

## **A Pragmatic Review of Workforce Motivation, De-motivation and Job Performance in the South African construction industry**

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### **Abstract**

The construction industry employs a high percent of workforce with the highest record of job losses when compared to other industrial sectors. Notwithstanding, the demand for best performance in construction activity has also increased dramatically. South Africa is among the most financially advanced countries in Africa with only few large construction firms. The biggest challenge in the South African construction industry is an acute shortage of skilled workforce. Most of the construction firms are regarded as unorganized and fragmented in nature. This paper is focused on reviewing the workforce motivation and their impact on job performance in the South Africa's construction industry. The review is part of an ongoing research, which is focused on resolving the current issues of unemployment, shortage of skilled workforce, and poverty in the industry. The paper creates an insight into the construction workforce motivation in the South Africa's construction industry and how the work productivity is influenced.

**Keywords:** workforce motivation, project performance, motivation theories, and contractual procedure.

### **1. Introduction**

The construction industry has a high percent of workforce with the highest record of job losses when compared to other industrial sectors (Rosen *et al.*, 2001; ETA/ Business Relation Group, 2004). The nature of construction industry allows for the construction companies to be contracted for specific projects, which they become redundant after project completion, except when new projects are awarded to them. The case is not different in the South Africa's construction industry, where most construction employees are regarded as casual workers and they are exposed to risks associated with ephemeral workforce, harsh weather conditions, poor skills development, and training for its recruitment purposes. It is important to know that for a world distinguished by competition, customer focus and the need for speed and flexibility requires the input of people to accomplish the results (Opu, 2008 citing Storey, 2001).

South Africa has enormous potential as an investment destination, offering a unique combination of highly developed first world economic infrastructure with a vibrant emerging economy (South Africa Info, 2013). The country is regarded as one of the most advanced, broad-based industrial and productive economies in Africa. Regardless of the macro-economic stability, the market infrastructure is still below average with an acute shortage of skilled workforce, unemployment, and poverty (Business Monitor International, 2013). World Bank (2013) reports that South Africa operates relatively diversified economy, but the country has one of the highest rates of inequality in the world. This has also contributed to these problems confronting the construction industry. The recent reform in the South Africa's construction industry is focused on ensuring that the construction employees gain the workforce

experience to consolidate their craftsmanship, supervisory, and professional capabilities (CIDB, 2007). Previous studies have shown that even talented employees with excellent technical and project management skills can perform poorly if they are not motivated effectively (Wiley, 1997; Snell, 1999; Germann, 2004). Motivation can be adopted as a means of inspiring, encouraging and stimulating an employee or project teams to achieve great accomplishments. Considering the identified challenges in the industry, it is essential to motivate the workforce appropriately in order to achieve project success. Why? The level of motivation of an employee and /or team can affect all aspects of project results, which include having a direct impact to the project objectives (Peterson, 2007).

The shift from a predominant first world oriented construction environment to developing world environment in South Africa has infused a labour intensive market in the construction industry, where the labour force plays a prevalent role in the industry. For example, a low level of performance resulting from poor job satisfaction can create a negative impact in the industry. The complex, dynamic, and uncertain nature of the construction industry requires a precise and motivated workforce to attain the desired goals. This paper assesses the impact of workforce motivation on job performance in the South Africa's construction industry. In order to achieve this aim, the theoretical framework of motivation/ de-motivation and the contractual procedure/ project performance in the South Africa's construction industry are discussed.

