

Nigeria Construction Industry Leadership Style and Adaptability Effectiveness: A Case of Civil Engineers

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Abstract – The construction industry is an industry that affords various professionals to work together is delivering a project on time, within cost and at the best quality, in other to achieve this leadership plays a critical role in the overall success. This study focuses on the use of Hersey and Blanchard’s Situational Leadership Model which are telling, selling, participating and delegating styles to assess the type and style of leadership predominant among civil engineers in the Nigerian construction industry. From the study it is observed that among civil engineers the most popular leadership style is the selling type with 72 percent and the next is the telling style with 20 per cent and the most unpopular of the styles is delegating with no one subscribing to this type. The selling leadership style is when the leader directs and closely supervises task accomplishment, but also explains decisions, solicits suggestions and supports progress. This style of leadership tends to promote interaction and communication between the leader and the led fostering team work and understanding.

Keywords – Leadership, Team work, Leadership style, Construction industry.

I. INTRODUCTION

The construction industry is multidisciplinary in its nature; it fosters cooperation between and within many disciplines and collaborating closely with many players, these disciplines includes architects, constructors, engineers, builders, clients whether private or government. To deliver a successful project will be dependent on organization of a well-developed interpersonal skills working at different hierarchy on other to meet every and various leadership and performance issues [1].

Leadership is critical to the overall successful performance of any enterprise, business, and it is even much more important to the construction industry due to its diversity nature [2].

According to Toor & Ofori [3], leadership is said to be the outcome due to the leader’s self-related cognitive information, personality traits, motives, and understanding the operating situation or condition. Leadership style proposed by researchers can be categorized to include the following: democratic, autocratic, consultative, and joint decision making types [4].

In other to improve effective planning, cost control and project delivery, the construction industry came up with project and construction management concept [5]. Liphadzi, Aigbavboa and Thwala, [2] are apt in saying that Leadership is one of the most important and essential factors in project and construction management.

Table -I: The basic comparison between Leadership and Management

BASIS FOR COMPARISON	LEADERSHIP	MANAGEMENT
Meaning	Leadership is a skill of leading others by examples.	Management is an art of systematically organizing and coordinating things in an efficient way.
Basis	Trust	Control
Emphasis on	Inspiring People	Managing activities
Power	Influence	Rule
Focus on	Encouraging change	Bringing stability
Strategy	Proactive	Reactive
Formulation of	Principles and guidelines	Policies and Procedures
Perspective	Leadership requires good foresightedness.	Management has a short range perspective.

According to Team Technology [6] identifies the essential difference between leadership and management as:

- Leadership is setting a new direction or vision for a group that they follow, i.e. a leader is the spearhead for that new direction.
- Management controls or directs people/resources in a group according to principles or values that have been established.

II. SCOPE OF STUDY AND METHOD

The data used in this research were derived from both primary and secondary sources. The secondary data was collected via a detailed review of related literature. The primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire using the leadership style questionnaire adapted from Paul Hersey and Kenneth H Barnard's Leadership Effectiveness and Adaptability Description (LEAD).

The questionnaire was distributed to Civil Engineers within Edo State Polytechnic Usen and members of the Nigeria Society of Engineers Benin Branch. The group consisted of lecturers, supervisors, project managers and anyone else acting in a supervisory capacity. A total of 50 surveys were distributed, completed and returned.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

The issues and meaning of leadership attracts a lot of attention among those within business entities, it conjure up images of powerful, dynamic individuals who command victorious armies or direct corporate empires.

Leadership can be seen as the art of influencing others to achieve desired results. According to CIOB [7], there is no single definition of leadership. It is a complex, emergent process that can be described in many different ways, using different components, styles and traits.

In general terms it is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective. The following points summarize some of the different ways in which leadership has been defined: Effective leaders are alike in one crucial way: they all have a high degree of emotional intelligence [8]. An idea popularized by Goleman [9], comprises a model of four domains: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management.

According to Naoum [10] leadership is aligning people towards common goals and empowering them to take the actions needed to reach them. In construction, Chan's [11] case study involving fifteen leading figures in the UK construction industry identified three factors instrumental in leadership development: people, places and events.

