

Construction Workers' Satisfaction with Work Provision Requirement Dimensions in Ghana's Construction Industry

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ABSTRACT

This paper, sought to empirically assess and analyze workers' satisfaction with different dimensions of work provision requirement of the construction industry in Ghana. It involved a cross-sectional survey that used a self-administered structured questionnaire administered to five hundred respondents of building construction workers. The findings indicate that though workers are satisfied with some work provision requirement dimension items significantly, most of the workers are very dissatisfied with working environment and work benefit of the work provision requirement in Ghana. The management of construction firms in Ghana and policy makers are called upon to focus and redirect attention and effort to ensuring that work provision requirement that workers are dissatisfied with are improved significantly to meet workers expectations. The paper contributes to the general body of knowledge in the area of workers' satisfaction in developing countries particularly in Ghana's construction industry. Theoretical and managerial implications are discussed.

Keywords: *workers satisfaction, construction workers, construction industry, work provision requirement, job satisfaction*

1. INTRODUCTION

The construction industry is closely linked to the economy of every country and contributes to the growth of that economy. If the construction sector and the economy of a country are so closely linked, then it makes sense to effectively manage the human resources within that industry (James, Braam & Kingma, 2012). Construction workers are exposed to risks that differ from general industry relative to occupational health and safety (OHS). They are exposed to a variety of health hazards, namely: noise, resulting in noise induced hearing loss (NIHL); skin diseases from close contact with irritant or sensitizing materials; respiratory irritation from dusts, fumes and gases; as well as developing more serious lung diseases related to exposure to asbestos and other fibrogenic materials (Smallwood & Ehrlich, 2001). In view of this, it is important for construction firms to provide the necessary work provision requirement for their workers to work and be satisfied with the job. Job satisfaction is important in everyday life to both employers and their workers. In the view of Spector (1997) organizations have significant effects on the people who work for them and some of those effects are reflected in how people feel about their work. This makes job satisfaction an issue of substantial importance for both employers and employees.

Workers' satisfaction regarding different dimensions of work provision requirement in Ghana's construction industry is an area that lacks empirically justified documentations. The construction industry workers have expectations and they are satisfied when these

expectations are met. By the researcher's observation there is a widespread dissatisfaction of work provision requirement in Ghana among building construction workers. As far as the researcher knows, no empirical study has been conducted to explore the dimensions of work provision requirement for which construction workers are satisfied or dissatisfied within Ghana's construction industry. There is, therefore, the need to empirically assess and analyze the phenomenon in order to provide direction for policy makers and managerial strategy.

In view of the above, the main question of this paper is: which dimensions of work provision requirement are workers satisfied or dissatisfied with within the construction industry in Ghana? The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to empirically explore and analyze construction workers satisfaction with different dimensions of work provision requirement in the context of Ghana's construction industry. The study is guided by the following research questions:

- How satisfied or dissatisfied are construction workers with work provision requirement delivered by their employers in Ghana?
- How can workers satisfaction be improved in Ghana's construction industry?

2. WORK PROVISION REQUIREMENTS

The provision of work requirement benefits varies from one organization to the other. While some organizations

provide a comprehensive work requirement benefit to their employees, others do not (Abbott & De Cieri, 2012). If an organization employs anyone, however short the period, they must so far as is reasonably practicable, provide adequate and appropriate welfare facilities for the employee while they are at work. This means the organization must provide such facilities unless it is clearly unreasonable in terms of time, trouble, cost and physical difficulty. Welfare facilities are those that are necessary for the well-being of employees, such as bath, toilet, rest and changing facilities, and a clean place to eat and drink during break.

Work provision requirements include the content of work the employers expect their workers to undertake within the working environment. This means the workload on workers should not be such that it can have effect on their health presently or in future. Again, the benefits of workers such as wage, pension contribution, bonuses, overtime payment, annual leave with pay and others which are made available to workers also constitute part of work provision requirements.