## **2. Theoretical Framework of Motivation and De-motivation**

Motivation is a psychological feature which is embedded on the ability to alter the state of imbalance or instability (Ackerson, 2010 citing Encarta, 2010). This psychological stability depends on one's capacity to adapt. According to Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance (2006), an individual is motivated to maintain consistency. This requires a process which a person is triggered to work for the achievement of his own aims and goals. The determination of an individual to perform may be driven by the individual's effort or the job itself and the tasks. A positive attitude towards one's job is associated with high level of job satisfaction (Bowen *et al.*, 2008). Job satisfaction consists of multidimensional constructs, which include work itself, salary level, conditions of service, performance appraisal procedures, opportunities for advancement, the nature and extent of supervision, and relationships with co-workers (Brunetto and FarrWharton, 2002). Job satisfaction has remained one of the most studied concepts of organization's bottom line (Judge *et al.*, 1995). Numerous studies on job satisfaction emphasize that work environment and workplace facilities influence job attitude (Lambert *et al.*, 2001; Laurie, 2005). The literature scan reveals a wide knowledge of employee job satisfaction in various industries with only few studies in the construction industry. It is therefore, important to understand that the concept of job satisfaction is clearly linked and invariably used interchangeable with motivation. For the purpose of this review, the paper focuses on employee motivation but this cannot be effectively reviewed without a clear understanding of the force behind the motivational drivers which is job satisfaction.

Originally, employers and/ or organizations have sought for various ways to motivate their employees towards job satisfaction in order to attain the desired project or organizational goals. The basic understanding of what motivate people was embedded on the whip and carrot approach. In the 1950's after the Second World War, the theories of motivation became visible through the three notable founding theories; Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Douglas McGregor's X and Y theory, and Fredrick Herzberg's two factor theory. These founding theories have been criticized by many academias. Since the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, management scientists, sociologists and psychologist have studied on how to motivate human behaviors from different angles, which have generated a lot of management theories of motivation which can be referred to as the contemporary theories (Parkin *et al.*, 2009; Seiler *et al.*, 2012). Several attempts have tried to put forward a general theory of motivation but unfortunately, each of these models has its weaknesses and gaps. Most of the contemporary theories are interlinked to the early founding theories and in most cases; they give further explanations to the founding theories. Figure 1 represents the theoretical framework of motivation/ de-motivation to be adopted for the research. For the purpose of this review, this paper categorizes the contemporary theories as follows;

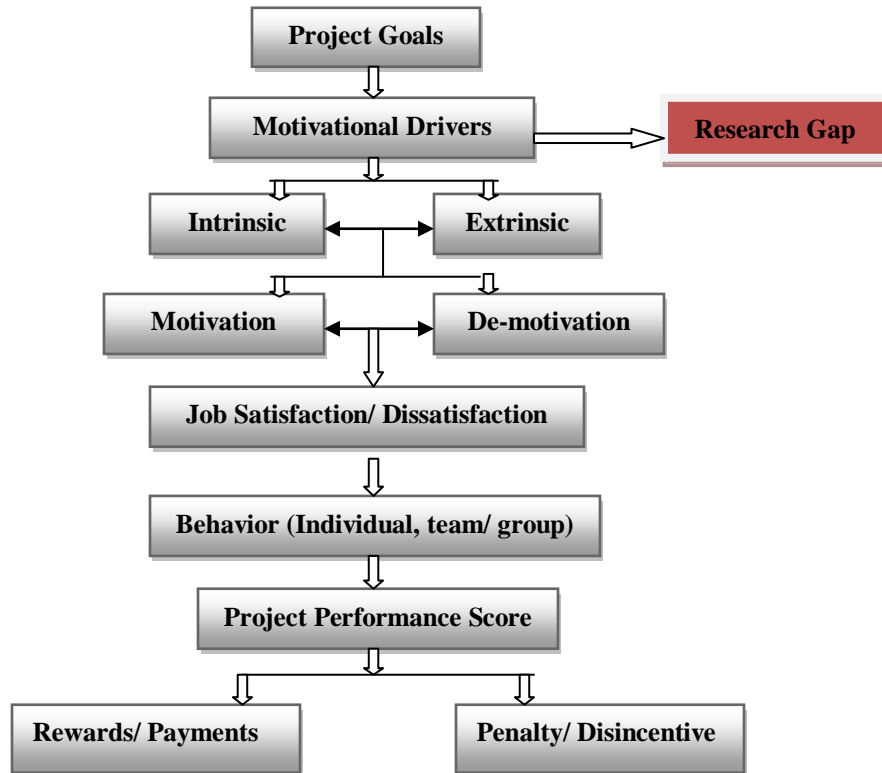


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework of Motivation/ De-motivation Process in the construction industry

