



**ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
INSTITUTE OF QUALITY AND PRODUCTIVITY  
MANAGEMENT**

**PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES OF MOTIVATING  
EMPLOYEES IN IMPROVING QUALITY AND  
PRODUCTIVITY IN ETHIOPIAN CONSTRUCTION DESIGN  
AND SUPERVISION WORKS CORPORATION**

**BY**

**FITSUM KASSAYE**

**JULY 2020  
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

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## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work, prepared under the guidance of Dr. Melaku Girma. All sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged. I further confirm that the thesis has not been submitted either in part or in full to any other higher learning institution for the purpose of earning any degree.

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July 2020

## ENDORSEMENT

This thesis has been submitted to School of Graduate Studies of St. Mary's University for examination with my approval as a university advisor.

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July, 2020

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## ABSTRACT

*In a globalized and knowledge-based economy, quality and productivity management are keys to an organization's success and survival in a competitive global environment. Many construction organizations therefore have to adopt quality and productivity as reliable management tools. These elements are primarily important inputs which lead directly or indirectly to the success of the construction industries. Construction is the major driving factor of the current Ethiopian economy, but current such practice in the Ethiopian building construction projects is still facing delays, cost overruns, poor quality and low productivity. Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore the practices and challenges of motivating employees to improve quality and productivity in the Ethiopian Construction Design and Supervision Works Corporation. To achieve this objective, case study qualitative research design was employed. Thirty-five informants were used as samples to generate the required qualitative data through in-depth interviews with case informants through probing, semi-structured interviews with key informants, and conducting documentary analysis method using interview guide, and documentary analysis template as data collection instruments, respectively. Thematic analysis and content analysis methods were used to analyze the data collected from different sources. Thematic issues emerged in data analyses were used to answer study questions and address the objectives. Findings reveal that top management mostly used non-financially related extrinsic motivational mechanisms in differential manner between experts and administrative staff in its different Sectors, Centres, and Corporate Service. Concomitantly, there were multi-faceted challenges encountered which had emanated from various factors while trying to improve quality and productivity in those divisions of the Corporation. Therefore, these findings have implications for business policy, professionals, interventions, and for further studies at different levels and various contexts at large.*

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>BA</b>	Bachelor of Arts
<b>BSc</b>	Bachelor of Science
<b>BUDSWS</b>	Building and Urban Design and Supervision Works Sector
<b>CDSCo</b>	Construction Design Share Company
<b>CS</b>	Corporate Service
<b>ECDSWCo</b>	Ethiopian Construction Design and Supervision Works Corporation
<b>FDRE</b>	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
<b>GIGEUWSS</b>	Geo-technical Investigation, Geo-technical Engineering and Underground Works and Supervision Sector
<b>MA</b>	Master of Arts
<b>MSc</b>	Master of Science
<b>MOLSA</b>	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
<b>PhD</b>	Doctor of Philosophy
<b>RLTC</b>	Research Laboratory and Training Centre
<b>SGCICo</b>	Surveying Geo-spatial and Civil Informatics Centre
<b>TDSWS</b>	Transport Design and Supervision Works Sector
<b>WEDSWS</b>	Water and Energy Design and Supervision Works Sector
<b>WWDSE</b>	Water Works Design and Supervision Enterprise



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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the thesis on practices and challenges of motivating employees in improving quality and productivity in ECDSWCo. It thus begins with the description of the study context, background of the problem to identify the study problem, statement of the problem, the research questions, objectives of the study, and significance of the study. The chapter also presents definition of key concepts in the study, indicates the limitations of the study, and outlines the organization of the thesis.

### **1.1. Background of the Problem**

Men and women define themselves and their roles in society through work. Work (being formal or informal, and paid or unpaid) plays a central role in the lives of people all across the world (Mensahl & Amponsa-Tawiah, 2015). Nowadays, humans live in globalized world which emphasizes knowledge-based economy and artificial intelligence. Against a backdrop of increased pressure on firms because of globalisation and technological developments, academics from a number of disciplines began to consider people and how they are employed and managed in organizations from a new perspective (O' Riordan, 2017).

Working environment today is rapidly changing and is much more affected by turbulence, uncertainty, and instability than it was some decades ago. Organizations are currently confronted with complex situations; they have to manage their vital resources (such as physical, financial, information, and human resources) in such circumstances (McAdamet et al., 2000). Increased competition calls for business organizations to device ways of improving their competitiveness in the ever-changing global market. One of the ways that those organizations, companies, and firms can improve their competitiveness is by improving effectiveness of their systems.

Global competitiveness has forced businesses to examine their operation for the purpose of making process improvements. These improvements generally involve better utilization of resources and higher level of quality. Essentially, the focus is on enhancing productivity to meet or beat the competition on relevant cost, quality, time, and flexibility issues.

Productivity improvements require designing and successful implementing of sound programme.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, human capital is considered as the most important asset of any company (Hafiza, Shah, Jamsheed, & Zaman, 2011). The staff members of any industry are key resources to its survival and success (Kuranchie-Mensah & Kwesi, 2016). Since all organizations are concerned with what should be done to achieve sustained high levels of performance through people, the effective human resource management is at the heart of any successful quality and productivity management process. Indeed, it is becoming a maxim of good management that human factors are the most important dimension in quality and productivity improvement. People really do make quality happen and improve productivity level (Omachonu & Ross, 2015). The same authors further indicate quality and productivity improvement programmes have been implemented in many of federal programmes, including the defence departments in different parts of the globe. It means giving close attention to how individuals can best be motivated through such means as incentives, rewards, and importantly, the work they do and the organisation context within which they carry out that work cannot be understated (Armstrong, 2010).

Different scholars and researchers have conducted studies on motivation of employees, quality improvement and management, productivity improvement and management, and even on some other related issues in the construction industry or sector in different parts of the world. For example, Lee & Raschke (2016) articulate the progress that has been made in understanding employee's motivation and organizational performance, and suggest how the theory concerning employee's motivation and organizational performance may be advanced; Arditi & Gunaydin (2007) studied construction industry professionals in the United States of America; Omachonu & Ross (2012) thought of quality in terms of all functions of an enterprise to internal and external customers like in the Hawthorne Works at Western Electric Company; Gohari, Kamkar, Hossenipour, & Zohoori (2013) reviewed various researches in terms of relationships between intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, and employees' performance; Eshun & Duah (2011) explored and ascertained rewards motivate employees, identified kinds of most beneficial rewards motivate employees, and investigated some dilemmas and difficulties managers had faced in applying motivation theory to work place

setting; and Cardoso, Domingueza, & Paivaab (2015) characterized motivation in small - and medium-sized civil construction companies in Portugal.

In Arabian countries; Kazaz, Manisali, & Ulubeylil (2008) identified effect of basic motivational factors on construction work force productivity in Turkey; Salem (2018) explored the potential linkage of employees' motivation with the performance management process at Microsoft Company in Kuwait; Shahzad (2018) studied impact of employee's motivation on customer's satisfaction in airline industry in Pakistan; Aghayeva & Slusarczyk (2019) identified and comparatively assessed motivating and demotivating factors affecting labour productivity in twenty-five construction industries of the Republic of Azerbaijan. In China, Bao & Nizam (2015) also investigated and identified the impact of motivation on employee's performance in the electronics industry.

In African countries; Abdulsalam, Faki, & Dardau (2012) assessed impact of incentive schema for the sustainable development of productivity in three tiers of Nigerian Construction Industry; Joyce & Forson (2012) examined impact of motivation on the productivity of employees at GTBank in Ghana; Kuranchie – Mensah & Amponsah – Tawiah (2016) identified the best intrinsic and extrinsic institutional motivating factors for the employees in the large-scale mining industries in Ghana; and Thwala & Monese (2015) conducted study by considering motivation as a tool to improve employee's productivity on the construction site in South Africa and then identified those factors that promote positive motivation behaviour among construction workers as to improve production in the site. Likewise, Nyathira (2010) identified institutional factors influencing motivation among professionals in Kongoni Division in Navaho District of Kenya.

Moreover, there are related studies conducted in Ethiopia. For instance, Misikir (2004) examined productivity improvement in the Ethiopian Leather Industry through efficient maintenance management in Ethiopia; Abebe (2005) assessed concrete production and quality control in building construction industries in Addis Ababa, Nazareth, Debre Zeith, Bahir Dar, Jimma, and Hawassa in Ethiopia; Amare (2006) identified and developed model of quality management system for Bahir Dar, and Akaki Textile Share Companies in Ethiopia; Azemeraw (2011) investigated a design of productivity improvement method for Novastar Garment Private Limited Company in Ethiopia; Mihreteab (2012) predicted

quality of Muger Cement Factory Products using Neural Network Based Data Driven Clinker Quality Prediction Method in South-western Ethiopia; Mesfin (2013) investigated the effect of government employee's motivation in Addis Ababa; Tesfaalem (2014) studied on the effectiveness of quality control for the production of reinforced concrete and hollow concrete blocks in Housing Construction Projects in Addis Ababa found in seven selected areas of the city; Abeje (2016) examined steel and composite structure as an alternative and its application in building construction on high rise construction in Ethiopia; Betelhem (2017) assessed supply chain management in public building construction projects in Addis Ababa; Mekdim (2017) studied on construction equipment planning and management problems in Road Construction Project of the City Government of Addis Ababa Roads Authority; Shewangizaw (2017) tried to establish the effect of employees' motivation on organizational performance in Addis Ababa; Woyesa (2017) assessed the impacts of logistics management on building construction projects in Addis Ababa; Abedulsemad (2018) examined productivity improvement through inventory management practices for printing in Yekatit Paper Converting Private Limited Company in Addis Ababa; Robel (2018) conducted empirical study on cash flow for construction using Monte Carlo Simulation Method for building construction projects in Addis Ababa; Yesu (2018) identified determinants of job satisfaction like motivation factors in the Ethiopian private banks in Addis Ababa; Anmut (2019) assessed the causes of failure of small, medium, and micro enterprise construction companies in Addis Ababa; Arnaud (2019) predicted the construction labour productivity in building project using a Factor Model at Meles Zenawi Leadership Academy Construction Project in Addis Ababa; Michael (2019) assessed the effect of employee's motivation on organizational performance at the Ethiopian Federal Civil Service Commission; and Selamawit (2019) finally examined the effectiveness of quality management system (ISO9001 - 2008) implementation in the Ethiopian Construction Consultants using mixed methods research in Addis Ababa.