There are some types of employee benefits that are mandated by law in almost every country. Some of the employee benefits include: minimum wage, overtime, maternity leave, annual leave with pay and workers compensation and disability. There are other types of employee benefits that employers are not required to offer, but choose to provide to their employees, and these include: [hazard pay](#), [health care](#), [paid holidays](#), [sick leave](#), [termination](#), [vacation leave](#), [work breaks and meal breaks](#). In studying the work provisions of construction workers in Ghana, it is important to find out if the workers enjoy these benefits especially the mandatory ones.

In Ghana, the Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT) is a statutory public trust charged with the administration of Ghana's National Pension Scheme governed by the National Pensions Act 766 (2008) operating the Mandatory Pension scheme for all workers including construction workers. There is therefore the need to investigate the job security of construction workers in Ghana in terms of pension or retirement scheme to ensure that workers at their old age can have some financial support.

For EU countries, the minimum annual holiday entitlement is 22 working days, and may be increased up to 25 working days depending on attendance. In Australia, annual leave forms part of the National Employment Standards (NES). An employee (other than a casual employee) is entitled to four weeks of paid annual leave for each year of service with the employer. The labor Act 651 (2003) in Ghana states that every worker is entitled to not less than 15 working days leave with full pay in any calendar year of continuous service. The expression "full pay" means the worker's normal remuneration, without overtime payment, including the cash equivalent of any

remuneration in kind. In South Africa the Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1997, state in part that a worker can take up to 21 continuous days of annual leave or by agreement, one day for every 17 days worked or one hour for every 17 hours worked. Construction workers are therefore entitled to annual leave with pay for which all construction firms should not hesitate to provide for their employees.

In a report by Self Employed Women's Association 'SEWA' (2000), construction workers in India articulated the following concerns: that they had no job security, their occupational risk factor was extremely high due to innumerable accidents resulting in temporary or permanent disabilities, they were doubly affected due to the lack of insurance coverage, their wages were low and were exploited by the contractors, they were not issued with any identity cards, the majority of the construction workers were not organized; and that the local construction labor suffered from chronic unemployment due to the availability of large numbers of migrant workers who were willing to work at lower wages. This suggests a dissatisfactory state of construction workers in India.

3. THE CONCEPT OF JOB SATISFACTION

According to Lise, Saari and Judge (2004), the most used research definition of job satisfaction is by Locke (1976), who defines it as "... a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences". Job satisfaction is a function of the job outcomes desired and expected and those received (Porter & Lawler, 1968). Describing job satisfaction from a facet approach (Dabke, Salem, Genaidy & Daraiseh, 2008) laid emphasize the attitudes of employees towards various aspects of job, such as satisfaction of rewards, opportunity, among others. In addition, demographic variables may be one factor influencing workers' job satisfaction. Job satisfaction has been a topic in organization research (Hoppock, 1935) for its impact on job performance. Knowledge of the job satisfaction of the construction workers helps us understand their motivations, and, thus, the ways to improve their performance. Spector (1997) defined job satisfaction as how people feel about their jobs and different aspects of their jobs. It is the extent to which people like (satisfaction) or dislike (dissatisfaction) their jobs.

4. IMPORTANCE OF JOB SATISFACTION

Job satisfaction is an issue which has generated a lot of discussions in most organizations. This is mainly due to the fact that many experts believe that job satisfaction trends can affect labor market behavior and influence work productivity, work effort, employee absenteeism and staff turnover. Job satisfaction has much importance.