## 2.1 The Content Theories

These comprise of the **need theories** and **job content theories**, which explain why it is important to consider the individual needs of employees with regard to work motivation (Seiler *et al.*, 2012). One of the earliest and best known content theories is the Marlow's hierarchy of **need theory**, which was developed by psychologist Abraham Marlow in 1943. This theory is based on a *satisfaction-progression* process, where an individual satisfies a lower level need, the next higher need in the hierarchy becomes the primary motivator. Regardless the rigidity of the model to explain the dynamic and unstable characteristics of employee needs, it laid the foundation for Alderfer's ERG theory which was introduced in 1969. The Alderfer's ERG theory is based on *frustration-regression* process, where an individual is continually frustrated in trying to satisfy growth needs, relatedness will re-emerge. David McClelland (1961) in his book named 'The Achieving Society' proposes a context for understanding the needs of people, which holds significance in understanding motivations and behaviors. It is subdivided into three categories; the need for achievement, need for affiliation, and need for power. Generally, the need theories uphold that an individual is motivated to do something if he or she comes across a certain need that may be accomplished directly or indirectly by performing the work (Maslow, 1954; Alderfer, 1972; McClelland, 1965).

The **job content theories** retain that only aspects related to the job content can satisfy and motivate people to work (Hackman and Oldham, 1975). Herzberg (1973) further explains this theory by proposing a factor motivation theory in close link with Maslow's theory as *motivation-hygiene*. The motivators fulfill an individual's needs for the meaning and personal growth while hygiene factors can create dissatisfaction if they are mishandled. Douglas McGregor's theory X and theory Y integrate motivation with management philosophies from the scientific management with its reliance on extrinsic motivators, and also with the new wave management with emphasis on intrinsic motivating factors (Parkin *et al.*,

2009). The theory X illustrates a pessimistic view while the theory Y presents an optimistic view of the employee's nature and behavior at work. For example, pessimistic view may include resistant to change or self-centered while optimistic view believes that the intrinsic motivators are used to promote self-control and self direction to employees to work effectively. The theory Z emerged from the theories of X and Y focusing on the organization rather than the individual worker, proposing on the corporate culture as a means of control (Parkin *et al.*, 2009). It offers the notion of a hybrid management style which has a combination of American and Japanese management styles, this creates a strong organization culture which values a working environment where family, cultures, traditions, and social institutions are regarded as equally important as the work itself, thereby promoting high productivity, high employee morale, and satisfaction (McAuley *et al.*, 2006).

## 2.2 The Process or Cognitive Theories

They define motivation in terms of a rational cognitive process, and focus on behavior as a result of the conscious decision making process (Seiler *et al.*, 2012). They try to understand how and why people are motivated. The concept of these theories is supported by Adam's equity theory, Vroom's expectancy theory, Locke's goal setting theory, and Skinner's reinforcement theory. Equity theory explores the individual's motivation to work based on the fairness or sense of equality he or she detects in the relationship, and the amount of efforts to the benefits received (Rosen, 2011). Vroom's expectancy theory is based on the idea that people believe that there are relationships between the effort they put forth at work, the performance they achieve from the effort, and the rewards they receive from their effort and performance (Nelson and Quick, 2003). The goal setting theory states that specific and challenging goals along with appropriate feedback contribute to higher and better task performance. For example, if an individual sets his/ her own goals, he/ she will be motivated to achieve these goals by virtue of having set them. Reinforcement theory assumes that people behave as they do because of the kind of consequences they experience as a result of their behaviors (Skinner, 1969; Steers and Porter, 1991).