Here, it is possible to conclude that there have been limited studies on nexus between motivation, quality of products, and labour productivity in construction industries of the developing countries. These studies have also revealed that government employees' motivation has effects on their quality of products, productivity, and organizational performance; effectiveness of quality control on productivity of certain building materials;

contribution of inventory management practices to productivity improvement; application of a Factor Model for predicting labour productivity in construction industries; motivational factors could determine employees' job satisfaction; and the general effectiveness of implementing quality management system in the construction industries. Additionally, most of those studies have employed quantitative research methods and a few of them used mixed methods research design.

However, these empirical studies did not consider practices and challenges of motivating employees in improving quality and productivity in construction companies owned by governments in various socio-cultural, economic, political, and environmental conditions at different levels using different research methods. Therefore, whether or not motivating employees improves quality of products and productivity in construction works companies in such contexts and levels have at least remained inconclusive in qualitative terms. Accordingly, this study intends to explore practices and challenges of motivating employees in improving quality and productivity in Ethiopian Construction Works Corporation in Addis Ababa since its establishment.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

The purpose of the study is to explore practices and challenges of motivating employees in improving quality and productivity in the Ethiopian Construction Works Corporation in Addis Ababa using case study. Motivation becomes crucial for organizations to function. Employee's motivation is the key factor to increase the function of an organization in developing countries. Highly motivated employees are considered as a core element in running a successful organization (Michael, 2019). Motivating employees is also a valuable asset which delivers huge value to the organization in maintaining and strengthening its performance growth. The more employees are motivated to tasks accomplishment, higher will be the organization performance, and success (Suresh, 2013). Employees who are highly-motivated tend to be more productive, dedicated, and cooperative; while non-motivated workers are less productive, resistant to change, and generally inflexible or lazy (Hiriyappa, 2010).



There are two types of motivated behaviour (i.e., intrinsic and extrinsic) in the organization (Kat, 2009). Intrinsic and/or extrinsic motivating factors could inspire the employees for producing quality products and bringing about job productivity in all types of organizations, including construction companies. Motivating employees in such organizations has a paramount importance because motivation describes how employees behave in particular ways and typically explains whether or not they manifest negative behaviours or positive behaviours founded on values, attitudes, perceptions, and social influence (Weiten & Lloyd, 2010).

Different types of motivating approaches/methods and factors may improve products quality and employees' productivity in construction companies. When employees as asset are satisfied in their jobs backed by different motivation methods, they could perform quality jobs, produce quality products, and increase their productivity level (Yesu, 2018). Employee's motivation is thus a key to the overall effectiveness of organizational performance. Motivation generally acts as a predictor of individuals' behaviours and performance which, in turn, contribute to organizational performance (Ritz et al., 2016).

Scholars in the field strongly argue that employees are thought to be motivated to work hard to produce quality results when extrinsic rewards as motivating factors that are offered and provided (Mahaney & Lederberg, 2006). Construction organizations offer intrinsic rewards which are those that exist in the job itself (Raghu, Sen, & Rao, 2003), and also extrinsic rewards as motivation methods to project team members for the purpose of improving project outcomes (Arya, Glover, & Routledge, 2002; Dunn, 2001; Wiseman & Gomez-Mejia, 2002). The organizations sometimes provide them with financial or non-financial rewards specifically for successful project completion (Wang, Shih, Jiang, & Klein, 2006).

There is a relationship between motivation and productivity in that productivity is directly linked to motivation, and motivation, in turn, relies on productivity. Suitable motivation of employees' labour can be assumed as a key contributor to maximizing their productivity (Kazaz, Manisali, & Ulubeyli, 2008). An act of motivating employee in any organization improves his or her productivity. Nevertheless, a lack of employee's motivation leads to lower productivity, an inability to overcome challenges, apathy, and poor customer's service (Andritotis, 2017; Lionard, 2019; Rutachururwa, 2013). Cardoso, Domingueza, & Paivaab

(2015) further approach indirectly motivation and then argue the construction workers' perception of the factors affecting their productivity mostly include tools, supplies, materials, project management, and construction equipment.

In addition, productivity improvement would be possible if workers are allowed to contribute their quota in all operations of a company. Leadership therefore remains the most single important aspect of enhancing productivity on construction projects. Consequently, everyone in a construction project is a leader as a result of demonstrating his/her willingness to react to workers' environmental needs which will effectively motivate the employee to work at his or her highest level (Olabosipo et al., 2004).

Productivity still remains a dominant issue in the construction industry as it has been an essential contributor to corporate success; it results in cost savings and profitability (Adjei, 2009).

Motivational factors generally play an important role in increasing employee's quality job and productivity of outputs which result in improving organizational performance. High productivity is a long term benefit of employee's motivation (Kaur, 2013). Financial rewards (extrinsic) thus stimulate short-term motivations, but non-financial (intrinsic) rewards are more effective in the long run. Intrinsic rewards are not only long term effective, but they are beneficial to the organization in other ways as well. Hence, the intrinsic motivation factors are not as costly as extrinsic factors (Senanayake & Gamage, 2017).

On the other hand, there are challenges encountered while motivating employees for quality products and their productivity in construction companies. Today, a construction manager has to know the behaviour of each employee and what might motivate each one individually (Osabiya, 2015). Some empirical studies (e.g., Al Jasmi, 2012) have highlighted that there are challenges which may encounter on the part of managers in the construction companies while they are engaged in improving productivity of their outputs. These challenges are: poor leadership structure; unclear or non-existent job descriptions, no clear chain of command, disorganized directives; hazy goals and objectives, lack of challenging work, inappropriate hires, not taking advantage of an employee's skills set, lack of professional

development opportunities, failure to promote from within, workplace conflict which occurs when employees are at odds with one another, or with management, bickering and open disagreement, open sabotage of the work product, gossip and clique formation, constant complaints to human resources, lack of confidence in the company, unwillingness to cross-train or develop professionally, no one-on-one attention, no regular performance evaluations, irregular one-on-one management meetings, lack of personal goal-setting, and the absence of regular feedback. The biggest productivity challenges in the companies generally include: employee disengagement, ineffective performance management, lack of tools, training and development, holding excessive meetings, and non-work related reasons.

In Ethiopia, there is a practice of motivating employees by providing the effective ones with intrinsic rewards. However, there is no implementation of intrinsic motivational mechanisms to improve quality of jobs and products, as well as to increase labour productivity. Moreover, there are practices of using different types of monitoring and evaluation methods to motivation for improving the employee's quality of job and products, and his or her labour productivity in governmental organizations, including construction corporations, companies, business firms and organizations.

Therefore, the essence of this study is to explore what types of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors could improve employees' quality of jobs and products, and their labour productivity in the Construction Corporation in Addis Ababa. Good research generally requires for well-informed questions; to ask for right questions which helps us to understand the research problem. Here, it is possible to raise certain questions which may require for empirically-based qualitative evidence generated from all those concerned stakeholders in the research setting.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

The study generally intended to answer the following specific questions:

- What are the practices of motivating employees in the ECDSWCo in Addis Ababa?
- What types of practical methods of motivating employees are being implemented in the Corporation in Addis Ababa?

- Which of the motivating factors are practically implemented to improve the employees' quality jobs and products in the Construction Corporation?
- How does the ECDSWCo practically motivate its employees to bring about increment in their labour productivity? and
- What types of challenges encountered while implementing motivational methods in improving the employees' quality and productivity in ECDSWCo?

#### **1.4. Objectives of the Study**

This study has both general and specific objectives in answering the afore-mentioned research questions raised to address them based on empirically-informed results.

##### **1.4.1. General Objective of the Study**

It intends to explore practice and challenges of motivating employees in improving quality and productivity in the Ethiopian Construction Design and Supervision Works Corporation since its establishment.

##### **1.4.2. Specific Objectives of the Study**

This study specifically aims at addressing the following objectives:

- To explore practice of motivating employees in the Ethiopian Construction Works Corporation in Addis Ababa;
- To assess methods of motivating employees in improving their quality of jobs and products in the Construction Corporation?
- To identify different types of motivational methods in improving the employees' labour productivity of outputs in the Construction Corporation; and
- To investigate challenges encountered while practically implementing different motivational methods in improving the employees' quality jobs and products, and their labour productivity of construction outputs in the Corporation?

#### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

The study mainly focused on the nexus among employee's motivation, quality, and productivity improvement in construction industry. Accordingly, results may serve as inputs for designing policy on the construction industry in a highly competitive market

environment. Study findings would also provide information to the policy makers and human resource managers at different levels of the Construction Corporation to either consolidate or reconsider ways of motivating its staff. The evidence also serves as research-inspired information for different practitioners in the construction companies. Further, these results may add to the already existing body of knowledge on the contributions of employee's motivation to quality of jobs and labour productivity improvements in the Construction Corporation. Finally, the results may trigger for further studies on these and related issues using sequential mixed methods approach at different levels and in various contexts.

