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Assessment of Challenges to Job Satisfaction of Multiskilled Quantity Surveyors in Consultancy Firms

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Abstract:

There is a general trend to develop skills and competencies across all professions. This development has necessitated an in-depth search on the satisfaction derived by multiskilled Quantity surveyors in consultancy firms. This research therefore appraised the challenges to job satisfaction of multi skilled Quantity Surveyors with a view to reducing turnover rate. Samples for this research work are multiskilled Quantity Surveyors in consultancy firms in Lagos State, and these were selected through snowballing. A total of 40 multi skilled Quantity Surveyors were identified and structured questionnaires were administered on these. The data gathered from 31 retrieved questionnaires were analyzed using mean and Relative Importance Index. The study revealed that though all the factors listed are important in satisfying an employee, however, salary wages attraction is most important. More so, multiskilled Quantity Surveyors still have challenges with welfare, job security, salary and entitlement among others. It is therefore recommended that payment of wages and salary should be given adequate attention; also, that regulatory authority should enforce firms giving adequate attention to employee welfare, and the need for employers to encourage employees to acquire training in special skills relevant to the firm's services through provision of incentives to assist them with their training.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, multiskilling, quantity surveying

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Employee satisfaction is essential to the success of any business. A high rate of employee contentedness is directly related to a lower turnover rate. Thus, keeping employees satisfied with their careers should be a major priority for every employer. While this is an established fact, the challenges faced by the personnel in the construction industry today are too many. It varies from location to location, companies, systems of operation and majorly personnel management in the construction sector. Extensive research has shown shortage of skills in the industry, and to counter this skill short fall, some productive workforce developed outside their job traditional boundaries to become multiskilled. Akinola (2016) defined multiskilling as the utilization strategy where personnel possess a range of skills appropriate for more than one work process and are used flexibly on a project or within an organization. Akinola (2016) further observed that multiskilling is based on the flexible application of skills that the personnel already possesses or is willing to acquire, and such personnel can be assigned to construction tasks based on their ability to perform the needed skill or task, not limited to traditional job boundaries. Multiskilling can also be viewed as a labor strategy, which seeks to utilize the current workforce more effectively and provide better career opportunities for construction workers by offering continuous employment on the site and within the company. With multiskilling, workers possess a set of skills that are appropriate for more than one work process and that can be deployed and used flexibly on a project or within an organization. While staying on one skill can give the intensity of focus, multiskilling can be paralleled to increasing the spread and extent of skill acquisition (Dada and Ekpe, 2006).

However, in the face of economic recession and high unemployment rate, multiskilled workers in the workforce have been observed to face peculiar challenges. Though Dada and Ekpe (2006) opined that multiskilling can enhance

employability of workers and hence an antidote of unemployment in a harsh economic condition, Camen and Zane (2010) and Rajasekaran (2002) observed that compensation and satisfaction of a multiskilled workforce is a matter of concern and confusion for both employer and employee because of the non-proportional compensation received by this class of workforce. This is because principal partners of firms would normally take advantage of multiskilled workforce to work beyond traditional job boundaries to gain economies of scale on personnel cost. The implication of this is that multiskilled employees are used to perform more functions by working across traditional job boundaries thereby leading to job stress and overloading the personnel. However, significant inadequacies in the motivation and satisfaction derived by personnel in such organizations have been observed. Such personnel remain in the organization like this because they do not have chances of better opportunity elsewhere. While multiskilled personnel are expected to perform multitasking that should ordinarily result in multi payments and compensations, instead their job descriptions are lumped together with one salary range.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to assess the challenges that multiskilled Quantity surveyors face in consultancy firms. The study attempts to allocate weight to the factors which makes the multiskilled employee satisfied or dissatisfied.

2. Literature Review

Job satisfaction is an affective or emotional response towards various aspects of an employee's work, it is a feeling that a worker has about his job or a general attitude towards work or a job and it is influenced by an employee's perception of his job (Robbins, 2003). Mosammod (2011) describes job satisfaction as how content an individual is with his or her job. Robbins and DeCenzo (2005) posited that job satisfaction could mean how people feel about their jobs and different aspects of their jobs, it is the extent to which employees like their work. It could also mean the sum of satisfaction across all facets of a job.