In the view of Diaz-Serrano and Cabral (2005), it is considered a strong predictor of overall individual well-being. According to Gazioglu and Tansel (2002) job satisfaction is a good predictor of intentions or decisions of employees to leave a job. Workers' decisions about whether to work or not, what kind of job to accept or stay in, and how hard to work are all likely to depend in part upon the workers' subjective evaluation of their work, in other words, on their job satisfaction (Clark, 2001)

In the view of Spector (1997) organizations have significant effects on the people who work for them and some of those effects are reflected in how people feel about their work. This makes job satisfaction an issue of substantial importance for both employers and employees. As many studies suggest, employers benefit from satisfied employees as they are more likely to profit from lower staff turnover and higher productivity if their employees experience a high level of job satisfaction. According to Nguyen, Taylor and Bradley (2003) employees should also 'be happy in their work, given the amount of time they have to devote to it throughout their working lives'. Job satisfaction has been found to be the most important tool for employee retention. Job satisfaction refers to how employees perceive their jobs (Mc Shane & Glinow, 2005).

It is an emotional state resulting from experiences at work. Many positive outcomes of job satisfaction have been observed which eventually lead to employees' intent to stay with the organization. Employee satisfaction has been found to be positively related to the intent to remain with the company and negatively related to intention to quit and turnover (Clark, 2001; Schields & Price, 2002).

5. METHODOLOGY

By design the study was a cross-sectional survey that sought the opinion of construction workers about their satisfaction of their work in terms of conditions provided by their employers in Ghana. The target population comprised masons, carpenters, painters, electricians, steel benders and plumbers. A convenience sample size of 500 respondents was selected because of cost and time constraints.

Construction workers satisfaction with each work provision was measured using self-administered structured questionnaire. The variables for measuring construction workers priority of each work provision dimension are presented in Table 1. The dimensions were work environment (WE), work benefit (WB), job security (JS), work content (WC) and work satisfaction (WS).

The respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction of the five (5) dimensions on a five-point disconfirmation Likert scale, based on the advice of Danaher and Haddrell (1996). The scale ranged from: Much worse than expected (1), Worse than expected (2) Equal to expectation (3),

Better than expectation (4) and Much better than expected (5). It had three items for respondents' bio data. Content validity was established by a panel of two construction experts; construct validity was ensured by critically developing it within established theoretical framework. Cronbach alpha reliability tests for each of the five multi-dimension constructs were above the recommended 0.70 (Straub, Boudreau & Gefen, 2004), and a composite reliability of all the 24 measurement items yielded a composite value of 0.832. Therefore the scales could be considered reliable. The questionnaire was pre-tested using a sample of 25 construction workers to identify any ambiguous items for refinement. Finally it was administered to the respondents through personal contact with the assistance of trained research assistants.

A total of 468 respondents returned their questionnaire representing 93.6% response rate. The data was analyzed using one-sample T-test to determine dimension-items that construction workers are significantly satisfied or dissatisfied regarding the work provisions requirement. The analysis considered a setting of a specified hypothetical constant of three (3) and a significance level of 0.05.

6. RESULTS

6.1 Demographic Data

In terms of gender, 430 respondents representing 92% were males and 38 respondents representing 8% were females, this suggests that there is male dominance in the construction industry in Ghana. This is due to the fact that the construction industry is a field which required intensive physical or manual strength in most of its sections, where females are somehow hesitant to enter. For age, 8 respondents representing 1.7% were 20 years and below, 142 respondents representing 30.3% were between 23 and 30 years, 177 respondents representing 37.8% were between 31 and 40 years, 117 respondents representing 25% were between 41 and 50 years while 24 respondents representing 5.2% were more than 50 years. This implies that the majority of them were in the economically active population. In terms of salary, 62 respondents representing 13.3% of them strongly disagreed that they are paid salary not less than the minimum wage, 54 of them representing 11.5% disagreed that they receive salary not less than the minimum wage, 19 respondent representing 4.1% were not sure, 190 of them representing 40.6% agreed and 143 respondents representing 30.6 strongly agreed. The result indicates that although most of them earned salaries above the minimum wage, a considerable number of them (24.8%) received salaries below the minimum wage.

