

## Relationship between Project Management Ethics and Project Success: A Case of Total Quality Engineering Service Limited Nigeria.

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### ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the relationship between of Project Management Ethics and Project Success of Total Quality Engineering Service Limited in Nigeria". Survey research design was adopted for the study, using a close-ended questionnaire for the data collection. Accidental and purposive sampling techniques were used for the selection of the sample size from the finite population, 56 questionnaires were distributed while 47 were returned. The data was analyzed using mean and standard deviation to reveal the relationship between the variables used in the research question. From the findings of this study, it was revealed that project management ethics was one of the major determinants of project success. Therefore, it was recommended among others that the construction organization must apply the principle of honesty and fairness to promotes relationship of co-workers and clients.

**KEYWORDS:** Project management ethics, Integrity, Confidentiality of information and Project success

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Project ethics do not just grow like a flower but rather evolved because of its various philosophical views, which in the course of time had been expanded with reference to the moral order. Catholic encyclopedia ethics (1908) asserted that, ethics properly was first discovered among the Greeks, that is in the teaching of Socrates. According to Socrates as cited in the study of Michael (1997) the ultimate object of human activity is happiness, and the necessary means to reach it is virtue. Since everybody necessarily seeks happiness, therefore, no one is deliberately corrupt. All evil arises from unawareness, and the virtues arise from so many kinds of caution. Virtue therefore, is achieved through instruction.

In the work of Andrew (2005) Plato also stated that virtue enables man to order his conduct

as he properly should, according to the dictates of reasoning and acting, thus, he becomes like unto God. Plato differed from Socrates in that he did not consider virtue to consist in wisdom alone, but in justice, temperance and fortitude as well, these constituting the harmony of man's activities. In a sense, the state is a man and its function are to train its citizens in virtue which includes honesty, accountability, responsibility, sustainability and dignity. For his ideal State, the ethical working out of persons in business ought therefore to be engaged solely to making obvious these hidden qualities. However, Socrates and Plato had been to the fore in this massive work and had provided much valuable material to the upbuilding of ethics.

Aristotle a student of Plato, who has been considered the real founder of virtue ethics, used positive character and behavior to solved most of

the problems that are concerns with ethics itself in his ethical and political writings. Unlike Plato, who began with ideas as the basis of his observation, Aristotle chose rather to take the facts of experience as his starting-point; these he analyzed accurately, and sought to trace to their highest and ultimate causes. He set out from the point that all men accept happiness as the ultimate object of all their endeavors as the highest good, which is sought for its own sake, and to which all other goods merely serve as means. This happiness cannot consist in external goods, but only in the activity proper to human nature, not indeed in such a lower activity of the vegetative and sensitive life as man possesses in common with plants and brutes, but in the highest and most perfect activity of his reason, which springs in turn from virtue. This activity, however, has to be exercised in a perfect and enduring life. The highest pleasure is naturally bound-up with this activity, yet, to constitute perfect happiness, external goods must also supply their share. True happiness, though prepared for him by the gods as the object and reward of virtue, can be attained only through a man's own individual exertion. With intense penetration, Aristotle thereupon proceeds to investigate in turn, each of the intellectual and moral virtues and his treatment of them must now be regarded to as in great part correct. The nature of the state and of the family was in the main, rightly explained by him. The only pity is that his vision did not penetrate beyond this earthly life, and that he never saw clearly the relations of man to God. (Stephen, David, Gayle and Joshua, 2010)

Construction industry's primary goal focuses mainly on achieving value for money the client has paid for. This is achieved through good service delivered which centers on ethical standards displayed by the construction industry's professionals (Adeyinka, Jagboro & Ojo, 2003). Mansfield (2008) considered ethics to be explicit philosophical reflection on moral beliefs and practices. According to Longstaff (1999), a professional's ethical landscape is made up of choices, decisions and practical application of shared core values and principles. A key issue in this approach is the need for practitioners to reflect upon their own professional practices that would have been developed within the particular profession. These fundamental principles of most professional bodies include integrity, objectivity, competence and care, confidentiality and behavior.