## 1.6. Definition of Key Concepts

- **Motivation** is a combination of certain psycho-mental forces perhaps an employee's internal desire, capacity, and energy directed at achieving an organizational goal or cause of action and directs behaviours (Matsumota, 2019; Sansone & Harackiewicz, 2010; World Bank, 2017).
- **Intrinsic motivation** is the self-desire to seek out new things and new challenges, to analyse one's capacity, to observe, and to gain knowledge related to 'psychological' rewards (Armstrong, 2006; Mullins, 2005).
- **Extrinsic motivation** is a motivation derived from outside the person or from those things that are external to the work or activity itself, positively influences behaviour, performance, and productivity (Ryan & Deci, 2000).
- **Quality** refers to those features of products, which are customer focus to meet its needs, expectations, reduced rework or defects, repeat business, conforming to ISO 9000 criteria, and completion on-time and budget (Aized, 2012; Hoonakker, Carayon, & Loushine, 2010).
- **Productivity** is the rate of an employee's labour performance, including effectiveness and efficiency. Shortly, it is the ratio of output value to input value (Asibuodu et al., 2016; Schermerborn, 1993).

## 1.7. Limitations of the Study

There are some limitations in this study. These limitations have emanated from the current COVID 19 pandemic, unpredictable political turmoil in Addis Ababa and its environs, the

Internet shut down in the country at large, and the sensitivity of the study. Therefore, it was primarily possible to organize and conduct the envisaged focus group discussions at convenient venues and to visit different potential resource centres to collect secondary data from available resources and official documents. Moreover, the Internet shut down prevented me from accessing relevant web-based published and unpublished dissertations and theses, research reports, government documents, and other files found elsewhere in the world. These resources could help in interpretations and discussions of the study findings. The sensitive nature of study further influenced on exploring detailed verbatim qualitative data because some informants were not as such free to share their views of and perspectives at motivations implemented to improve quality and productivity in the Corporation. Consequently, these inter-dependent problems might affect the depth of data collection, discussions, conclusions reached, and recommendations put forward to solve those challenges encountered. Finally, all these problems may limit the external validity of the study.

### **1.8. Organization of the Thesis**

This thesis has five chapters. The First Chapter introduces background of the study/problem which provides background information about the importance of motivation, quality, and productivity in the construction industry. This Chapter elaborates on the problem statement and the justification of the study. It further presents the research questions and highlights on the objectives of the study, justifies the significance of the study, defines key concepts in the study, and briefly describes limitations of the study.

The Second Chapter presents review of related literature on the construction industry and its contribution to the national economy. It also explains the concepts of motivation, quality, and productivity, and further describes different factors that may influence employee's motivation, quality, and productivity of construction projects. Chapter Three dwells on research design and methodology. It then describes research design and methods, target study participants and sampling techniques, data collection instruments and procedures, qualitative data analysis methods, and ethical considerations in the study. The Fourth Chapter presents the data analysis, interpretation, and discussion of findings of the study. Finally, it summarizes major findings of the study, draws conclusions which help answer those research questions and address the study objectives, and then recommend practical and plausible

activities that should be implemented by different concerned stakeholders with individually or collectively working shoulder-to-shoulder in an informed manner for sustainable management action to ensure employees' motivation and enhancement in quality and productivity.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

A literature review for this study means locating and summarizing the studies about the topic. Often these summaries are research studies, but they may also include conceptual articles or thought pieces that provide fireworks for thinking about that topic under investigation.

#### **2.1. The Overview of ECDSWCo**

The ECDSWCo in Addis Ababa was established by the FDRE Minister of Councils according to Regulations Number 365/2015 (FDRE, 2015). The Corporation was thus founded by unification of three Federal Government's public enterprises which had been accomplishing their respective works differently for years. These organizations include:

- Water Works Design and Supervision Enterprise (WWDSE),
- Construction Design Share Company (CDSCo), and
- Transport Construction Design Share Company (TCDSCo).

Its Head Quarter Office is located in Bole Sub City of the City Governance of Addis Ababa. There were also four Sectors, two Centres, as well as one Corporate Service. These include:

- Building and Urban Design and Supervision Works Sector (BUDSWS),
- Geo-technical Investigation, Geo-technical Engineering and Underground Works and Supervision Sector (GIGE UWSS),
- Transport Design and Supervision Works Sector (TDSWS),
- Water and Energy Design and Supervision Works Sector (WEDSWS),
- Research Laboratory and Training Centre (RLTC),
- Surveying Geo-spatial and Civil Informatics Centre (SGCIC), and
- Corporate Service (CS) (ECDSWCo, 2020).

#### **2.2. Origin and Definition of Motivation**

After Elton Mayo had conducted a series of studies in Hawthorne Works of the American Western Electric Company in Chicago beginning from 1924 to 1932, it was observed that employees were not motivated solely by money. However, the employees' behaviour was linked to their attitudes (Lindner, 1998). Consequently, the concept of motivation came into



practice. Motivation was derived from the Latin word “movere,” meaning move (Kreitner & Kinicki, 1998), and this concept was also derived from the word “motivate” which means to move, push or persuade to act to satisfy a need (Ramlall, 2004). If there is one trait that virtually all effective leaders in an organization have, it is thus motivation (Harvard Business School, 2014).

In construction companies and corporations, there are a number of important factors that contribute to their successes. But the people are the outstanding factor. These people – employees – have to be motivated both internally/intrinsically and externally/extrinsically for the competitive survival of such organizations (Benator & Thumann, 2013). However, these employees are not all the same. Thus, to effectively motivate them requires on the part of the managers to gain an understanding of the different types of motivation (i.e., motivational needs).

There have been various definitions of motivation across different disciplines in the academia such as management, psychology, and allied sciences. Let us consider some of these definitions. For example, Lindner (2004) views motivation as a psychological process that gives behaviour purpose, purpose and direction. Robbins (2005) also defines it as the willingness to exert high levels of effort toward organisational goals, conditioned by the effort’s ability to satisfy some individual need. For this author, a need is an internal state that makes certain outcomes appears attractive and an unsatisfied need creates tension that stimulates drives within an individual. These drives generate search behaviour to find goals that if attained, will satisfy the need and lead to the reduction of tension. Carragher et al. (2006) further advocate there should be an effective reward system to retain the high performers in organizations and reward should be related to their productivity. Moreover, motivation is a decision making process through which an individual chooses desired outcomes and sets in motion the behaviours appropriate to acquiring them (Dartey-Baah, 2010). Shah and Shah (2010) furthermore consider motivation as inspiring people to work; individually or in groups in such a way as to produce best results. Accordingly, what is common in all these definitions of motivation is that all the authors believe that there are stimuli, push, and drive among others that propel human beings to act in a particular way (Nevid, 2013).

In any organization or company, there are various needs and expectations at workplaces. These can be categorised in two ways - intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Mullins, 2005). Some scholars have further classified the complex and variable nature of needs and expectations at workplaces. These are economic reward, intrinsic satisfaction, and social relationship (Armstrong, 2009). Economic reward is an instrumental orientation to work and includes items (such as pay, fringe benefits, pension right, material goods, and security). Intrinsic satisfaction is also a personal orientation to work and concern with oneself. It is dependent on the individual attitude and varies from person, circumstance, and job as well as different parts within the same job. Moreover, it is derived from the nature of the job itself, interest in the job, and personal growth and development. Social relationship is, on the other hand, the relational orientation to work and concerned with the other people. It is an important feature in all set ups. It improves the supportive working relationships and teamwork and comprises friendships, group working and the desire for affiliation, status and dependency (Mullins, 2005; William, 2010).

### **2.3. Quality and Motivation**

Quality can mean different things to different people given the same experience. Quality is also defined in the context of the totality of the experience. However, the most significant problem with the delivery of services is that it is typically measured at the customer's interface — the one-on-one, face-to-face interaction between supplier and customer (Giàord, 2020). There are eight dimensions of quality - performance, features, reliability, conformance, durability, serviceability, aesthetics, and perceived quality (Omachonu, Vincent, & Ross, 2015).

In many ways, defining and controlling quality of service is more difficult than quality assurance of products. Based on the above-stated essence of quality, it has different aspects. These include: marketing, performance, features, service, focus on customer concerns, user-based concerns that raise cost, engineering, specifications, product-based concerns, manufacturing, conformance to specifications, and cost reduction (Bauer, Duffy, & Westcott, 2006).

Quality reduces a cost which, in turn, provides an additional competitive edge. Such a quality includes two types of quality (i.e., customer-driven quality and conformance or internal specification quality). Improving both internal (conformance) quality and external (customer-perceived) quality not only lowers the cost of poor quality or “non-quality” but serves as a driver for growth, market share, and profitability as well. Tauseef Aized (2012) generally argues that organizations need to carefully organize their activities regarding quality management to survive in a modern and competitive environment.

Motivating employees in organizations and companies highly contribute to quality. One of the ways to get people to like working hard is to motivate them. Employees who feel motivated to work are likely to be persistent, creative, productive, and turning out high quality work that they willingly undertake (Puplampu, 2013).

#### **2.4. Productivity and Motivation**

Productivity has been an essential contributor to corporate success. The construction productivity still remains an interesting and a dominant issue in the construction industry, promising cost-savings, timely delivery, and efficient usage of resources. Productivity is directly linked to motivation, and motivation is, in turn, dependent on productivity. Suitable motivation is, therefore, a contributor to maximising workers’ productivity. Critical factors (i.e. teamwork, late payment of interim certificate, work based on contract, supervision-based on leadership by example and provision of equipment, communication, love and belongingness, opportunity to undertake challenging task, and identification with goal and overtime) had great effects on motivation and impact on productivity (Adjei, 2009; Osabiya, 2015). The same authors adduce that the introduction of a non-financial incentives have contributed to workers’ motivation in Ghanaian and Nigerian Construction Industries. Consequently, these incentives enhance workers’ output and the overall productivity within the construction industry and further contribute to the respective national economy.

