leadership skills such as communication, motivation, creativity, positivity, feedback, delegating, trustworthiness, work ethics, conscientiousness, and dispute settlement. The study by Radhika (2020) further added that developing and implementing effective leadership skills should base on job duties, situations involved, Goals, objectives to be pursued, as well as client demands. Taking such a developmental initiative will be beneficial to internal and external organizational stakeholders. Every organization must therefore hone the leadership skills of their construction managers so that they can attain personal and corporate success. According to Odusami (2002); Nguyen, Ogunlana, and Lan (2004), the subject of leadership skills in construction/project management is very important considering that the industry's product is expensive, time-bound technically demanding, and involves managing a large and diverse project team. We expect a construction manager to be kitted to manage any sort of construction project (George and Shamas-ur, 2012). The construction industry's need for leadership skill development rank high compared to any other field of endeavour considering its place on national socio-economic development, the absence of adequate and relevant project-based leadership skills will ultimately breed poor performance of the construction managers and poor project delivery (Hillebrandt, 2000). Developing an effective construction manager's leadership skills becomes a primary answer to the problems experienced within the industry. According to Bryman (2004), modern leadership skills developments have gathered recent interest, therefore, requiring greater interest in diverse methodological approaches and optimistic development for (a) Improved measurement and analytical methods, (b) Greater use of meta-analyses in systematic reviews, (c) An increased interest in new leadership topics such as transformational leadership and charismatic leadership, (d) Better cross-cultural studies; and greater diversity research on the leadership and organizational contexts. Critical leadership skills development requirements should include; excellent communication skills, the ability to encourage others, feedback receipt mechanisms, delegating responsibilities, personal development, and training, reward packages, and being able to brief/inform. We must equip a successful construction manager to achieve the assigned projects in terms of cost, time, quality, safe environment, good health, and scope. According to Cadwell (2004), team performance is a measure of a construction manager's leadership development and work performance to hinge on team performance. The study highlights that applying the right leadership, and motivational strategy on construction managers is a bait to improve industrial performance; the research was able to differentiate between construction

managers, and leaders in terms of the skills they possess; the study sees management skills as the basis to developing leadership skills, the major differences outlines between management, and leadership was: leaders innovate; managers administer; leaders seek challenges; managers seek to maintain the status quo. Leaders think long term; managers think short-to mid-term, leaders motivate, and inspire; managers control, leaders worry about doing the right things; managers worry about doing things right and leaders have a wide circle of influence; managers` have limited influence.

According to Kumar (2009), successful construction or construction managers are effective and have strong management, and leadership skills, the study differentiated between what strong management is as opposed to having effective leadership skills. The study identifies basic competencies in leadership skills development as a tool that help construction managers manage their team, deliver the project successfully and become effective leader. The study asserts that while management skills can be acquired through experience and practice; leadership skills is often developed, and learned. Based on this study developing leadership skills as a tool for motivating construction managers becomes possible through job learning and development. The study identified the need to practice what's learned which includes:

1. Listening, and Influencing Skills: Active listening by a construction manager will help understand the subordinate, and be considerate to learn the operative perspective, collaborate, and make mutually beneficial decisions
2. Negotiation Skills and Communicating Skills are needed to make the management team or operative's members with opposite or shared interests work effectively because of an open, and honest communication platform.
3. Motivating, and Inspiring Teams deal with communicating developed vision consistently through enthusiastic vision sharing, and making management team members know how contributing to organization goals will breed self-satisfaction.
4. Team Building Skills are the skills that enable construction managers to help their team individually, and on a group level, to achieve personal, and corporate goals.

Hassan, and Abdussalam (2016), in a study on Dubai construction industry, were able to identify 20 core leadership skills that will lead to construction managers' performance, and that these set of skills are foundationally based on the quality of treatment team receive from their leaders. These skills include:

1. Communication Skills
2. Interpersonal Skills
3. Managing Conflict
4. Mentoring Skills
5. Controlling group performance
6. Building effective relationships
7. Decision-making

8. Planning skills
9. Sharing leadership
10. Motivational skills
11. Knowledge
12. Problem-solving
13. Negotiation
14. Confidence
15. Setting objectives
16. Prioritization
17. Strategic planning
18. Networking skills
19. Teamwork
20. Building bonds.