### Statement of problem

Construction industry is considered one of the most susceptible to unethical practices because it involves substantial capital investments, providing large-scale opportunities for rent extraction as well

as investments that usually cannot be redeployed after implementation. Unethical practices take place at every phase of a construction project, such as, during planning and design, pre-qualification and tender, project execution and operation and maintenance. Such practices sometimes result into overlay complex components, overpriced and delayed of project delivery. These ethical problems have lasting impact detrimental to construction and engineering firms such as wasted tender expenses, tendering uncertainty, increased project costs, economic damage, blackmail, criminal prosecutions, fines, blacklisting and reputational risk. The issue of professional ethics has sparked enthusiastic concern and pragmatic discussion among the public and there is growing demand by the current literature such as good ethical practices and professional behavior in the construction industry.

### Objective of the Study

The main objectives of the study are:

- i to assess the integrity of the Project Managers on timely delivery of projects in the construction industry.
- ii to assess the integrity of construction industry and sustainability of its businesses as measured by the integrity of the project managers.

### Research Question

The following questions guided the study:

- i. Does integrity of Project Managers determine timely delivery of a project in the construction industry?
- ii. Does integrity of project manager affect sustainability of the industry?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Velasquez (1998) refers to ethics as 'the pursuit of studying the moral standards of a society and question on how standards relates to one's existence and to know if these standards are reasonable'. It calls for investigation into the essential characteristics of morality, incorporates moral judgments, standards and rules of conduct (Taylor, 1975 cited by Chow, 2000). Ethical behavior is not just the right thing to do but it is a necessity (Longstaff, 2004, cited by Maree, 2007).

Vee and Skitmore (2003) asserted that ethics mainly entails a disposition of good behavior by which human undertakings and approaches could be concluded to be considerable or disgusting i.e. being right or wrong. The principles to identify in account of a particular rating of human activities, and good standards starting at a person's behavior that is just in an environment might be termed unjust in another. However, even in the same environment,

the explanations might be definite and even indefinite. Adding to this dubiousness is the way that people frequently make their own understandings of appropriate good and moral conduct (Hinze, 1993). Sinha, (2007) articulated that ethics can't be instructed, rather what can be educated, but a system for assessing moral and deciding issues. Ethics direction incorporates various measurements accordingly, a coordinated way to deal with the structure that appears to be suitable. Ethics isn't just about definition, set down the code of ethics nor build up how the code of ethics may be read (Oyewobi, 2011). Hassim (2010) and Pearl, (2005) asserted that ethics does not necessarily mean discerning a target decency yet incorporates meditation, language, reasoning, strategy and discernment that educate the decisions individuals make in their everyday experience that impact their own success and that of others. It isn't just about the way we carry on, think or act, there are likewise different components that influence the way we act either morally or dishonestly (Ayat, 2013).

Oyewobi, (2011) stated that ethics does not necessarily mean a goal is great; however, it comprises a cautious plan in settling on a feasible decision or differentiating if the decision is right or wrong. It is strenuous to supervise moral respects, as it is a personal thing. It is about individual conduct and it is about standards like quality guidelines. It is indecent that staffs act at work in any capacity they like. The clients see the conducts of the staffs and that impression can incorporate values and degenerate into moral issues. (Holme, 2008).

Project management ethics therefore is defined as the morals that govern the activities of application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques in realizing project goals. Project management ethics is an essential ingredient in managing projects. It is about making the best possible decisions concerning people, resources and the environment. In addition, there are different philosophies related to ethics ranging from the pragmatic to the situational interpretations. Clearly, within a profession, compliance to each code of conduct is critical to maintaining your professional standing in that space. This applies to activities in project management; short of a formal complaint or review by the organization happening, there is much grey area that needs to be explored as to what constitutes ethical behavior within the day-to-day oversight and management of a project (Oshungboye,2019).