In a similar framework; Kazaz, Manisali, and Ulubeyli (2008) examined, determined, and defined basic employees’ motivational factors and finally, identified organizational factors as the most effective factors influencing construction labour productivity in 82 firms of Turkey. Thwala and Monese (2016) also identified motivation of employees as tool to improve

productivity on the construction sites in Johannesburg, South Africa. In construction industry, motivation can be seen as a tool to improve productivity. Higher productivity in the industry means seeing the final result sooner which, in turn, creates satisfaction. One way that construction management can influence productivity is by determining how smooth the work will flow and how much work can be accomplished. Another more important way that construction management influences productivity is by how it influence worker's attitude, which is a major element in worker's motivation and determining how much work will be accomplished (Pitino, 2013; Thwala & Monese, 2016). Generally, the company's productivity level is a reflection of its success which depends on the motivation of workers.

It is, therefore, possible to argue that with a positive motivation philosophy and practice in place; productivity, quality, and service should improve because motivation helps people towards achieving goals, gaining positive perspective, creating the power for change, building self-esteem and capability, and managing their development, and helping others (Osabiya, 2015). In what follows, let us explain employees' work motivation and their application in the construction industries.

## **2.5. Theories of Motivation**

As it will be discussed in the next part of the thesis, this study employed case study research design using qualitative research methods. Thus, it is inductive in its approach in which after qualitative data had been generated through qualitative empirical observations; these data were considered in the light of the arguments of the following theories of motivation.

There are various theories which endeavour to qualify what motivation is, all which are partially true. However, a generalized theory that applies to all individuals in different circumstances has not yet been theorized. It is not essential to discuss all motivational theories, but it is important to identify that each one is different. Historically, motivation theories can be traced back over two centuries ago to the works of innovative theorists (such as Robert Owen, Jeremy Bentham, and Elton Mayo) who have begun to research and implement principles of motivational theories. It is now possible to divide motivation theories into two major categories as **Content Theories** and **Process Theories**.

**Content Theories** may also be referred to as Need Theories as they focus on the importance of establishing what motivates us, trying to identify the individuals' needs, and thus relating motivation to the fulfilling of these needs. Content/Need Theories are concerned with identifying people's needs, their relative strengths, and the goals they pursue to satisfy these needs (Karimi, 2010; Mullins, 2005). Six Content Theories are taken into consideration to give an explanation to the question raised in the problem formulation (Ndang, 2020; William, 2010). Theories of motivation seek to justify why certain employees act or do things in a certain way rather than others. These theories include: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Model, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, John Adair's Fifty-Fifty Theory, Alderfer's Modified Need Hierarchy Model, McClelland's Achievement Motivation Theory, and McGregor's X and Y Theory. Today, the construction industry used theories which have been generally developed from these scholars' theories. Meanwhile, their studies focused on motivation, employee's needs, and incentives in the construction industry.

Abraham Maslow developed his "**Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory**" in 1943. The Needs Hierarchy Theory argues that human beings have an internal need pushing them on towards self-actualization (fulfilment) and personal superiority. Consequently, he introduced a hierarchy of needs. The hierarchy attempts to explain or propose factors that motivate an individual. Maslow further comes up with the view that there are five different levels of needs – psychological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization needs (Osabiya, 2015). Once we happen to satisfy a need at one stage or level of the hierarchy, it also has an influence on our behaviour. At such level, our behaviour tends to diminish; we now put forth a more powerful influence on our behaviour for the need at the next level up the hierarchy (Robert, 2012).

Firstly, individuals are motivated by psychological needs which form the basic needs for survival. These psychological needs may include: food, warmth, clothing, and shelter. When people are hungry, they do not have shelter or clothing; there are more motivated individuals to fulfil these needs because these needs become the major influence on their behaviour. On the other hand, when people do not have a deficiency in those basic needs (psychological needs), their needs tend to move to the second level where it is equally seen by Maslow as the higher order of needs. The second level is seen as the security needs. Security tends to be

the most essential need to people at this level. This is expressed in safety in the employee's health and family. The third level of needs is the social needs. When feeling secured and safe at work, employees will now place job relations as their focus that is trying to build up a good friendship, love, and intimacy. As we keep moving up the ladder, we will have self-esteem needs. This fourth level of needs presents the recognition to be accepted and valued by others. The highest or the last level of need is self-actualization needs. Self-actualization is to develop into more and more what one is to become all that one is competent of becoming (Srivastava, 2005).

In contrast, Hierarchy of Needs Theory has been criticized for its apparent rigidity as the Theory is difficult to test it empirically. First, it is questionable whether or not needs can always be ranked in a simple hierarchical form. Maslow himself questions the validity of a rigid ordering of needs, because individuals are likely to have different priorities (Needham 1999). Furthermore, this means that there are various interpretations of Hierarchy of Needs Theory and the clarity of Maslow's work has also faded over time due to more recent publications by authors with more current views. Nevertheless, the values of the Maslow Model's tiers approach remain, regardless of the overlapping of needs (Puplampu, 2013).

**Frederick Herzberg's Two - Factor Theory** implies that those factors which cause job satisfaction are the opposite to those that cause job dissatisfaction. Herzberg conducted a survey to gain an understanding of what had created job satisfaction. He collected data from a group of accountants and engineers. In his studies, Herzberg concludes that employees are influenced by two factors – thus developed his Two-Factor Theory. This Theory states there are certain factors in the workplace that cause satisfaction and, in turn, different factors that create dissatisfaction. Accordingly, Herzberg divided these factors into two categories as **hygiene and motivator factors** (Valencia, 2011). Principally, hygiene factors are crucial in ensuring that workers are not dissatisfied, whereas motivators are needed to increase performance.

Motivators, therefore, create job satisfactions which include: achievement, recognition, autonomy, and other intrinsic aspects when these are fulfilled. Motivators are also those factors which provide feeling of job satisfaction at work. These factors further influence on the ways of work in a company. Motivators are those factors which come from within an

individual that is intrinsic. These factors could be achievements, interest in the task, responsibility of enlarge task, growth, and advancement to higher level (Grant & Shin, 2011).

Conversely, hygiene factors are extrinsic which include: job security, salary, fringe benefits, and company policies which are elements of Maslow's higher level needs. They do not provide positive satisfaction, but if they are not present this will create dissatisfaction. Herzberg's hygiene factors create a suitable work environment, albeit not an increase in satisfaction. Therefore, hygiene factors are essential to make sure that the work environment does not develop into a disappointing situation. Generally, typical hygiene factors are salary, working condition, status, and company's policies and administration (Saiyadain, 2009). Contrarily, there has been criticism regarding the accuracy of the results concluded in Herzberg's Two Factor Theory.

Developed as a motivation factor, **John Adair's Fifty-Fifty Theory** could influence performance of company. From Adair's perception, fifty percent of motivation comes from within a person and the other, fifty percent from the environment, mainly emanate from people around us. However, this rule tries to explain that fifty percent of our motivation comes from within us and fifty percent from an external influence (i.e., from our environment, particularly from the people around us) (Slocum et al., 2011). These observations are indicative rather than mathematical and they may differ from person to person. Within these important external factors, the nature and quality of the leadership present is essentially important. Hence, this existing tough link between leadership and motivation becomes vital to determine employee's motivation (Osabiya, 2015).

The Fifty-Fifty rule does have the benefit of reminding leaders that they have a key role to play for the success or failure in the employees' motivation at work. Fortunately or unfortunately, not all the cards are in the leaders' hands, for they are dealing with people who are self-motivating in various degree. These are the challenges that confront the human resource management to galvanize employee's motivation with the work environment (John, 2007).

In 1969, Alderfer developed his **Modified Need Hierarchy (ERG) Theory** from Maslow's Hierarchy Needs Theory. It condensed the five levels of needs in the hierarchy needs into

three levels: existence, relatedness, and growth which emerged the other name as ERG Theory. **The existence needs** are those concerned with sustaining human existence and survival, and it covers physiological and safety needs. **Relatedness needs** are those which focused on the relationships with the social environment and it encompasses love, affiliation, and meaningful interpersonal relationships, safety, and esteem needs. Finally, **growth needs** are concerned with the development of potential and also cover self-esteem and self-actualization (Osabiya, 2015).

Alderfer further suggests that the individual progresses through the hierarchy from existence needs, to relatedness and to growth needs as the lower needs become satisfied. The activated need in his view is more than one. Therefore, it is possible to suggest that individual need is more of continuum than hierarchical (Mullins, 2005). Alderfer then postulated a two-way progression and cited a frustration-regression process as the downward trend. He has said the lower level needs become the focus of the individual's effort when continuous frustration is experienced in the quest for higher level needs. He further argues that lower level needs are not to be completely satisfied before the emergence of a higher level. The ERG Theory generally states that an individual is motivated by one or more set of needs. In this sense, if a person's quest for a need is blocked; then his/her attention should be focused on the satisfaction of needs at other levels (Osabiya, 2015).

In an effort to further develop the work of Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, David McClelland conducted research and then developed **Mc Clelland's Achievement Motivation Theory**. In so doing, McClelland carried out research and experiments to identify the varying needs and motivators in a variety of people. His Achievement Theory focuses on the relationship between the hunger needs and the extent to which imagery of food dominated thought processes. Consequently, McClelland identified four main arousal-based, and socially developed, motives (Lawall & Okhankhuele, 2014). These include: the achievement motive, the power motive, affiliate motive, and the avoidance motive (McClelland, 1988). The initial three motives correspond to Maslow's self-actualization, esteem, and love needs, respectively. The relative intensity of these needs is dependent on the individual and it also varies between different occupations. With the perception that managers are higher in achievement than affiliation, McClelland saw the achievement need



(n-Arch) as the most significant for the success and growth of any nation. He used Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) and subjective judgement, and then identified four achievement needs - a preference for moderate task difficulty, personal responsibility for performance, the need for feedback, and innovativeness (Mullins, 2005).