## 2.3 Goal or Organization Commitment

This involves the setting of incentive goals to propel the motivation and commitment of employees to impact on the attractiveness and expectancy of goal attainment (Hollenbeck and Klien, 1987). Goals are proven to be an effective motivation tactic; therefore they should be set high enough to encourage high performance and also low enough to be attainable. **Goal commitment** is the degree of determination one can adopt to achieve an accepted goal, which can enhance by two primary factors such as importance and self-efficacy (Locke and Latham, 2002). Importance implies the features that make attaining a goal significant while self-efficacy is the belief that one can attain the goal (Locke and Latham, 2002). **Organization commitment** is the strength of bond a person has with the entire organization (Lambert *et al.*, 2005). This is regarded as the reflective of the magnitude of employees' fidelity to the organization.

## 2.4 Organizational Justice

People are naturally responsive to the justice of events and situations in different contexts (Tabibnia *et al.*, 2008). The perception of employees about the fair treatment in the organization can influence the individual's subsequent attitudes and behaviors. The principle of organizational justice is anchored on the perception of inequality in distributive issues. The equality on how and what decisions to make considering the rewards can significantly affect motivation towards achieving the client's goals (Bierhoff *et al.*, 1986). There are three key theories of organizational justice namely; distributive, procedural, and interactional justice. **Distributive justice** is the treatment of equal basis of employees, where the employees are satisfied because they feel that the rewards have been equally distributed to their input. **Procedural justice** focuses on the fairness of managers in decision making or dealing with employees in order to attain motivation and commitment (Colquitt, 2004). **Interactional justice** deals with whether or not employees believe that they are treated fairly when decisions are implemented. Murtaza *et al.* (2011) further distinguish that the procedural justice deals with the means while the distributive justice treats the ends.

### **3 Review of the Contractual Procedure and Project Performance in the South Africa's Construction Industry**

The construction sector in South Africa is recognized as very large, diverse and complex in nature with vast number and range of employees (CETA, 2008). Notwithstanding, the total number of liquidations has decreased by 39.4 percent in March, 2012 by MAT values of 158 as against 222 in March, 2011 and the employment in construction has also declined by 14.3 percent between 2008 and 2010, 6.7 percent in 2011 and 4.4 percent in 2012 with current total population of 986, 000 employees (State of the Construction Industry, 2012). The contribution of the South Africa's construction industry to gross domestic product has also declined from 7 percent in 1970 to approximately 3 percent in 2000 (Dlungwana *et al.*, 2002). In 2012, the contribution of the construction industry to GDP is regarded as insignificant with relative size of 3 percent of GDP (Statistics South Africa, 2012). Rust and Koen (2011) attribute that the slowdown in the industry's growth as a result of lack of national planning coordination. On the hand, the pursuit for fair, transparent and better contracting strategy began as far back in 1995 with the establishment of procurement reform, focusing on restructuring the tendering process to create employment and easy access for small, medium and micro enterprises. This reform has remained significant in the public sector as a policy tool to streamline the discriminatory and unfair practices in the industry (Bolton, 2006).

Over the years, South Africa has recorded acute labour market challenges due to the inability of the economy to create enough jobs to keep pace with the growing labour force. The government's commitment to economic transformation led to the introduction of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEARS) strategy in 1996. The GEAR strategy is focused on creating a competitive fast-growing economy of an average annual employment growth of 2.9 percent, or 270, 000 jobs per year (Burger and Woolard, 2005). The economic growth has been much slower than the predicted through GEAR strategy following the massive financial crisis between 2008 and 2009. Lehloesa (2000) further emphasizes that the GEARS strategy has limited the role of the nation to the creation of a stable environment for market only. The hallmarks of GEAR are tight monetary and fiscal policies, the liberalization of the economy and privatization (Lehloesa, 2000 citing Osborne, 1997). Regardless of these challenges, South Africa government has shown commitment towards improving the labour market. In the construction sector, the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act was initiated to stipulate how tenders should be evaluated and awarded to the bidder with highest weighted points relative to price, and specific goals but the provision for quality in tender evaluation was not properly specified (CIDB, 2006). The Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) was established in 2000 with the mandate to monitor project implementation and evaluate their impact. In spite of this, the CIDB (2013) reports that only around 50 percent of South Africa's construction tenders are evaluated on quality.