Furthermore, Ekta (2013) defined job satisfaction as a worker's sense of achievement and success on the job. Job satisfaction implies doing a job one enjoys, doing it well and being rewarded for one's efforts. So, simply put, job satisfaction is connected to how employee's personal expectations of work are in congruence with the actual outcomes. In the opinion of Ellickson and Logsdon (2002), job satisfaction is any blend of mental, physiological, and natural circumstances that bring about a man honestly saying 'I am pleased with my job'. It is generally perceived to be directly linked to productivity as well as to personal well-being. Job satisfaction further implies enthusiasm and happiness with one's work. It is the key ingredient that leads to recognition, income, promotion, and the achievement of other goals that lead to a feeling of fulfillment. Thus, keeping employees satisfied with their careers should be a major priority for every employer. Brenninger (2015) and Gregory (2013) argued that increasing customer satisfaction depends on highly motivated employees and staff motivation is based on satisfaction with their working circumstances and conditions. While this is a well-known fact in management practices, economic downturns like the current one seems to cause employers to ignore it. The studies further opined that dissatisfaction with the job may come from sources other than stress or poor fit between employee and job. Employers that are deemed unapathetic by their workers may be viewed as such because they appear to care exclusively about company revenues, rather than the employees that are working for them. This perception of an employer may lead to job dissatisfaction, and raise the company's turnover rate. Dissatisfaction may also arise, with the same result in turnover, when the work environment fails to have any flexibility or any source of amusement for the employees; the tone of the business will become stressful or tedious. The studies further x-rayed lack of communication in the workforce as a major contributor to dissatisfaction. This is usually the result when managerial staff is isolated and does not know how to relate with their employees on a personal or professional level. Bad communication leaves employees feeling disconnected from the organization.

Berghe (2011) classified job satisfaction into three components; an affective component, a cognitive component and a behavioural component. While the affective component refers to a feeling about a job, the cognitive component represents a belief in regard to a job. Often these two aspects are related. The behavioural component is an indicator for behavioural intentions towards a job such as getting to work in time or working hard. The study also reviewed the approaches job satisfaction; the first approach turns its attention to the characteristics of the job and it is called the information processing model. According to this model, employees gather information about the job, the workplace and the organisation and cognitively assess these elements in order to determine the level of satisfaction. The second approach suggests that the measurement of the level of job satisfaction is founded on 'social information' – information based on past behaviour and what others at work think. It shifts its attention to the effects of the context and the consequences of past behaviour, rather than to individual predispositions and rational decision-making processes. Therefore, job satisfaction is dependent on how others at work evaluate the workplace. This approach is called the social information processing model. The third approach indicates that job satisfaction relies on the characteristics or the dispositions of the employee. These dispositions can be based on experience or genetic heritage. Mosammod (2011) observed that job satisfaction is a collection of attitudes about specific facets of the job. Employees can be satisfied with some elements of the job while being simultaneously dissatisfied with others. Different types of satisfaction will lead to different intentions and behaviour.

3. Methodology

The multiskilled Quantity Surveyors in Consultancy firms in Lagos were identified using snowballing. Snowballing is a referrer method and through this, 40 multiskilled Quantity Surveyors in Lagos were identified. Questionnaires were administered on the list. The data gathered were analyzed using mean and Relative Importance Index (RII).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

4.1.1. Data Collection and Rate of Response

Out of 40 questionnaires distributed, 31 (77.50%) were retrieved while 9 (22.5%) were withheld. Judging from the antecedents of respondents in the construction industry, this is an encouraging response rate and it suggests that this rate of return was considered sufficient for the study as majority willingly supplied the information sought about their respective organisations.

4.1.2. Respondent's Profile

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Numbers of Partners		
1	12	38.70
2	13	41.90
3	5	16.10
4	1	3.20
Total	31	100.00
Qualification Obtained in QS		
HND	8	25.80
B.Sc/B.Tech	13	41.90
Post Graduate diploma	4	12.90
MSc	6	19.40
Total	31	100.00
Years of Experience		
1-5	8	25.80
6-10	8	25.80
11-15	4	12.90
16-20	5	16.10
Above 20	6	19.40
Total	31	100.00
	Mean years	11.87
Position		
Principal Partner	1	3.20
Senior Quantity Surveyor	1	3.20
Quantity Surveyor	29	93.60
Total	31	100.00

Table 1: Characteristics of the Respondents
Source: Field Survey (2018)

Table 1 indicated that of 13 (41.90%) of the sampled firms are managed as a Partnership with two partners, 12 (38.70%) are owned by Sole Proprietors, 5 (16.10%) are operated by 3 partners and 1 firm managed by 4 partners is the least on the table pooling 3.2%. Furthermore, 8 (25.8%) of the respondents are HND graduates, 13 (41.9%) had B.Sc/B.Tech, 4 (19.4%) had M.Sc/M.tech while 6 (12.9%) had post graduate diplomas. The Table further revealed that the average years of experience of the respondents is approximately 12 meaning that the level of experience is high and the intellectual capacity of the respondents is equally high.

Furthermore, from Table 1, out of the 31 sampled respondents, 29 (93.5%) occupies the position of Quantity Surveyors in their firms, while 1(3.2%) each are in the position of Principal Partner and Senior Quantity Surveyor.