6.2 Satisfaction with Dimensions of Work Provision Requirements

To verify whether the mean satisfaction ratings for each work provision requirement dimension are significant or

not, a one sample T-test was conducted. The alternate hypothesis assumes that the work provision of construction workers are poor or worse or much worse than expected while the null hypothesis states that work

provision of construction workers is at least equal to expectation, signifying a cut-off value of 3. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: One Sample T-Test for Construction Workers’ Satisfaction with Work Provision Requirements

One-Sample T-Test								
Code	Work Provision Requirement Dimensions	Test Value = 3						Assessment of Null Hypothesis
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
						Lower	Upper	
WE1	Don't work for more than 8 hours in a day	.716	248	.475	.06827	-.1196	.2561	Accept
WE2	Provision of protective clothing for work	-1.645	248	.101	-.13253	-.2912	.0261	Accept
WE3	Work under safe and hygienic environment	1.430	248	.154	.10040	-.0379	.2387	Accept
WE4	Availability of first-aid facilities on site	.620	248	.536	.04819	-.1050	.2014	Accept
WE5	Proper disposal of waste on site	.283	248	.777	.02008	-.1197	.1598	Accept
WE6	Availability of toilet and bath facilities on site	-7.950	248	.000	-.59839	-.7466	-.4501	Reject
WE7	Availability of canteen/food services on site	-10.331	248	.000	-.73494	-.8751	-.5948	Reject
WB1	Paid salary not less than the minimum wage per day	7.307	248	.000	.63454	.4635	.8056	Accept
WB2	Paid allowances/bonuses beside salary	-4.509	248	.000	-.34137	-.4905	-.1922	Reject
WB3	Paid when I work over-time	3.570	248	.000	.27309	.1224	.4238	Accept
WB4	Enjoyment of annual leave	-11.949	248	.000	-.83133	-.9684	-.6943	Reject
JS1	Employer SSNIT contribution for workers	-5.167	248	.000	-.43775	-.6046	-.2709	Reject
JS2	Membership of construction workers union	-9.390	248	.000	-.64257	-.7774	-.5078	Reject
JS3	Status as casual worker	.730	248	.466	.06426	-.1092	.2377	Accept
JS4	Availability of insurance cover for project site	-.911	248	.363	-.06024	-.1905	.0700	Accept
WC1	Stressful nature of the work	13.642	248	.000	.85542	.7319	.9789	Accept
WC2	Availability of risk/danger with the work	7.947	248	.000	1.28514	.9666	1.6036	Accept
WC3	Not made to work beyond my strength	7.030	248	.000	.48193	.3469	.6169	Accept
WS1	Satisfaction with the work	3.520	248	.001	.25301	.1114	.3946	Accept
WS2	Pleased with the work	3.002	248	.003	.21687	.0746	.3592	Accept

The results in Table 1 show that for six (6) dimension items, all confidence intervals are negative with significantly negative mean differences; this implies that construction workers work provision requirement is worse or much worse than expected for the following six dimensions: WE6, WE7, WB2, WB4, JS1 and JS2.

Again, it further indicates that construction workers’ work provision requirement is at least equal to expectation for the following seven (7) dimensions: WE1, WE2, WE3, WE4, WE5, JS3 and JS4. This is because their confidence intervals have at least a positive value or include zero, implying that satisfaction is significantly equal but not less or greater than the cut-off value of 3.

Finally, for the following eight (8) dimensions of construction workers' work provision is better or much better than expected: WB1, WB3, WC1, WC2, WC3, WS1, WS2 and WS3. This is because all the respective confidence intervals and mean differences for these items are positive values, implying that satisfaction is significantly greater than the cut-off value of 3.

7. DISCUSSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The results in Table 1 provides a strong support that construction workers are significantly not satisfied in the following six (6) work provision requirement dimension items, two (2) of which relate to working environment, two (2) from work benefits and another two (2) from job satisfaction items:

- Availability of toilet and bath facilities on site
- Availability of canteen/food services on site
- Payment of allowances/bonuses beside salary
- Enjoyment of annual leave
- Employers SSNIT contribution for workers
- Membership of construction workers union

In the above six dimensions workers are typically dissatisfied and that their satisfaction can further be described as worse and/or much worse than expected by construction workers.