South Africa has a sophisticated construction sector with a large number of employers, but about 95 percent of the firms can be characterized as small and micro enterprises (CETA, 2008). It comprises of a handful of large contractors of about five leading construction firms representing 75 percent of the total industry output (BMI, 2013). The main contractors engage in the business strategy of subcontracting with the view of avoiding uncertainties in the construction market (CIDB, 2013). Subcontracting has become predominant in the industry with over 70 percent of the building projects and 30 percent of the civil engineering works being subcontracted out (Ogwueleka and Maritz, 2013 citing CIDB, 2013). This allows for the subcontractors to play major role in the infrastructure development. The contract relationship between the main contractors and subcontractors are ad hoc, where there is no formal contract, this restrains the advocacy for best performance through equity in the allocation of risks. Hinze and Tracey (1994) stipulate that subcontractors play significant role in the project execution but only little is published about the actual process by which they are initiated or how award arrangements are made. This implies that the majority of the construction workforce is not considered in the contract provision,

although CIBD has made provision in contractor’s performance evaluation criteria for the large construction firms to encourage the small and micro construction firms but this provision is limited. Motivation has being seen as a means of improving productivity, not only by the contractor but also by the client. South Africa government as the major client in the construction industry has to take up a leading role towards workforce motivation.

#### 4. Workforce Motivation Tools

The concept of motivation refers to ‘internal factors that impel action and the external factors that can act as inducement to action (Holmes, 2011). Motivation is tied to the human behavior, thereby possessing the ability to influence the management’s attempt to increase productivity improvement whether positively or negatively (Gonzalez, 1991). Holmes (2011) emphasizes the importance of creating an ‘umbrella’ strategy to manage motivation of all employees, which may incorporate procedures for setting goals, challenging tasks and ensuring progress is monitored and all achievements are acknowledged, and also focusing on promoting good co-worker relationships. Cox *et al.* (2006) further categorize motivation processes into three groups namely; goal setting, employee needs and employee rewards/ incentives. It is important to understand that there are basically two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. **Intrinsic motivation** is the motivation that comes from inside of an individual rather than from external or outside reward, however the individual may seek rewards but he/ she derives pleasure or satisfaction in completing a task (Bainbridge, 2013). **Extrinsic motivation** is the motivation an individual derives from outside or external, the individual is motivated to perform the task in anticipated satisfaction of some reward even if he/ she has little or no interest to do it (Bainbridge, 2013).

The literature scan on motivation theories re-affirms that employee needs, employee rewards/ incentives, and goal setting are fundamental elements of the contemporary theories of motivation; this is in line with the study of Cox *et al.* (2006). This paper further identifies the organizational culture as a means of promoting workforce motivation.

##### 4.1 Motivation through employee needs

People work for various reasons and each of them has different motivations for working. The work environment impacts the morale and motivation, and the quality of their lives. Haden (2012) stipulates that ‘employees will care about your business when you care about them first’. Everyone has a need to be recognized and appreciated, a desire to feel that their work has meaning, and a wish to be treated with dignity and respect. There are basically three types of need theories discussed, while the list of needs differ slightly among these theories but they all hold that an unsatisfied need is a source of individual motivation. Figure 2 shows the need-based approaches to motivation.