2.3 Identification of Literature Gap

Despite the identified studies as reviewed, there is still a gap on sufficient detailed examination of the core leadership skills, merits of using them, and their prospects.

3.0 Methodology

Considering the research questionnaires of this study, qualitative data will be required through adopting a descriptive survey design approach. This approach will help in gathering critical data that affords an opportunity to create essential models based on empirical research and to differentiate theory, assumptions, and facts from information gathered from the professionals. The technicalities of this thesis adopted a deductive approach by looking at theory, produces hypothesis from that theory, relates to the focus of the research, and tests that theory. This research is a logic positivist focus is to promote the idea of the experimentation strategy, testing theory to increase the predictability and outcomes. The population of this study was 60 construction operatives, project/human resource managers/coordinators/engineers, and top managers/company owners from registered Construction Companies in Nnewi, Awka, and Onitsha town, Anambra state. Since the population for this study is not that large, effort was made to administer the question to the 60 members on the sampling frame. The data set needed was quantitative data obtained through well-structured questionnaires. The sampling frame (Table 3.0) adopted for distributing the questionnaires are

Table 3.0 Sampling Frame Adopted for Distributing the Questionnaires

| Work Sections | Target Population |
|---|-------------------|
| Site – Operations or Construction Project Manager | 21 |
| Human Resource Management | 12 |
| Payroll Department | 3 |
| Head Office Department | 2 |
| Training/Development | 2 |
| Total | 40 |

Source: Business Place Records on CAC (2021)

3.1 Presentation and Analysis of Questionnaire Survey

Section 3.1 states the number of questionnaires administered as well and the number retrieved after fieldwork on the project under consideration. The details are highlighted in Table 3.1:

Table 3.1: Distribution of Questionnaire

| Study Area | Number of Questionnaire Administered | Number of Questionnaire Retrieved |
|------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| a) Nnewi | 25 | 18 |
| b) Onitsha | 17 | 11 |
| c) Awka | 18 | 11 |
| Total | 60 | 40 |
| Percentage | 100% | 66.67% |

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 3.1 shows there were 60 questionnaires administered but only 40 questionnaires were retrieved back, representing 66.67% of the original. This is a very high representation, since Okolie (2011), asserts that a range of response rates of 30-94% in the field of organization research is acceptable; the response rate of this study falls within the acceptable rate and therefore adequate. The questionnaires were administered to 16 Construction Operatives, 14 Construction Managers, 5 Project Managers/Coordinators/Project Engineers, and 5 Top Managers/Owners/HR Managers.

3.2 Various Leadership Skills use as Motivational Strategies for Construction Managers

Section 3.2 identified twenty (20) key leadership Skills used as Motivational Strategies for Construction Managers in construction sites in Anambra state, Nigeria. The question assessed the respondent's level of agreement with the identified leadership skills and motivational strategies that enhance construction managers' performance in the study area.

Table 3.2 Various Leadership Skills used as Motivational Strategies for Construction Managers