Adair [12] defines leadership in the form of a Diagram (Fig 1).



Fig. 1. Adair model of leadership.

Cole [13] defines leadership as a dynamic process in which one individual influences others to contribute to achievement of the group task. Murphy [14] defines leaders as people "to whom others turn when missions need to be upheld, breakthroughs made and performance goals reached on time and within budget".

IV. LEADERSHIP IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

In the construction industry according to Walker [15] leadership is defined as the way and method in which project managers and construction managers conduct themselves in their role, in order to obtain the best performance from the people they are managing.

Toor and Ofori [3] posited that the construction industry need is to develop an authentic leadership style fit to overcome the different challenges associated with the complex nature of the industry to successfully deliver projects on time and within budget. An authentic leader according to George [16] is one who is capable of using his / her personality and disposition to accomplish tasks.

Leaders in the construction industry are responsible for their team performance and the achieving of their goals. Therefore, it is implied that leaders of the construction project who has good skills and management styles can expect good results from their team [2].

Ogunlana [17] highlighted some important factors as a project leader like, competencies, personalities, characteristics, skills and leadership styles, amongst others upon which the success of a construction project

depends. These can have significant impact positively or negatively on any construction project.

1. Leadership Styles

The diverse nature and complexities of construction projects underscore the fact that different types of construction projects require different methods for their management and leadership, as well as requiring management procedures suited to meet the needs of the specific project [18]. That is why the leader's leadership style of the project manager is very important. A leadership style is a leader's method and way of providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people.

The study of leadership as an academic discipline has gained prominence in the twentieth century [19]. Lewin, et al [20], was one of the foremost scholars to initiate the scientific study of leadership by leading a team of researchers seeking to identify leadership styles.

According to Raza [21], leadership style is the way a person employ power to direct other people. From researches the most appropriate leadership style depends on the function of the leader, the followers and the situation.

The following twelve leadership styles have been identified by scholars and researchers of how organizations and people can be led [19, 22, 23, 24, 25].

2. Autocratic Leadership

Autocratic leadership style is centred on the boss. In this leadership the leader holds all authority and responsibility. In this leadership, leaders make decisions on their own without consulting subordinates.

3. Democratic Leadership

In this leadership style, subordinates are involved in making decisions. Unlike autocratic, this leadership is centred on subordinates' contributions. The democratic leader holds final responsibility, but he or she is known to delegate authority to other people, who determine work projects. Communication is the unique feature of this style. Democratic leadership is one of the most preferred leadership style from statistics.

4. Strategic Leadership Style

Strategic leadership is one that involves a leader who is essentially the head of an organization. The strategic leader is not limited to those at the top of the organization. It is geared to a wider audience at all levels who want to create a high performance life, team or organization.

The strategic leader fills the gap between the need for new possibility and the need for practicality by providing a prescriptive set of habits. An effective strategic leadership delivers the goods in terms of what an organization naturally expects from its leadership in times of change. 55% of this leadership normally involves strategic thinking.

5. Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is all about initiating change in organizations, groups, oneself and others. Transformational leaders motivate others to do more than they originally intended and often even more than they thought possible. They set more challenging expectations and typically achieve higher performance.

6. Team Leadership

Team is a group of people working as one. Team leadership is about working as group with the hearts and minds of all those involved. Team leadership involves the creation of a vivid picture of its future, where it is heading and what it will stand for. The vision inspires and provides a strong sense of purpose and direction.

7. Cross-Cultural Leadership

This form of leadership normally exists where there are various cultures in the society. This leadership has also industrialized as a way to recognize front runners who work in the contemporary globalized market.

8. Facilitative Leadership

Facilitative leadership is too dependent on measurements and outcomes – not a skill, although it takes much skill to master. The effectiveness of a group is directly related to the efficacy of its process. If the group is high functioning, the facilitative leader uses a light hand on the process.

On the other hand, if the group is low functioning, the facilitative leader will be more directives in helping the group run its process. An effective facilitative leadership involves monitoring of group dynamics, offering process suggestions and interventions to help the group stay on track.