### **Benefits of Project Management Ethics**

Ethical people are those who recognize the difference between right and wrong and consistently

strive to set an example of good conduct. In business settings, being ethical means applying principles of honesty and fairness to relationships with coworkers and customers.

Ethics play a critical role in project management in these following: (Rafi,2003)

1. It raises future standards and elevates profession.
2. It boosts trust of others.
3. It imprints on individual moral mindsets and behaviors.
4. It promotes business relationships
5. It promotes fair decision-making.
6. It reduces project risks.
7. It provides a greater chance of success.
8. It reduces anxiety and stress and ultimately turnover in projects (Rafi,2003).

### **Integrity**

Integrity is a conceptual framework for outlining how the intention of a policy can be maintained throughout the implementation process regardless of any environmental turbulence that may be encountered throughout the process. Integrity does not necessarily mean the implementation of a policy will be achieved exactly how it was first envisaged. In fact, the environmental changes that may occur from the time the original policy was developed, may mean rigidly adhering to a specific policy that was originally outlined may produce a worse result than not implementing the policy at all. Rather, Integrity focuses on ensuring the guiding intent of a policy is achieved within a fluid organizational and environmental construct. Integrity requires both a clear understanding throughout the organization of the policy intent and the means for ensuring that this intent is maintained in a fluid organizational environment (Rafi,2003).

### **Organization Sustainability**

According to Hasmann (2010), sustainability evolved from eternal conflict between individual interest and public interest. The problem encountered has been to compare sustainability in terms of progress, technology and improved standards of living. Sustainability means acting responsibly and maintaining long term relationship (Kuhlman & Farrington, 2010). This develops the need for reconciliation of social, economic and climatic aspect (Tovey, 2009). Corporations face the same problems when developing projects and they have to consider all the three pillars of sustainable development if they want to achieve success.

Nidumolu (2009) signals the advantages of sustainability practices, as companies reduce cost and increase revenues. He considers that organizations gain competitive advantage, being

able to “rethink business models, products, technologies, process”. These results represent evidence for the fact that successful projects with both economic and social environmental benefits can be determined by sustainability behavior.

Han (2012) stated that sustainability brings about innovation and original solutions. Focusing on the vision of a sustainable future in the circumstances of large industrialized economies, his aims was to spot the benefit of innovation for sustainability. He further explained that sustainability and innovation are highly correlated and are both essential for project managers. Similar studies that discuss sustainable development and urban social sustainability present two distinct perspectives, of social equity and community sustainability (Dempsey, 2011) and describe the progress of cities, organization and products, underlining the concept of social sustainability in terms of urban development (Weingaertner, 2011).

#### **Deontological Ethics Theories**

The philosopher Immanuel Kant suggested that one should act according to his or her duty. According to Wainwright (2005) Kant argued that one’s actions should ultimately be expressions of one’s basic commitment to a moral law that is incumbent on all rational beings or that one should act in such a way that “the principles of the action could become a universal law in a world which one would have to live in.” Kant’s view, therefore, assesses morality by examining the nature of actions rather than goals achieved. This view supports the well-known phrase “do unto others, as you would have them do unto you”. The second view proposes that one should act in a way that ensures “respect for others as rational and free beings” and that one should make decisions in a large part based on this respect. The English philosopher John Locke held the view that everybody is born with certain natural rights, which cannot be taken away and should, therefore, be used as a fundamental grounding for decision-making (Bradburn, 2001).

In other words, for whatever decision that has to be made, one has to first take into account any human rights. The Harvard philosopher, John Rawls developed the concept of “justice as fairness”. Rawls (2005) states that “justice as fairness” is a status quo in which agreements reached are fair. In addition, it is a state of affairs in which the parties are equally represented as moral persons and the outcome is not conditioned by arbitrary contingencies or the relative balance of

social. Also prescribed to the idea of the “veil of ignorance” when making decisions of an ethical nature and in which one does not know how various alternatives will affect one’s case and that one is then obliged to evaluate a situation on the basis of general considerations. Under this idea, it assumes that one does not know one’s sex, race, nationality, individual tastes, place in society, fortune in natural assets, abilities, one’s aversion to risk and economic or political situation. Decisions should therefore be made on a selfless view that has not been influenced by who we are, what we know and our motivations (Rawls, 2005). In essence, this view holds that decisions must be made with a level playing field in mind.