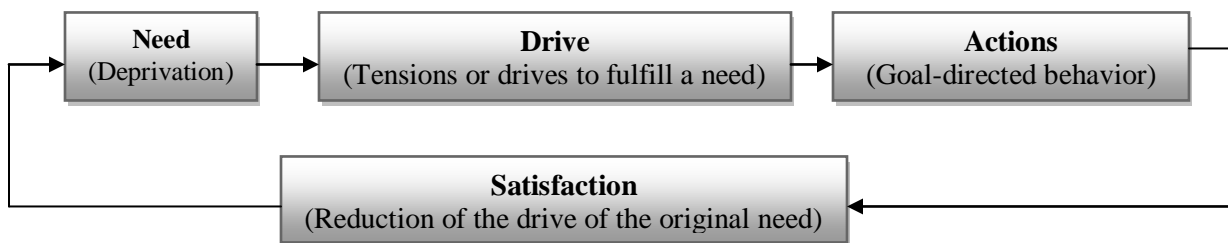


Figure 2: The flow chart of need-based approaches to employee motivation (Ajang, 2007)

##### 4.2 Motivation through employee rewards/ incentives

Rewards and incentives in the workplace have benefits for both employees and employers. It is no longer about getting cash bonus, but rather recognition for a job well done. The recognition is typically used to reward employee for a behavior or to recognize an employee for exceptional performance and productivity, this increases the employee’s morale, job satisfaction, and involvement in the organizational functions. Likewise, Whitney (2010 citing Tom McMullen, North American reward practice leader, Hay

Group) states ‘if you want to get results, you need to have the behaviors to achieve the results, and rewards and incentives are reinforcers of behaviors...’ Kohn (1993) argues that rewards are ineffective because people do exactly what it takes to get a reward and no more. Nelson (2013) emphasizes that all of his concerns are true if only inadequate goal setting is done, not because rewards don’t work. For example, if you set fuzzy goals, then you will produce fuzzy results, but if a goal clearly focuses on a desired behavior, such as risk taking, creativity, or problem solving, rewarding the behavior will produce more of it.

#### **4.3 Motivation through goal setting and commitment**

The mere presence of a goal does not motivate employees or individuals. The goals should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely so as to encourage employee motivation and commitment, the absence of these characteristics will only infuse corruption, dishonesty and cutting corners (Bennett, 2009). Schweitzer *et al.* (2004) stipulate that people have general inclination to be dishonest if they fall short of their goals. Latham (2004) states four reasons why goals motivate, first, goals give direction therefore goals should be set carefully. Second, goals energize people and tell them not to stop until they reach that point. Third, having a goal provides a challenge, where people attain the goal; they feel a sense of accomplishment. Four, goals urge people to be creative.

#### **4.4 Motivation through organizational culture and commitment**

Heathfield (2013) emphasizes that the keys to financial success and a profitable business are not the strategies or the systems of the firm but rather the character and skills of the employers. The company culture affects the way in which employees behave in the organization. This can be viewed as the unique pattern of shared values, attitudes, rituals, beliefs, norms, expectations, socialization, and assumptions of employees in the organization (Nongo and Ikyanyon, 2012 citing Armstrong, 2009). It is pervasive and powerful as it either encourages or hampers change in the organization; thereby creating a direct impact on the employee’s commitment to the organization. It is essential to give employees an equal opportunity and accepting that each of them has unique personality and special role to play in the development and success of the organization.

#### **Research Methodology**

This paper assesses the impact of employee motivation on work productivity. The exploratory nature of this study requires a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. For quantitative approach, surveys through questionnaires were found effective because of the relative ease of obtaining standard data appropriate for achieving the objectives of this study. A questionnaire survey was used to get information from respondents in order to assess their perceptions on workforce motivation. Amendments were made on the drafted questionnaire based on the suggestions of the reviewers. According to Farrell (2011), the use of qualitative method for data collection may be difficult to get an answer but the data captured are rich. Personal interviews were conducted with some respondents to clarify their answers. The study population comprises of project stakeholders who are involved in both building and civil engineering works in Gauteng Province of South Africa. Gauteng is the smallest of the nine provinces in South Africa with the highest population of about 12.3 million. It is regarded as the economic centre of South Africa, which accounts for over 34.8 percent of the country’s total GDP. Most of the construction companies have their headquarters in the Gauteng province and the province has recorded the largest infrastructural development in South Africa. Kothari (2003) stipulates that survey protocol of random sampling procedures allows a relatively small number of people to represent a much larger population.