4.1.3. Factors Enhancing Job Satisfaction

Job Satisfaction Factors	RII	Rank
Salary or wages attraction	0.93	1
Recognition of efforts at work	0.92	2
Welfare Measures	0.91	3
Training opportunities	0.90	4
Job Security	0.88	5
Being part of decision	0.86	6
Good communication	0.83	7
Workers involvement	0.82	8

Job Satisfaction Factors	RII	Rank
Work environment	0.81	9
Employee innovation and creativity	0.80	10
Job fitness	0.78	11
Working relationship	0.77	12
Supervisor support	0.75	13
Social group formation/unionism	0.71	14

Table 2: Job Satisfying Factors

Source: Field Survey (2018)

Employee satisfaction is fundamental to the growth and success of any business. A high rate of employee contentment is related to a lower turnover. Therefore, keeping employees satisfied with their careers should be a major priority for every employer. Table 2 depicts salary or wages attraction, with RII value of 0.93, recognition of efforts at work and welfare measures, both with RII value of 0.92 respectively as the major factors that promotes or enhances job satisfaction of staff. This is so because some personnel evaluate work more meaningfully because it provides the excitement of creativity and the opportunity to give something to them. But for most, the main purpose of work is to make money for living. However, this does not indicate that money is the only reward in a job. The least factors that enhance job satisfaction are working relationship, supervisor's support and social group formation/Unionism with values of 0.77, 0.75 and 0.71. The table further revealed that the least value among the variables of job satisfaction has a value of 0.71. This value is far above the average of 0.50, implying that all the variables have great impact in enhancing job satisfaction among Quantity Surveyors in the study area.

4.1.4. Challenges to Job Satisfaction

Challenges	RII	Rank
Poor welfare measure	0.92	1
Job insecurity	0.91	2
Being part of decision making	0.90	3
Inadequacy of salary or wages	0.89	4
Inadequate compensation commensurate to output	0.86	5
Recognition of effort at work	0.80	6
Lack of training and work involvement	0.78	7
Poor working relationship	0.77	8
Lack of empowerment	0.75	9
Inconsistent job rotation	0.74	10
Inappropriate job fitness	0.70	11
Poor communication	0.63	12
Vague objectives	0.61	13
Poor work environment	0.58	14
Inappropriate innovation and creativity of employees	0.54	15
Poor supervisor support	0.45	16

Table 3: Challenges to Job Satisfaction

Source: Field Survey (2018)

The challenges today in the construction industry is not limited to raw materials, financial and human resources, it equally involves satisfying, compensating and retaining productive workforce. Employee satisfaction is a complex concept, with many issues. Table 4.4 above shows that the major challenges to job satisfaction of multiskilled Quantity Surveyors are poor welfare measures, job insecurity and inadequacy of salary or wages; these have values of 0.92, 0.91 and 0.90 respectively. The table also identifies inappropriate innovation and creativity of employees and poor supervisor support as the least challenge with values of 0.55 and 0.45.

4.2. Discussion of Findings

4.2.1. Factors That Promote Job Satisfaction

Even though the factors that promote job satisfaction in the diversified Quantity Surveying firms in Lagos state are numerous, the most prominent factor is the salary. This could be on the ground that the labourers deserve their wages. Among the factors that are also important is the accessibility to training opportunities as well as welfare measures which play significant roles in satisfying workers. This equally agrees with Mosammod (2011) whose research showed that salary, efficiency in work, fringe supervision, and co-worker relation are the most important factors contributing to job satisfaction. The report of Mosammod (2011) emphasizes the submission of Jed and Martin (2011) that salary, safe working conditions, motivation are directly related to the characteristics of job satisfaction. The result is also in tandem

with Ekta (2013) except that in this study while social group formation is the least factor, in Ekta(2013), innovation and creativity of employees ranked least.

These findings are in harmony with Bidyut and Mukulesh (2014) where it was established that salary is the most important factor for influencing job satisfaction of employees. However, apart from salary, the report observed that the influence of supervisor support, healthy working environment, proper work-life balance, career opportunities and promotion, proper training and development opportunities, are also very important factors for enhancing employee's job satisfaction.

4.2.2. Challenges to Job Satisfaction of Multiskilled Quantity Surveyors

It is common now that employees are always in search of better career opportunities. A more important challenge an organization faces is to retain a productive workforce. Analysis from this research showed that the major challenges of keeping this productive work force were poor welfare measure, job insecurity, inadequate compensation commensurate to output and inadequacy of salary or wages. This is agreement with Prateek (2015) which observed that employees identified job security, benefits (especially health care) with the importance of retirement benefits, compensation/pay, opportunities to use skills and abilities, and feeling safe in the work environment rising with the age of the employee as very significant factors. However, this study differs on the ground that salary and wages rank high among the challenges productive workers of the multiskilled workforce face.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

It is in the best interest of organizations with multiskilled personnel to retain this unique workforce, because it is common now that employees are always in search of better career opportunities. It is highly imperative that employers place emphasis on the critical factors revealed by this study to influence employee satisfaction. Salary/wages of the employee rank highest among the factors, others include poor welfare measures, job insecurity and inadequate compensation commensurate to output. In the light of these, this study recommends that Nigerian Institute of Quantity Surveyors (NIQS) and other allied bodies should be proactive by influencing Quantity Surveying firms to pay attention to Codes of Conduct in respect of the welfare of professionals working in registered firms. Also, that payment of wages and salaries should be timely and done proportionally to qualification, productivity and performance. Management of Quantity Surveying consultancy outfits should encourage multiskilling of their employees through provision of incentives to support them in acquiring training in developing special skills relevant to the organization's services.

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