### **III. MATERIAL AND METHODS**

The study population comprised of the 56 engineers/project managers and site supervisors of Total Quality Engineering Service Limited Nigeria. The firm was located at Ikeja division of Lagos State The firm specialized in both road maintenance, rehabilitation and road construction. Purposive and Accidental sampling techniques were used to select 47 samples of the population at. Survey research design was used for the data collection. The research instrument was validated using content validity, while Cronbach Alpha was used for the reliability test of the instrument at 0.83. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics.

### **IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This aspect presents the outcomes of the study that was conducted based on the research methodology was previously discussed. Forty-seven (47) copies of questionnaires were distributed to the engineers/project managers and site supervisors of Total Quality Engineering Services Limited and the forty-seven questionnaires were retrieved from the respondents. Data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics involving cross tabulation, mean and standard deviation.

#### **Research Question 1**

Does integrity of Project Managers determine timely delivery of a project in the construction industry?

In order to answer this question, respondents were asked to rate series of questions using a scale ranging from 1 to 5

Table 1 presents the mean responses and standard deviations of the respondents

**Table 1:** To what extent does integrity of Project Managers determine timely delivery of a project in the construction industry?

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Our organization capabilities enhance prompt delivery of our deliverables	47	4.83	.524	-2.591	8.624
Our organization responsiveness to project enhance the timely delivery of our projects	47	4.60	.614	-1.857	5.219
Our staff capabilities to do what is the right prompt timely delivery of the projects	47	4.53	.546	-.550	-.873
Our organization image enhances timely delivery of the projects	47	4.19	.647	-.703	1.749
Our organization abilities to handle projects with clarity and discernment enhances prompt delivery of our project	47	4.11	.866	-1.892	5.602
Our organization honesty promotes timely delivery of our projects	47	4.40	.577	-.317	-.735
Our organization fair judgment on product quality promote timely delivery of our projects	47	4.11	1.026	-1.355	1.907
Valid N (listwise)	47				

Source: Field Survey (2019)

The top attributes of Timely Delivery of Project when arranged in order of priority based on the mean value are *perceiving how organisation capabilities enhance prompt delivery* (4.83), *perception of how organisation responsiveness enhance timely delivery of project* (4.60), *understanding how staff capabilities enhance timely delivery* (4.53), *reflection on how organisation honesty prompt timely delivery* (4.40), *understanding how organisation image enhances timely delivery* (4.19) and *understanding how organisation abilities to handle project prompt, timely delivery and how organisation fair judgement promote timely delivery of project* (4.11). The most crucial timely delivery attributes among the study participants are “*perceiving how organisation capabilities enhance prompt delivery*”, and the standard deviation value of 0.524 is indicating that the respondents’ opinions are not different. The next most crucial timely delivery attributes are the *perception of how organisation responsiveness enhances timely delivery of project*, and the standard deviation value of 0.614 is showing that the respondents’ opinions on the attribute are almost the same. The next most timely delivery attributes are the *understanding how staff capabilities enhance timely delivery*, and the standard deviation value of

0.546 is showing that the respondents’ opinions are almost the same. The next most crucial timely delivery attributes are the *understanding how organisation honesty enhances timely delivery*, and the standard deviation value of 0.577 is showing that the respondents’ opinions on the attribute are almost the same. The next most crucial timely delivery attributes are the *understanding how organisation image enhance timely delivery* and the standard deviation value of 0.647. The two attributes with least rating on the priority order understood *how organisation abilities to handle project prompt, timely delivery and how organisation fair judgement promote timely delivery of the project* (4.11). Though these attributes had the lowest means in order of priority; they are also crucial timely delivery attributes as this can be seen in their mean values. It is also observed from Table 4.2 that the absolute values of skewness are less than three (3), and all values of Kurtosis are also less than (10). Therefore, data is considered normally distributed.