The study targeted project stakeholders comprising of clients, designers, consultants, project managers, contractors and sub-contractors. First, the questionnaire was sent out through open access capturing project stakeholders in Gauteng, and second, the questionnaire was also sent out electronically to sixty-five (65) project stakeholders. Majority of the respondents did not response, therefore face to face delivery was adopted to promote clarification of any arising queries and also raise response rate. A total

number of 45 questionnaires were administered to the construction professionals, but 14 opted out due to varied reasons, only 31 construction professionals participated in the research with response rate of 69%.

### Data Analysis and Discussion

This section presents the analysis and discussion of the findings obtained from the copies of the administered questionnaire. Table 1 reveals the demographic data of respondents. The analysis shows that respondents are involved at different construction sectors, thus their responses can be generalized for the construction industry. Table 1 discloses that 46 percent of the respondents have more than 10 years of working experience in the construction industry, 21 percent have between 8 to 10 years, 18 percent have between 5 to 7 years, and 15 percent have between 2 to 4 years therefore their responses are of great value to this research. The contract procedure uncovers that 73 percent of the respondents have been involved in both partnering and non-partnering projects. A total of 54 percent of the respondents are engaged in projects with average contract sum of between R20million to R50million.

<i>Table 1: The demographic data of respondents</i>			
	Frequency	Percent%	Cumulative percent
<i>Profession of Respondents (N = 52)</i>			
Clients	10	19	19
Designers	5	10	29
Consultants	11	21	50
Project Managers	6	12	62
Contractors	12	23	85
Subcontractors	8	15	100
<i>Construction Industry Sector</i>			
Public sector	12	23	23
Private sector	8	15	38
Both	32	62	100
<i>Working experiences</i>			
Less than 1 year	0	0	0
2 to 4 years	8	15	15
5 to 7 years	9	18	31
8 to 10 years	11	21	52
More than 10 years	24	46	100
<i>Contract procedure</i>			
Partnering	8	15	15
Non-partnering	6	12	27
Both	38	73	100
<i>Average Contract Sum in last 12 months</i>			
Less than R 1m	8	15	15
R1m to R20m	11	21	36
R20m to R50m	28	54	90
R50m to R 100m	5	10	100
Above R100m	0	0	0
<i>Project Type</i>			
Civil engineering	8	15	15
Building/ Electrical	23	44	59
Both	21	41	100

### *The effect of compensation plan on work productivity*

This examines the impact of the compensation plan on the employees' inputs towards project productivity in the industry. Figure 1 reveals that 36 percent of the respondents agreed that it is motivating and 27 percent of respondents also agreed that it is moderately motivating, while 18 percent agreed that it is highly motivating. Only 9 percent agreed that it is slightly motivating and least motivating. This analysis shows that a high percentage of the respondents believed that compensation plan can improve the work productivity and performance.