McClelland (1988) further suggests **Process Theories**. These are extrinsic Theories and they attempt to identify the relationships among the dynamic variables which make up motivation and the actions required to influence behaviour and action. The Process Theories provide a further contribution to our understanding of the complex nature of work motivation (Mullins, 2005). Alternatively, Process Theory is also known as Cognitive Theory because it is concerned with people's perceptions of their work environment, the ways in which they interpret, and understand. Guest (2010) argues that Process Theory provides a much more relevant approach to motivation than Maslow's Theory and Herzberg's Theory. Guest confirms that extensive research conducted on the issues have shown their arguments to be wrong. Accordingly, Cognitive Theory can certainly be more useful to managers than Needs Theory because the former provides more realistic guidance on motivation techniques than the latter (Armstrong, 2009).

As one of the Process Theories, **Expectancy Theory** cannot be linked to a single scholar. Motivation based on Expectancy Theory focuses on a person's beliefs about the relationships among effort, performance, and rewards for doing a job. There have been different versions of this Theory in which some are complex. However, recent approaches to Expectancy Theory have been associated with works of Victor Vroom (Mullins, 2005).

In 1964, Vroom developed the concept of the Expectancy Theory in order to offer an expectancy approach to the understanding of motivation. Consequently, motivation is a product of the anticipated value to a person in an action. Vroom also perceived probability that the person's goals would be accomplished as a product of the anticipated value in an action. Thus, the Vroom' Model is built around the concepts of value, expectancy, and force. The concept of force is on the whole equivalent to motivation and may be shown to be the algebraic sum of the products of valences and expectations. Consequently, **Motivation (force) = Valence x Expectancy**.

Valence is the strength of an individual's preference for an outcome or goal. The strength may be negative (i.e., fear for demotion or transfer to less important job) or positive (i.e., prospect for promotion). Expectancy is the probability that a particular action will lead to a required outcome. If the employee has a particular goal, some behaviour has to be produced to accomplish that goal. The employee has to weigh the likelihood of various behaviours that will accomplish the desired goals and select the most successful behaviour. According to Vroom, the employee's motivation may be augmented by changing the perception or by boosting the expectancy level through better communication and augmenting the actual reward that will result. Vroom's Expectancy Theory clarifies the relationship between the employee and the organizational goals and recognizes the differences between employees in producing work motivation. Furthermore, the Expectancy Theory is consistent with the idea that a manager's job is to design an environment for performance, necessarily taking into account the differences in various situations. Thus, Vroom's Theory is quite consistent with management by objectives. However, Expectancy Theory is difficult to research and is thus confronted with practical difficulties in its application (Bose, 2004).

Generally, Vroom tackles three beliefs and brings out with some clarity and applicability. Each of the beliefs deals with what employees' think will happen if they put out effort to perform. The first belief comprises of the relationship between effort and performance. That is, the first belief is the employee's belief about the probability that effort will lead to performance. Another definition is that this belief is the expectation that effort will lead to success (Odusami, Iyagba, & Onirin, 2003). The first belief can be seen as the employee's belief about whether or not what is expected can be done.

The second belief comprises with the relationship between performance and outcomes. It is thus the employee's belief about the probability that performance will lead to outcomes. The second belief can further be stated in different ways. That is, the employee's belief about the relationship between "what you do" and "what you get." It is the belief about outcomes following performance.

The third belief looks at the relationship between outcomes and satisfaction. This belief is the employee's belief about how satisfying or gratifying the outcomes will be. It is generally the belief about how fulfilling or worthwhile they will be (Osabiya, 2015).

In conclusion, it can be deduced that all these motivation theories had been considered in the light of inductive research approach. The empirical observations in terms of qualitative data were thematized, analysed, interpreted, discussed, and then considered whether or not each theory argument(s) has some sort of empirical relevance to the reality on the ground in the study setting.

## **2.6. Empirical Literature**

### **2.6.1. Global Overview**

Some empirical studies have confirmed the relationships between motivation and employee's nature, behaviour, purpose, and achievement. Woo and Soetanto (2010) reviewed different relevant sources and then identified four main groups of motivational factors which are relevant to those working in the construction industry. These were drive, goals (i.e., power, status, recognition, and comfort), relationship (e.g., friendly working environment, and social contact and action), and incentives.

Available general literature on those issues under investigation also indicates that motivation of employees have contributions to improvement in quality and productivity. Empirical studies undertaken in different parts of the world have documented that motivating employees in organizations improves their quality of jobs and productivity. For example, the motivations of construction industry professionals have confirmed that such practice encourage them to perform quality jobs and to become productive in their accomplishments in the United States of America (Arditi & Gunaydin, 2007). Gregory (2008) has further found that a motivated workforce has more productive employees which is translated into bottom line cost-savings – productivity. Applications of various motivational methods in different counties furthermore have improved quality, productivity, and organizational performance (Raghava, 2009; Linder, 2010; Remi et al., 2011; Karaskakovavska, 2012; Manzoor, 2012; Ruge, 2012; Farhanabanana, 2013; Waheed; 2013; Lipman, 2014).

There are also effects of basic motivational factors on construction workforce's productivity in Turkey. Specifically, these were organizational, economic, physical, and socio-psychological factors. The most influential group among them was the organizational factors, followed by economic, physical, and socio-psychological factors (Kazaz, Manisali, & Ulubeyli, 2008). Based on these results, it is clear that the organizational factors unexpectedly have a stronger effect than economic and socio-psychological ones on the construction workers' productivity. The four major interrelated categories factors such as environmental, organisational, group, and individual factors are found affecting productivity in six construction sites of contracting company in Abu Dhabi (Ailabouni, Painting, & Ashton, 2016). Here, it could be possible to argue that motivation of workers in the construction companies and organizations using different methods would improve their quality of jobs and productivity in various contexts of these countries.

In contrast, there are some contradictory empirical studies in certain parts of the world. In developing countries, for instance, quality is compromised for a number of reasons: problems on the part of building construction foreman, supervisor and workers' deliberate negligence of doing different types of construction parts which are dangerous for the durability of the infrastructure (Probst, 2018).

It is possible to speed up the construction projects without losing quality in California, USA because construction is an extremely important job for accuracy. However, construction clients usually want their buildings and projects done as quickly as possible. Accordingly, the following approaches improve the employees' productivity at workplaces in the construction industry:

*[C]ommunicate the goal(s) clearly as communication is the most important productivity booster in any job; set realistic goals which are understandable by the entire crew as construction activities take time; reward construction workers regularly (i.e., by offering incentives in the form of rewards) because it involves often hot and tiring works; providing training to all workers in a project before beginning the construction as it reduces the number of injuries; carefully and attentively listen to the employees well; planning with purpose by stating detailed project plan with schedules for workers, materials, and other logistics before starting a construction project; hiring good and respectful management; and tracking construction materials continuously (Rhumbix, 2018).*

Consequently, the above-stated long quotation shows that clear communication, practical goals, provision of incentives, conducting trainings for employees, purposeful planning, good management, and continuous tracking of construction materials have contributed to improvement in labour productivity of the workers in the construction industry. In this study, the author has found out that mostly those extrinsic motivational factors have improved productivity of the workers in the construction industry in San Fransisco.

### **2.6.2. Empirical Studies in African Countries**

In Africa, employees' motivation has two meaning - expanding effort toward the accomplishment of an organizational goal and the managerial process of getting workers to accomplice organizational goal. Employee's motivation is one of the most important factors for increasing performance and productivity. Performance result from the interaction of physical, financial and human resources (Gutsy, 2012).

Managers are found to employ different motivational strategies to improve labour productivity in the construction industry in Ghana. Teamwork, late payment of interim certificate, communication opportunity to undertake challenging task, work-based on contract, love and belongingness, provision of equipment, supervision-based on leadership by example, equity, and identification with organizational goal (Adjei, 2009). In a study on the contribution of employee's motivation to organizational effectiveness of private enterprises in Uganda, it was found that those employees were found to be vital in running organizations efficiently and effectively (Seguya, 2009).

### **2.6.3. Empirical Studies in Ethiopia**

In Ethiopia, an employee's motivation is the key to success in any organization or company. Proper employees' motivation can save a company's time, money, and other resources – may result in productivity (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs [MoLSA], 2010). In the construction industry, labour quality and productivity are key issues in the profitability of a construction project like the case of Meles Zenawi Leadership Academy Construction Projects in Addis Ababa (Kwizera, 2019).

Abebe (2005) confirmed that proper motivation of employees had been found to contribute to quality control of concrete production in building construction industry of Ethiopia. Specifically, the author assured that these were empirical findings in 41 concrete construction production industries in Addis Ababa, Nazareth, Debre Zeith, Bahir Dar, Jimma, and Hawassa. Likewise, Tesfaalem (2014) found out that motivating workers had had effectiveness in quality control for the production of reinforced concrete and hollow concrete blocks projects in Yeka Ayat II, Yeka Ayat III, Yeka Abado, Bole Arabsa, Kolfe Keranyo, Tulu Dimtu and Kelento sites under the auspices of Addis Ababa Housing Projects.

Quoting Abebe Dinku who is the Professor of Structural Engineering at Addis Ababa University, Yohannes (2020) states, “[T]he collapses of a five-story building were not new quality problem phenomenon in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. There were similar collapses that had occurred different parts of Ethiopia like a three-story building in Gondar, three –story building in Hawassa, and a four-story building in Wolaiyta in the past couple of years.”

Yohannes (2020) also identified customer focus, leadership, and engagement of employees had had significant contribution to the improvement of quality in building constructions. Consequently, the author has concluded the contractors do not regard the quality management system as a critical success factor for quality of products in the construction companies in Addis Ababa.

Mesganaw (2016) indicated that the majority of the respondent executives of building construction companies had not given much attention to those factors hindering productivity of employees in the industry. These major factors include: compliant management systems, orientation at entry when employees join the company, implementation of effective construction waste management, timely monitoring and evaluation, capacity building schema, and transparent communication.

In contrast to practice of motivating employees to improve quality and productivity in the construction companies of different countries in the world, there are some challenges which have encountered the concerned bodies or stakeholders. In Addis Ababa, marketing factor was the most challenging one, followed by financial problem due to its shortage because of late payment from the clients and that of working capital from an enterprise. Additionally,

the study results adduced that managerial, ethical, information- technology, and government policy and regulation related factors were other challenges encountered the small, medium and micro-scale construction enterprises and companies (Animut, 2019).