| Leadership Skills | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | M | R |
|--|----|----|----|---|---|-------|-----------------|
| Big Thinking, Being Plan Driven, and Visionaries | 17 | 22 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4.4 | 2 nd |
| Focusing on Processes | 19 | 14 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 4.275 | 3 rd |
| Risk-Taking | 15 | 14 | 10 | 1 | 0 | 4.075 | 5 th |
| Planning for the required Result, | 22 | 13 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 4.475 | 1 st |
| Team Building skills i.e. Motivational, inspiring Teams Skills | 13 | 21 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 4.2 | 4 th |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|----|----|----|---|---|-------|------------------|
| Seeking and obtaining accord from Participants | 10 | 11 | 17 | 2 | 0 | 3.725 | 14 th |
| Consistency in Confidence | 15 | 13 | 9 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 8 th |
| Flexibility | 11 | 18 | 10 | 1 | 0 | 3.975 | 9 th |
| Not Accepting Failure | 12 | 17 | 9 | 2 | 0 | 3.975 | 9 th |
| Not whining or Blaming but Problem Solving and Opportunists | 14 | 16 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 4.025 | 7 th |
| Communicating Skills, Listening, and influencing Skills | 15 | 16 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 4.075 | 5 th |
| Negotiation Skills and Managing Conflict, | 12 | 9 | 13 | 1 | 0 | 3.425 | 18 th |
| Interpersonal Skills, Problem-Solving and Networking Skills | 12 | 14 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 3.55 | 17 th |
| Mentoring Skills and Building Bonds | 14 | 13 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 3.625 | 16 th |
| Controlling Group Performance and Planning Skills. | 17 | 14 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 3.8 | 12 th |
| Decision Making | 19 | 6 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 3.625 | 16 th |
| Building Effective Relationships | 19 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 3.775 | 13 th |
| Gaining information and Sharing knowledge | 16 | 12 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 3.7 | 15 th |
| Setting Objectives | 25 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 3.925 | 11 th |
| Prioritization and Strategic | 13 | 17 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 3.625 | 16 th |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--------|--|
| Planning | | | | | | | |
| Average | | | | | | 3.9125 | |
| Where 5=Strongly agree,4=Agree,3=Slightly agree;2=Disagree,1=Strongly Disagree M:Mean Score and R= Ranking | | | | | | | |

Source: Field Survey (2022)

The results in Table 3.2 shows that leadership skills like Planning for the required Result(4.475), Big Thinking, Being Plan Driven and Visionaries(4.4), Focusing on Processes(4.275), Team Building skills i.e. Motivational, inspiring Teams Skills(4.2), Risk-Taking/Communicating Skills, Listening, and Influencing Skills(4.075), Not whining or Blaming but Problem Solving and Opportunists(4.025), Consistency in Confidence(4.0), Flexibility/Not Accepting Failure(3.975) and Setting Objectives(3.925). Also in the result, Table 4.1.2, revealed that the least leadership skills and motivational strategies were: Controlling Group Performance and Planning Skills(3.8), Building Effective Relationships(3.775), Seeking and obtaining accord from Participants(3.725), Gaining information and Sharing knowledge(3.7), Decision Making/ Mentoring Skills and Building Bonds/prioritization and strategic planning (3.625), Interpersonal Skills, Problem Solving and Networking Skills(3.55) and Negotiation Skills and Managing Conflict(3.425).

4.0 Findings

First, from the result in Table 3.2, the critical leadership skills that strongly serve as a motivational strategy for construction managers to increase productivity are: planning for required results; big thinking; being plan-driven or visionaries; focusing on process; team-building skills, i.e., motivational; communicating and inspiring team skills; listening and influencing skills; not whining or blaming but problem-solving and opportunism; consistency in confidence; flexibility; not accepting failure; and setting objectives. These leadership skills are productivity boosters, as rightly supported by the work of Hassan and Abdulsalam (2016) and Adrain (2004). If construction managers are to be motivated to effect desired change, appropriate intangible social incentives must be provided. This is what this table highlights.

5.0 Summary of Key Findings

The various leadership skills that can be used to motivate construction managers in the study area include communication, planning for the required result, flexibility, risk-taking, and focusing on the process. (See Table 3.2.)

6.0 Conclusion

Since leadership is the key to achieving work results, effective project delivery, and achieving an end goal, this study concludes that developing leadership skills such as flexibility and risk-taking in construction managers in Awka, Nnewi, and Onitsha will significantly and strategically impact their performance.

7.0 Recommendations

The examined leadership skills metrics be used by construction stakeholders and used as a motivational tool for construction managers in Anambra State to increase productivity and retention of construction employees.

8.0 Contribution to Knowledge

The study has opened new literature dimensions in the studies of construction managers' leadership skills development by examining the various leadership skills metrics to be used by construction stakeholders as a motivational tool for construction managers in Anambra State to increase productivity and retention of construction employees.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this manuscript.

Ethical Approval: Ethical approval is not required.

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