9. Laissez-faire Leadership

Laissez-faire leadership gives authority to employees. According to research, this kind of leadership has been consistently found to be the least satisfying and least effective management style.

10. Transactional Leadership

This is a leadership that maintains or continues the status quo. It is also the leadership that involves an exchange process, whereby followers get immediate, tangible rewards for carrying out the leader's orders. Transactional leadership can sound rather basic, with its focus on exchange. Transactional leadership behaviours can include: clarifying what is expected of followers' performance; explaining how to meet such expectations; and allocating rewards that are contingent on meeting objectives.

11. Coaching Leadership

Coaching leadership involves teaching and supervising followers. A coaching leader is highly operational in setting where results/ performance require improvement.

Basically, in this kind of leadership, followers are helped to improve their skills. Coaching leadership does the following: motivates followers, inspires followers and encourages followers.

12. Charismatic Leadership

In this leadership, the charismatic leader manifests his or her revolutionary power. Charisma does not mean sheer behavioural change. It actually involves a transformation of followers' values and beliefs.

Therefore, this distinguishes a charismatic leader from a simply populist leader who may affect attitudes towards specific objects, but who is not prepared as the charismatic leader is, to transform the underlying normative orientation that structures specific attitudes.

13. Visionary Leadership

This form of leadership involves leaders who recognize that the methods, steps and processes of leadership are all obtained with and through people. Most great and successful leaders have the aspects of vision in them.

However, those who are highly visionary are the ones considered to be exhibiting visionary leadership. Outstanding leaders will always transform their visions into realities.

V. HERSEY AND BLANCHARD'S SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP MODEL

The Hersey-Blanchard's situational leadership model is applied to measure the actual leadership style employed by managers. This model of Situational Leadership is based on the amount of direction (task behaviour) and amount of socio emotional support (relationship behaviour) a leader must provide given the situation and the level of maturity of the followers.

The four leadership style identified by the model are:

- **Telling:** This style reflects high task/low relationship behaviour (S1). The leader provides clear instructions and specific direction. Telling style is best matched with a low follower readiness level.
- **Selling:** This style reflects high task/high relationship behaviour (S2). The leader encourages two-way communication and helps build confidence and motivation on the part of the employee, although the leader still has responsibility and controls decision making. Selling style is best matched with a moderate follower readiness level.
- **Participating:** This style reflects high relationship/low task behaviour (S3). With this style, the leader and followers share decision making and no longer need or expect the relationship to be directive. Participating style is best matched with a moderate follower readiness level.
- **Delegating:** This style reflects low relationship/low task behavior (S4). Delegating style is appropriate for leaders whose followers are ready to accomplish a

particular task and are both competent and motivated to take full responsibility.

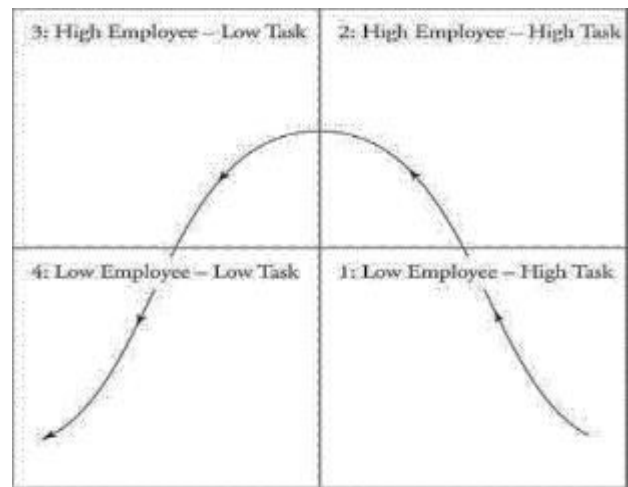


Fig. 1. Four Leadership Styles from Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Model [26].

VI. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The information used was extracted from a survey conducted by me used in an article 'Assessing Leadership Style among Stakeholders in the Nigerian Construction Industry' in which a total of 300 questionnaires were administered to stakeholders. This paper x-rays the information as regards specifically to Civil Engineering/Engineers in the industry.