In conclusion, it has been argued that practice of motivating workers and/or professionals in the construction industry elsewhere in the world improves quality of jobs and labour productivity of outputs. However, these positive achievements are realized in the industry not without their multi-dimensional challenges encountered in various socio-cultural, economic, environmental, and political contexts at different levels in the world.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Description of Research Setting

The study was conducted in the ECDSWCo setting found in Addis Ababa. The Corporation had a total of 1959 employees in its different sectors, centres, as well as corporate during the Fiscal Year of 2019/20. Among these employees, 987 of them were permanent employees while 972 temporary employees. Additionally, regarding the gender composition of these employees, there were 1422 (72.6%) males and 537 (27.4%) females in the Construction Corporation as of July 2020 (ECDSWCo, 2020).

#### 3.2. Research Design and Methods

Yin (2014) argues that a research design ensures the evidence obtained enables the researchers to answer the initial questions as unambiguously as possible. Based on this assumption, the researcher employed a case study design. Consequently, the researcher used qualitative research methods (i.e., in-depth interviews with case informants [interviewees who give detail pieces of information about the Corporation's practices and challenges related to motivation for improving the employees' quality and productivity through probing] and semi-structured interviews with key informants [those interviewees who give pieces of information on only certain key issues related to the issues under investigation]), and also documentary analysis to accurately measure the complex dynamics of motivation that underpin quality and productivity behaviour manifestation on the part of employees.

The researcher used qualitative research in this study based on the following assumptions and premise. First, qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the researcher in the world and then studies social phenomena in their natural settings thereby attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Consequently, the case study design of the qualitative research methods were employed to effectively explore complex dynamics of the employees' motivational behaviour, cognition and attitude towards improving their quality of jobs and products, and labour productivity in the ECDSWCo. Second, such qualitative research methods have



considered the study participants' broader aspects related to the how and the why of human behaviour that would likely underpin their behaviours resultant of motivational factors (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Third, Fazio and Olson (2003) further support the idea that qualitative research is most beneficial and viable for exploring attitudes and behaviours, as attitudes are constructed as a result of social group influence and pressures, perception and attention. Attitudes and perceptions are not static aspects of the human condition and are likely to differ according to workplace conditions, relationships, and experiences (Creswell, 2019). Generally, the researcher employed in-depth interviews with case informants, semi-structured interviews with key informants, conducted physical observations of the Corporation's settings, and used documentary analysis methods on available published, as well as unpublished documents, research reports, web-based files, etc.

### **3.3. Study Participants and Sampling Techniques**

The population of this research was employees of the ECDSWCo in Addis Ababa. The size of the study population was estimated to be 1959 employees who were working in different sectors and centres in various sites during the Fiscal Year of 2019/20. The sample was selected from the population of the staff with a precaution of considering sub-populations from each site or office and gender.

The sample design identifies the method or approach used to select the sampling units, and may incorporate probability sampling design method which is used in both quantitative and qualitative research (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). In this research, the researchers used purposive sampling technique combined with snowballing method of non-probability sampling design to properly locate and select sample informants and participants in those sites of the Ethiopian Construction Corporation. These study participants who could best enhance the researcher's understandings of those phenomena being investigated were carefully selected based on knowledge of the different working groups according to specific criteria in selecting a total of 35 employee interviewees. Among these, 18 employees were selected from those professionals working in different Sectors, Centres and Corporate

Services (i.e., 10 case interviewees and 8 key interviewees) and 17 administrative staff members (i.e., 10 case interviewees and 7 key interviewees).

### **3.4. Data Collection Instruments and Procedures**

In order to generate the appropriate primary and secondary qualitative data using interview guides, observation checklist, and documentary analysis template as research instruments, the researcher prepared each type of the instrument in May 2020. As this qualitative research undertaking involves a series of small, manageable steps; the researcher considered the actual process of these steps while planning to accomplish the data collection successfully. After completing reviews of relevant and recent literature on concepts, theories, and empirical studies found elsewhere in the world; the researcher identified relevant issues for this research which were prepared in the form of open-ended questions, checklists, and those issues which required qualitative answers and/or justifications from available different documents (e.g., FDRE Constitution; Ethiopian Construction Laws; Ethiopian Construction Policy and Strategy; the Construction Regulations; Guidelines; the ECDSWCo's Manual on Administrative Incentives; published and unpublished thesis, research reports, consultancy papers, web-based documents and files; and related documents found in the archives) and then incorporated them in the interview guides, observation checklist, and documentary analysis template, respectively. Following, these research instruments were submitted to the advisor and also given to experienced researchers and officials in the issues under investigation for constructive comments and feedbacks. Consequently, the researcher collected the constructive comments and feedbacks and then incorporated them accordingly while preparing the draft instruments.

Next, these instruments were pre-tested by conducting pilot study to get final feedbacks and constructive comments from the advisor which would improve their reliability and validity through ensuring that potential problems were identified and eliminated. At this stage, in addition to the advisor; experienced colleagues and fellow researchers, experts in the issues under investigation, potential users of the data, and a sample group of informants were involved. Finally, the required cross-sectional qualitative data were generated from those sample employees during the Fiscal Year of 2019/20 using the final version interview guides, observation checklist, and documentary analysis template.

### **3.5. Data Analysis Methods**

The researcher used content analysis and thematic analysis methods of the qualitative data analysis methods to answer those research questions and then address the objectives of the study. The former was applied while identifying and analysing different documents related to the issues under investigation. The latter method was employed to analyse the qualitative data generated using interviews and observations. In order to analyse the qualitative data; the researcher engaged in reading the verbatim transcripts of the interviews and other related sources of such data, identified relevant issues, categorized similar issues, and then put them in themes as folders. Afterwards, when the researcher wrote-up; these thematic issues were drawn from the relevant folder and presented in the different sections of the thesis. This presentation includes the voices of participants in the forms of direct quotations (i.e., long and short quotations) or paraphrased versions of their views, also the reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and its contribution to the existing reservoir of literature or a call for change (Creswell, 2019).

### **3.6. Ethical Considerations**

In the study, ethics in research undertakings are considered. Ethics in research refers to the proper conduct of the research process through the maintenance of ethical principles and guidelines. The researchers have also obligations to treat participants with respect and to be truthful in data analysis and the reporting of findings (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). These principles and guidelines may affect the research in one way or another. The ethical considerations which were taken into account for this study generally include: informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, and opportunity given to receive a summary of the results of the study under the auspices of the St. Mary's University. In sum, the ethics employed define the principles and guidelines under which research was conducted. The researcher also treated people and their working sites which had participated in the research with respect. This is because the researcher had a reciprocal right to be treated honestly and fairly by the study participants. A paramount ethical principle considered in the study was the right of participants to make an informed, voluntary decision to take part in the research. Informed consent also emanated from the provision of adequate information about the research, its procedures and the options available to the study participants. Here, the

researcher emphasised the importance of confidentiality, anonymity, and respect participants' privacy by the avoidance of deception in order not to harm and protect the study participants' self-esteem and safety. On the whole, all these ethical concerns were addressed appropriately in this study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents the collected and analyzed qualitative data which are organized according to the research questions. It first briefly describes profile of the study participants. Next, the section explores actual practice of motivating employees in the Corporation. Additionally, it focuses on practical motivational mechanisms employed to improve the employee's quality of jobs and their produced products in the Corporation. Similarly, the chapter dwells on practised mechanisms for increasing the employee's labour productivity. Finally, it describes those challenges encountered while the concerned officials in the Corporation were practising different types of motivational mechanisms. Consequently, the chapter packs up the major findings and sheds some light on the practices and challenges of motivating employees in improving quality and productivity in the ECDSWCo.

#### **4.2. Study Participants Profile**

Among those total employees (1959) in the Corporation, a total of thirty-five of them were selected as sample study participants in June 2020. Disaggregated by gender, twelve sample employees were females, while twenty-three of them were males. Meanwhile, three employees were from top level management, fifteen experts from those relevant Sectors and Centres which required professionalism, ten employees from middle level management, and seven of them from Corporate Service or administrative staff. Thus, twenty-seven were experts and eight of them were administrative staff members. Regarding their educational status, 1 held PhD, seventeen were with MSc degrees, two MA degrees, and fifteen BA/BSc degrees. As to their duration of stay in the Ethiopian Construction Corporation, six of the study participants stayed for a duration of one to three years, eleven of them for 4 to 6 years, fourteen for 7 to 10 years, and four of the samples for above ten years as shown in Table 4.1 below.

**Table 4.1. Profile of the Study Participants**

Items	Category of participants	Number
Gender	Male	23
	Female	12
Position in the Corporation	Top management	3
	Experts	15
	Middle level management	10
	Administrative staff	7
Educational status	BA/BSc	15
	MA	2
	MSc	17
	PhD	1
Duration of stay in the Corporation	1 – 3 years	6
	4 – 6 years	11
	7 – 10 years	14
	Above 10 years	4

### 4.3. Practices of Motivation in the Corporation

At the outset of the individual interviews conducted in convenient venues, all study participants were assessed on their understanding of the concept of motivation per se. Their responses could be boiled down and summarized as follows: Motivation is taking an action which initiates the employees to give their full potential and more attention to accomplish the respective day-to-day activities in each Sector, Centre, and Corporate Service in the Corporation. With regard to informants' perception of motivation in the study, every employee's behaviour in the different Sectors, Centres, and Corporate Service has a reason for behaving in a certain way behind it. Hence, the employee will somehow be motivated by certain intrinsic and extrinsic factor(s). Consequently, their understanding and perception of the concept seems quite different from the operational definition of motivation used in this thesis. Their conception of motivation mostly emphasizes on its intrinsic aspects which are financially related incentives (rewards), but they have relegated the non-financially-toned extrinsic aspect of the concept. This is because the interviewees have given due emphasis to

receiving financial rewards as their internal motivational drives for accomplishing quality jobs and producing quality products in the Corporation.