Again, the result (Table 1) also provides adequate evidence to support the claim that construction workers work provision requirement is at least equal to expectation for these seven (7) dimensions, five (5) of which are related to work environment items and two (2) from job satisfaction:

- Do not work for more than 8 hours in a day
- Provision of protective clothing for work
- Work under safe and hygienic environment
- Availability of first-aid facilities on site
- Proper disposal of waste on site
- Status as casual worker
- Availability of insurance cover project for project site

Finally, construction workers work provision requirement is better or much better than expected for the following eight (8) dimensions, two (2) of which relate to work benefits, three (3) relate to work content and all three (3) from work satisfaction items:

- Paid salary not less than the minimum wage per day
- Paid when work over-time
- Stressful nature of the work
- Availability of risk/danger with the work
- Not made to work beyond my strength
- Satisfaction with the work
- Pleased with the work
- Desire to continue working as a construction worker

For work content and work satisfaction, already the construction workers are satisfied with all items relating to them, so less strategic effort should be devoted to them.

7.1 Theoretical Implications

The study contributes to the general body of knowledge in workers satisfaction measurement. Specifically, it develops workers satisfaction measurement instrument in the context of building construction industry. It also provides evidence that workers satisfaction could be measured for many dimensions of work provision requirement. This study provides a detailed assessment and analysis of dimensions of work provision requirement that workers satisfaction could be measured, and provides the foundation of future research to be conducted in similar construction industry contexts.

7.2 Policy Implication

The study has a number of implications for management and policy in Ghana's construction industry. The study provides empirical evidence on the work provision requirement of workers in the construction industry in Ghana in general. Management of construction firms should improve upon their performance to improve work provision requirement for dimensions that workers were typically dissatisfied. Previous studies (James, Braam & Kingma, 2012; Smallwood & Ehrlich, 2001; Laryea, 2010) have shown that the satisfaction of construction workers has many serious consequences on the construction industry.

It is important for the construction firms in Ghana to improve the working environment within which the workers work to ensure healthy conditions on and around the site. This can be done by providing toilet and bath facilities on site and also make available canteen/food services on site. These are some of the basic requirements of the welfare of workers on site

Furthermore, the contribution of SSNIT pension benefit is also vital to improve the well-being of workers in the construction industry. Because the employers want to run away from the contribution of pension scheme for their workers, they adopt the strategy of employing large number of workers on casual basis. Again, this practice prevents the workers from discussing their work problems with their employers, since they are likely to be sacked from the work with the slightest fault. This situation has negative impact on the job security of the workers since they are not employed permanently and therefore contribute negatively on the state of the construction workers. According to Ghana's National Pension Scheme Act 766, it is mandatory for all employers to make a SSNIT contribution for their employees on monthly basis.

Provision of annual leave is mandatory in every country and therefore workers should not be denied of such provision to enable them have some benefits after going on retirement. The result shows that the construction workers in Ghana are not enjoying annual leave with pay and are therefore dissatisfied with such situation. Government should therefore ensure that construction firms provide their employees with annual leave with pay. Again, the result suggests that the construction workers do not belong to any workers union. Government should ensure that construction workers can form unions that can speak on their behalf without fear to press for improved condition of service.

8. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Though the study provides evidence on satisfaction of workers in the construction industry context in developing country, it is limited to building construction industry. Again, the satisfaction of the workers was measured against theoretically and empirically identified dimensions of work provision requirement. There might be other useful dimensions that were not included in this study such as grievances resolution, chain of command, and information provision, among others for which workers satisfaction could be measured in the construction industry context. Future research could explore other critical work provision requirement dimensions in construction industry. Furthermore, future research could examine the influence of workers satisfaction on promotion and growth of the construction industry.

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