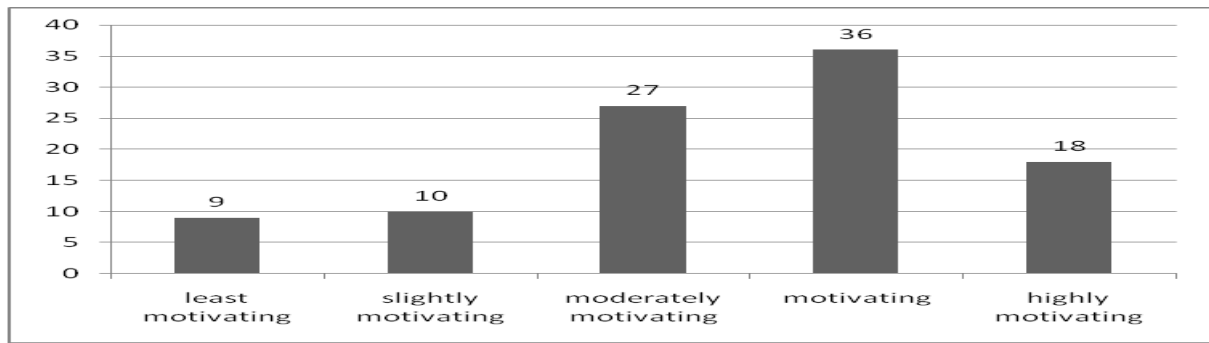


Figure 1: The effect of compensation plan on work productivity

This section is to seek the respondents' opinions on the most preferred compensation plan and also on how these compensation plans can influence construction workforce motivation on a construction site. Each of the attributes affected by compensation plan is ranked based on the relative importance index (RII) using the following expression:

$$RII = \frac{\sum w}{A \times N} \quad \text{Equation (1)}$$

Where 'w' is the weight assigned to each attribute by the respondents and ranges from 1 to 5, 'A' represents the highest weight and 'N' is the total number of respondents.

**Table 2: Most preferred motivational tools amongst construction workforce**

Motivational tools	RII	Rank
Recognition/ Prestige	0.865	4 <sup>th</sup>
Fair pay	0.812	6 <sup>th</sup>
Rewards and incentives	0.908	1 <sup>st</sup>
Promotion/ Prospect for growth	0.782	8 <sup>th</sup>
Fairness in decision making	0.876	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Challenging tasks or goals	0.768	9 <sup>th</sup>
Security	0.824	5 <sup>th</sup>
Training	0.899	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Work environment	0.790	7 <sup>th</sup>

**Table 3: Impact of employee motivation on work productivity**

Attributes	RII	Rank
Improved morale	0.873	4 <sup>th</sup>
More open communication in workplace	0.798	7 <sup>th</sup>
Reduced absenteeism	0.912	1 <sup>st</sup>
Low conflict/ reduced level of complaints	0.856	5 <sup>th</sup>
Increased job satisfaction	0.877	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Timely completion	0.894	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Organizational commitment	0.813	6 <sup>th</sup>
Improved working relationship	0.784	8 <sup>th</sup>

The results of the analysis reveal the three most preferred motivational tools amongst construction workforce as 'rewards and incentives', 'training', and 'fairness in decision making'. Table 3 shows the impact of employee motivation on work productivity, 'reduced absenteeism' is ranked first, followed by 'timely completion' as the second ranked, and 'increased job satisfaction' as the third ranked.

## 5. The way forward

Most the studies conducted on employee motivation in the construction industry are focused on the main contractors with less emphasis on the subcontractors. In South Africa's construction industry, the subcontractors play major role in project execution, where the few key players in the construction industry are awarded project contracts and they subcontract over 70 percent of the building projects and 30 percent of the civil engineering works. The existing contract arrangement does not make provision to include the subcontractors, although the new performance assessment criteria mandate the key players in the industry to encourage the small and micro enterprises to rise. It is important to know that most contractors are concerned with being profitable in order to remain in business; therefore this may not be enforceable. Likewise, the small and micro enterprises (mainly the subcontractors) are also desperate to get project contracts from the main contractors at any cost, even when it is not favorable to them. The unfavorable state of the South Africa's construction industry undermines the confidence of new entrants.

There is no doubt that the government has made great efforts towards improving project performance in the construction industry, but the actual players (subcontractors) are neglected in the provision. It is therefore, necessary to incorporate the subcontractors in the contract arrangements and allow the main contractors to play supervisory role in ensuring the project completion. This review is based on the interviews conducted with the regulatory bodies and project stakeholders in the South Africa's construction industry. The findings of the analysis reveal the three most preferred motivational tools amongst construction workforce as 'rewards and incentives', 'training', and 'fairness in decision making'. The incorporation of these motivation tools in compensation plan will not only encourage new entrants but also reduce absenteeism at work, encourage timely completion, and increase job satisfaction.

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