A total of 50 questionnaires were administered and same returned for analysis. The analysis breakdowns are as follows:

1. Gender distribution

The gender distribution indicates that females were 11 and males 39 given us a percentage of 22 and 78 respectively as shown in fig 2.

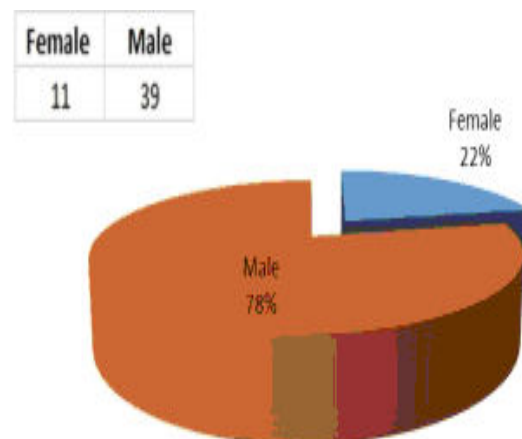


Fig 2: Showing Pie Chart presentation of Gender

2. Age distribution

Table -II: Age Distribution Table

Age	Number
25 & Under	0
26-35	6
36-45	23
46-55	12
56 & above	9

From table 1 and fig 3 it is observed that the age range of 36-45 years make up the bulk of respondents followed by 46-55 years and then 56 years and above.

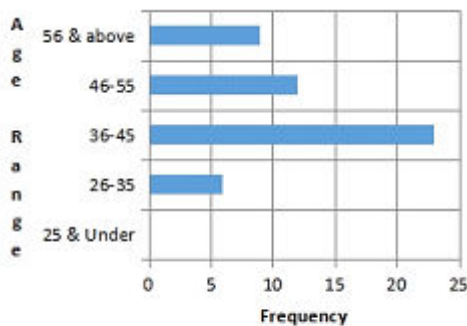


Fig 3: Show bar chart presentation of age distribution

3. Basic Leadership Style

Table -III: Showing the basic leadership styles.

Style	Number
Telling	10
Selling	36
Participating	4
Delegating	0

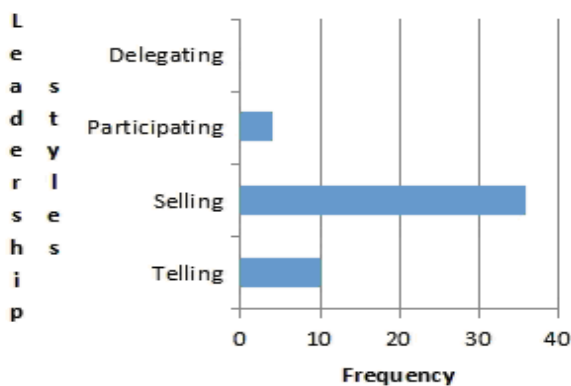


Fig. 3. Showing Bar Chart Presentation of the Basic Leadership Styles.

From table 2 and figure 3 showing the basic leadership style prevalent among civil engineering/engineers, the

following can be observed from the table and bar chart diagram. The number of respondents that falls in the telling category is 10 which translate 20 per cent of the total respondents. The next is the selling category which is make up of 36 which translate to 72 per cent and finally, participating category with 4 which is 8 per cent.

VII. CONCLUSION

Leadership is an important requisite skill for all project managers [27]. Building the appropriate leadership skill with respect to managing construction projects is very vital and therefore more attention should be given to it. The key issue about managing projects is about ensuring that things get done while motivating the project team towards delivering project success. Understanding what good leadership is, cultivating and modifying it so as to gain results is important [28]. Every project is unique and as such the leadership style in the management of the project execution is usually a function of the type of project.

The leadership styles identified using the Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Model are telling, selling, participating and delegating. From the study it is observed that among civil engineers the most popular leadership style is the selling type with 72 percent and the next is the telling style with 20 per cent and the most unpopular of the styles is delegating with no value subscribing to this type.

The leadership style should be flexible, dynamic and innovative to suit every project in other to bring about the project success. Leaders should emphasize on building their team and motivation them so that the various professionals can work together as a one [28].

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