**Research Question 2**

Does integrity of project manager affect sustainability of the industry?

Table 2 presents the mean responses and standard deviations of the respondents

**Table 2:** To what extent does integrity of construction industry affect sustainability of the industry?

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Our organization quality assurance of our product and services enhances customers loyalty	47	4.23	.865	-1.325	2.672
Our organization focus on honesty promote better market share	47	4.34	.760	-.982	.566
Our organization courage to do what is right enhances profitability	47	4.40	.771	-2.046	7.022
Our organization capabilities to fair judgment enhances profitability	47	4.26	.675	-.356	-.751
Our organization values and company image enhance better market share	47	4.28	.713	-.839	.892

Our organization prompt responsiveness to project enhance profitability	47	4.30	.689	-.886	1.325
Our organization respect to clients enhance client's loyalty	47	4.23	.890	-1.649	3.541
Valid N (listwise)	47				

Source: *Field Survey (2019)*

The top attributes of Organisation Integrity when arranged in order of priority based on the mean value are *perceiving how organization courage to do what is right enhances profitability* (4.40), *perception of how organization focus on honesty promote better market share project* (4.34), *understanding how organization prompt responsiveness to project enhance profitability* (4.30), *reflection on how organization values and company image enhance better market share* (4.28), *understanding how organization capabilities to fair judgment enhances profitability* (4.26) and *organization quality assurance of our product and services enhances customers loyalty and organization respect to clients enhance clients loyalty* (4.23). The most crucial Organisation integrity attributes among the study participants are having a standard deviation of 0.771, followed by the next most crucial with a standard deviation of 0.760, then the next most crucial with standard deviation of 0.689, and the next most crucial with standard deviation of 0.713, the next crucial attributes with standard deviations of 0.675, 0.865 and 0.890 all shows that the opinion of the respondents on the attribute are not far apart. It is also observed from Table 4.2 that the absolute values of skewness are less than three (3), and all values of Kurtosis are also less than (10). Therefore, data is considered normally distributed

## V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

### Summary

This study used project management ethics as a major variable for assessing project success, using Total Quality Engineering Services Limited as a case study. Despite various laws and code of ethics regarding professional practices in the construction industry, some ethical misconduct is still prevalent. Notable among them integrity, honesty, organizational cultures, personal values, confidentiality of information, non-disclosure policy, organization means of communication, notwithstanding the fact that organization stability being compromised and the integrity of the construction firm is declining.

While there are many ways contesting unethical conducts, most project managers are not any such measures. As a result, the promotion and modelling of ethical behaviour is decreasing significantly. Unethical Acts in construction

companies with all other elements of business must be managed by competent personnel, otherwise, the consequences of such misconducts will lead to non-sustainability of organization and joblessness for individuals.

### Conclusion

Conclusively, respondents agreed that integrity in terms of honesty, staff capability to doing what is right and confidentiality of information have a resultant effect on the sustainability and timely delivery of a project which enhances project success.

Therefore, since project success has been the focus of project managers, it is a necessity for the construction firms to gain its sustainability in the industry by keeping to the organization terms of agreement, stringent confidentiality of information, focus on honesty and respect to clients.

### Recommendation

Based on the research findings, it was recommended that:

- 1 The construction firms must ensure that projects are delivered on time, within budget and scope to proof integrity.
- 2 The construction organization must ensure that project team are motivated to give in their best during project execution to guarantee quality of project.
- 3 The construction firms must set quality standards for sustainability expectations and ethical code of conducts in project management.
- 4 The construction organization must apply the principle of honesty and fairness to promotes relationship of co-workers and clients.

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