Regarding motivational factors on the part of the study participants in the ECDSWCo, one of the key interviewees/informants selected in the study has reflected that,

*Our deep-rooted desires or internal factors have the highest motivational power. These could be acceptance by our co-workers, curiosity (i.e., to be known by others), to be ethical and need to be organized, have the desire to have influence, need to have social interactions in daily routines of life, and the desire to feel important by holding certain social positions in the respective organization's organizational structure.*

In order to explore the practices of motivating employees in the ECDSWCo, the study informants were asked open-ended question(s) on the issue under investigation. The informants' responses that were selected from all Sectors, Centres, and Corporate Service in the ECDSWCo show the practical methods implemented in the Corporation to motivate its employees were found to be monthly salary bonus, incentives, medical and education expenses coverage, and provision of transport service. As they stated that the Corporation had employed motivational factors or mechanisms for increasing productivity and producing quality results by its different employees. These mechanisms are: recognizing and appreciating employee of the fiscal year by means of awards, providing benefits package (i.e., money, different types of bonuses, and organizing various retreat trips and activities to historical and tourist attraction places in Ethiopia). However, in the Building and Urban Design and Supervision Works, Transport Design and Supervision Works, and the Water and Energy Design and Supervision Works Sectors; the top management of the Corporation have mostly used incentive methods.

In the same framework, these informants strongly stressed that the Corporation did not have proper motivation mechanisms implemented to motivate and properly manage its employees. They unanimously confirmed,

*The Corporation has already prepared a general motivation package for both professionals and administrative staff members It consists of 90% coverage of medical expenses, 90% of education expense coverage with the first getting approval by and consent of the Corporation's top management members, annual salary increment of 8%, bonus payment which amounts up to two months of salary pay for each employee, and transportation service.*

The same study participants continued and reflected their differential views on contribution of such motivational mechanisms for the ECDSWCo, when most of the interviewees underscored the motivational package which was being implemented in the Corporation had never contributed for the successful performance of its different works and development. Contrarily, few of the participants assured that the motivational factors had had positive impact on the employees through generating job satisfaction for them.

In the ECDSWCo, it can be concluded that there is no clearly stated, well-designed, and engraved official motivational package system for each Sector, Centre or Corporate Service. However, there are differential motivational mechanisms for professionals in the Sectors, on one hand and for administrative staff, on the other hand.

Nevertheless, these excerpts of qualitative data on views of the study participants reveal that motivational factors be it from inside or outside of the concerned employee of the Corporation could contribute to improve quality and productivity without taking into account due considerations of the existing potential differences of motivational factors among project site-based staff and office-based staff (e.g., managers, designers, architects, and so on) and even the Corporation's clients and other stakeholders. These findings are not consistent with those studies which are carried out to understand/assess worker's motivational factors on various construction sites, projects, companies, and/or corporations in Bangkok, Thailand (Woo & Soetanto, 2010).

#### **4.4. Motivation for Quality**

This study furthermore intended to assess the employees' own level of awareness about quality in the context of their Corporation. Their responses generally imply majority of the employees do not have clear awareness and understanding the concept of quality. They usually relate it with amount of cost incurred to produce a given product in their Corporation. Quality works and products need more cost and time; such quality is costly. However, the qualities of works and products in the Corporation are mostly determined by its clients, argued those informants from those sectors.



Conversely, there are variations in interviewees' views on their awareness and understanding of quality in the context of the ECDSWCo. Accordingly, they stated the following regarding quality:

- Quality design means high class designs or high standard designs,
- Quality supervision is strict supervision of everything as per the design;
- Quality consultation is consultation by highly experienced professionals;
- Quality administration is much systematized management; and
- Quality in soil investigation starts from the drilling machines because the bore holes are to be drilled are done by taking soil samples which involve a very modern way, the materials they use to take these samples are of a high class standard, those machines they use for testing the samples taken in the soil laboratory are of modern ones, and the frequency of testing the soil samples.

The researcher further asked those interviewees question about motivating factors which are practically implemented to improve their quality of jobs and products in the ECDSWCo. Their responses imply that there are different types of motivational mechanisms employed in order to improve employee's quality of jobs and products which vary by sector, on one hand, and centre and corporate service, on the other hand. All of the informants in the four sectors in the corporation substantiated this claim by their informative expressions. They asserted that there were different methods of incentive to motivate those concerned professionals in the Building and Urban Design and Supervision Works Sector, Geo-technical Investigation, Geo-technical Engineering and Underground Works and Supervision Sector, and Transport Design and Supervision Works Sector. As the same informants substantiated their claims when have argued that there are standards set in the Corporation's Human Resources Management and Development Manual which stipulates that the professionals in those Sectors who have finalized their respective assigned works/tasks according to the set standards and also it these are within a lesser time; their incentive payment even increases accordingly. Generally, such incentives for motivating professionals work to the satisfaction of the top management of the Corporation.

At the other side of the motivation mechanisms package in the Corporation, those employees in the different Centres, as well as the Corporate Service have entertained those motivation factors stated in the Incentive Package Manual. Most of the workers in these Operational Units of the Corporation are in view of this, as they have articulated: Those employees who are working in the rest of the working units of the Corporation like supervision, consultation, administration, and soil investigation works use the normal motivation benefits of the employees which are stated in their collective agreement (e.g., medical, education, bonus, and transportation).

In the same framework, findings from documentary analyses support the above-stated views of the interviewees in the study. The ECDSWCo has designed and adopted a Manual on Administrative Incentives, including structural engineers, electrical engineers, sanitarian engineers, and architects since 2018. These incentives mostly focus on professional tasks related to building construction design and supervision works. In this regard, the Manual stipulates that “one percent of the cost of a given task is allocated as incentive payment for those engineers/professionals who have accomplished quality building designs and supervisory works up to the accepted standards of the respective Department Head in the Corporation within 21 days” (ECDSWCo, 2018, p. 12). Nevertheless, the implemented incentive mechanisms are not based on the General Collective Agreement of the ECDSWCo to which all the administrative staff and experts are expected to be abided. Surprisingly, this document is not reviewed annually.

In order to reward employees with incentives, their accomplished jobs are evaluated by respective immediate supervisor of an employee under evaluation. However, the actual procedures for evaluating the employee’s performance are not properly followed and genuinely implemented – according to the Manual on Engineers’ Incentives (ECDSWCo, 2016). Consequently, the employees are generally not satisfied by the actual practised performance evaluation. Here it is possible to deduce that the stipulated requirements for receiving incentives are mismatched with the practised procedures of evaluating employees’ performances.

In 2019, the Corporation prepared and implemented a document on Total Quality Management System. This document clearly states criteria as requirements for quality jobs and products, as well as for getting incentives for accomplishing quality accomplishments by employees. Most importantly, one of the requirements is accomplishment of a professional task assigned. However, when the engineers strictly follow and implement the stipulated requirements for quality jobs and products in the document on the Total Quality Management System; they cannot deliver their assigned tasks within 21 days. The assigned tasks usually call for time-demanding critical thinking, innovative ideas, and multi-dimensional perspectives. These required expertise tasks could not be accomplished in the above-stated three weeks time period. Additionally, in this regard, work experience matters. Quality of building design and construction supervision works vary according to the expert's work experience. Surprisingly, such a gap between expected performance and actual performance cannot be handled and filled by concerned officials because there are no practices of on-the-job trainings on quality and productivity related to building designs and construction supervision works. Unfortunately, the presence of frequent turnover of the experienced experts further substantiates the afore-mentioned reality on the ground in the Corporation.

#### **4.5. Motivation for Productivity**

The researcher first assessed the study participants' general conceptualization of the concept of productivity. For them, productivity indicates as under:

- Productivity is producing more products;
- Productivity is measured by comparing the products from the plan, for example, what was stated in the annual physical and financial plans of the Corporation. That is, it implies that the Corporation may plan to produce 200 designs and then produces 250. Consequently, it means it is productive. This is the same in all Sectors, Centres, as well as Corporate Service in the ECDSWCo; and
- Productivity is also evaluated and measured by comparing the result against what was stated in the annual plan before.

By implication, all these conceptualizations of productivity by the interviewees in the study are quite different from the working definitions given to the concept. This is because their

understandings do not consider the ratio of input value to output value in producing quality products.

Similarly, the researcher raised a question about practical motivational mechanisms implemented in the Corporation to increase the employees' labour productivity in its different divisions. All of the study participants generally agreed that,

*The practical methods implemented in the Corporation to motivate its employees to increase their productivity using payment of monthly salary as a bonus, incentives, medical insurance coverage, coverage of educational expenses, and transport service, particularly in the Centres, as well as the Corporate Service for a productive employee. Nevertheless, in the Design Centres, they mostly use incentive methods – additional payment of monthly salary as an incentive mechanism.*

The afore-mentioned excerpts from the interviewees' views further justify the findings on motivation and quality in the Corporation. Meanwhile, concerned officials in the Corporation have mostly employed financially-related extrinsic motivational factors to increase labour productivity on the part of the employees in the ECDSWCo.

In the ECDSWCo, on the other hand, there are practices of motivating employees to bring about their labour productivity in different Sectors, Centres, and Corporate Services. The actual practices of motivating them for labour productivity lack positive thinking on the part of the top managers and immediate supervisors in the Corporation. These senior officials mostly use bossy-toned expressions and commands when they assign building design tasks and construction supervision works to the experts, and even without considering the required creativity and time-demanding mental tasks. Therefore, there are ineffective and improper practices of motivational mechanisms stated in the Corporation's Manual on Administrative Incentives intended for bringing about improvement in labour productivity.

Findings of this study on motivation and productivity partially support those of the empirical studies undertaken on the contributions of motivational mechanisms to improve or increase employees' productivity in the construction projects or in the industry in different parts of the world (Usungami, 2006; Arditi & Gunaydin, 2007; Gregory, 2008; Kazaz, Manisali, & Ulubeyli, 2008; Linder, 2009; Raghava, 2009; Woo & Soetanto, 2010; Remi et al., 2011; Karaskakovavska, 2012; Manzoor, 2012; Ruge, 2012; Farhanabanana, 2013; Waheed; 2013; Lipman, 2014; Ailabouni, Painting, & Ashton, 2016; Rhumbix, 2018). Moreover, the same

holds true for studies conducted in African countries (Gutsy, 2012) and in Ethiopia (Abebe, 2005).

Likewise, there are supportive findings from the field observations conducted in different parts of Addis Ababa. Physical observations of certain building construction sites in Addis Ababa confirmed that there was lack of practicing effective motivational mechanisms for improving the employees' performance quality and productivity in the Corporation. Against this backdrop, the case interviewee in each of the observed sites strongly argued, "there are compromised negotiations and arbitrations between the Corporation's top management staff and its clients' representatives. These clients are, in turn, mostly governmental organizations, but they have dissatisfaction with the Corporation's performances of contracts." Thus, there are observed problems of proper implementation of motivational mechanisms for improving the experts' quality and productivity in the ECDSWCo. These findings generally highlight the evidence of Abebe Dinku's observed findings in Addis Ababa, Gondar, Hawassa, and Wolayita in 2016.

#### **4.6. Challenges in improving Quality and Productivity**

Empirical qualitative evidence reveals that there have been multi-faceted challenges encountered while the Corporation's top management members implement motivational mechanisms for improving quality, increasing productivity, and overall improvement of its practice in Addis Ababa. Those study participants generally identified the following challenges related to improving quality of works in their Corporation. These were:

- In the Design Sectors, the Corporation's clients first demand is not always the same, they change their mind a number of times;
- They focus on cost to be incurred;
- The designers in the Corporation and its customers' understandings of quality is always related to cost; and
- Even the top management's understanding of quality in terms of reduced costs incurred which was a big challenge in all divisions in the Ethiopian Construction Corporation, especially in the Supervision, Consultation, Administration, and Soil Investigation Centres.

Likewise, there is challenge in increasing productivity in terms of its monotonous motivational mechanism being implemented in the ECDSWCo. All informants have strongly argued that productivity works in all sectors are always evaluated almost in the same manner because the concerned officials in the Corporation compare our works with what have been planned regarding such issues.

Finally, most of the study participants continued by saying the Corporation had encountered the following challenges in its implementation of improving quality and productivity in its different Sectors, Centres, as well as corporate Service:

- Turnover of experienced employees;
- Misunderstanding of the management body about motivation, quality, and productivity;
- Misunderstandings of the its clients about quality as they only focus on amount of cost incurred and time to be elapsed;
- The top management was not conscious about quality and establishing a quality measurement system;
- There is no mutual understanding between the management and the employee; and
- Mostly, the relationships of productivity and quality with motivation were not clearly and properly recognized and understood by the top management of the ECDSWCo in Addis Ababa.

There are also related challenges encountered on the part of the Corporation generated from the analysis of the foregoing documents undertaken by the researcher. These were the following:

- Cost overrun;
- Frequent turnover of well-experienced employees due to lack of properly designed and implemented motivational mechanisms for quality and productivity in building designs and construction supervision works;
- Lack of reliable job security for experts and coordinators;
- Lack of on-the-job trainings on a continuous manner;

- Absence of opportunities for further studies for employees to upgrade their educational statuses and to improve their career ladders;
- Absence of the practices of coaching and mentoring for those employees who have lacked experience for perpetuating their successful records;
- Lack of proper strategy for motivating employees to improve their performance quality and productivity in the Corporation;
- Lack of competitiveness on the part of the Corporation in the construction industry; and
- The actual practice of the Total Quality Management System in the Corporation appears to be a further multi-dimensional challenge to the employees and the ECDSWCo in an equal term.

In sum, this chapter has been discussing those empirical qualitative data on the concept of motivation, quality, and productivity, as well as their inter-dependence, including those various challenges encountered on the part of the Corporation while practising motivational mechanisms package to improve quality and productivity. Following this, let us highlight summary of major findings of the study.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 5.1. Summary

The study aimed to explore practice and challenges of motivating employees to improve quality and productivity in the ECDSWCo. Globally, nowadays, business organizations and corporations are running their business activities in a globalized knowledge-based competitive market economy. Here, it must be bear in mind that the people – the employees – are at the centre to get gain competitive advantage. These human resources should be properly managed, developed, and motivated in a scientific and professional manner.

Some empirical studies have revealed that proper implementation of motivation mechanisms could improve employees' quality of jobs and products, and their productivity with variations in studied conducted organizational settings, including the construction industry. However, these findings elsewhere in the world have remained inconclusive because they do not hold true for all countries, organizations, and socio-cultural, economic, ownership, as well as political contexts. Thus, such gaps in our understanding may serve as imperative for designing and conducting further studies on those issues under discussion.

For this study in the Ethiopian Construction Corporation, conceptual framework related to the origin and definition of the concepts of motivation, quality, productivity, and related terms; six relevant theories of motivation were considered in an inductive approach. In addition, empirical studies available at global, continental, national, regional, and local levels were thoroughly considered in the study.

In order to answer those open-ended research questions and to address the study objectives, the researcher employed case study qualitative research design. Specifically, in-depth interviews with case informants (i.e., interviewees who give detail pieces of information about the Corporation's practices and challenges related to motivation for improving the employees' quality and productivity through probing, semi-structured interviews with key informants (i.e., those interviewees who give pieces of information on only certain key issues related to the issues under investigation), and documentary analysis method were used to



generate the required qualitative data using interview guide, and documentary analysis template, respectively. A total of thirty-five informants (twelve females and twenty-three males) informants were used as samples. The thirty-five individual interview sessions were organized and held in convenient venues based on the choice of respective informant in the study which on average, elapsed 45 minutes. Additionally, secondary data were collected from different relevant documents, and fields notes were also taken whenever the researcher found such activities had importance for the purpose of this study.

The researcher employed thematic analysis and content analysis methods to analyze the qualitative data collected from different sources. Then, different issues were identified, categorized and thematized, followed by putting them in specific name labelled folders. These were used as inputs for writing-up this thesis to different audiences and scientific community. Most importantly, ethical issues were properly considered and addressed while collecting data and writing the report for academic purpose.

In the final analysis of those qualitative data generated in this study, there are major themes which emerged as major findings to achieve the study purpose, to address the objectives, and to answer those research questions. The following are major findings.

The study participants' understandings and perceptions of the concept of motivation seemed quite different from the operational definition of motivation used in this thesis. Their conception of motivation mostly emphasizes on its intrinsic aspects which were financially-related incentives (rewards) (i.e., the employees give due attention and emphasis to their internal motives for receiving monetary rewards after they have accomplished quality jobs and products by improving their labour productivity up to the required standards), but they relegated the non-financially-toned extrinsic aspect of the motivational mechanisms.

On the other hand, there was no clearly stated, well-designed, and engraved official motivational package system for each Sector, Centre or Corporate Service of the Corporation. However, there were differential motivational mechanisms for professionals in the Sectors, on one hand and for administrative staff, on the other hand.

Majority of the employees in the study did not have clear awareness and understanding of the concept of quality. They mostly related it with amount of cost incurred to produce a given product in their Corporation. Conversely, there were variations in informants' views on their awareness and understanding of quality in the context of the Corporation. There were also different types of motivational mechanisms employed to improve employee's quality of jobs and products which varied by Sector, on one hand, and Centre and Corporate Service, on the other hand.

All those conceptualizations of productivity by the informants in the study were quite different from the working definitions given to the concept. This may be due to their understandings did not consider the ratio of input value to output value in producing quality products.

Regarding motivation and quality in the Corporation, those concerned Officials in the Corporation had mostly employed financially-related external/extrinsic motivational factors to increase the employees' labour productivity. Generally, there were multi-faceted challenges encountered while the Corporation's top management members had implemented the packaged motivational mechanisms for improving quality, increasing productivity, and overall improvement of the Corporation's practice.

## 5.2. Conclusion

It has been argued that there are no clear conceptualizations and understandings of motivation, quality, and productivity among the study participants in the Corporation; and the top management uses mostly non-financially related motivational mechanisms package in differential ways between professionals and administrative staff members in motivating them to improve quality and productivity in its different Sectors, Centres, as well as Corporate Service. Concomitantly, there have been multi-faceted challenges encountered while trying to improve quality and productivity in those divisions of the Ethiopian Construction Corporation.

There are quite different ways of conceptualizations and understandings of the concepts of motivation, quality, and productivity among the study participants in the Corporation. These may emanate from their given due emphasis to their internal/intrinsic aspects which are financially related incentives (rewards), but they have relegated those non-financially-toned external/extrinsic aspect of the concepts.

In the Corporation, it can also be concluded that there is no clearly stated, well-designed, and engraved official motivational package system for each Sector, Centre or Corporate Service by meticulously considering formal decision made on the employee's nature, purpose, behaviour, need for achievement, autonomy, praise, and on-going trainings (on the job and/or off-the job) of quality of jobs and products, and their increased labour productivity in the contexts of site-based staff and office-based staff, respectively.

Likewise, these practices of motivating employees in the Corporation are not the most effective motivational factors or approaches or mechanisms for improving quality and increasing productivity. Each employee may not satisfy his/her both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational needs when the employee is actually executing the assigned tasks or works as required by the respective Sector, Centre, or Corporate Service in the ECDSWCo. All those practised motivational tools and mechanisms have personal touch, but they are generally key motivational factors for improving employees' quality of jobs and products, and increasing their labour productivity in any construction company or industry.

The ECDSWCo has attempted to plan and conduct certain relevant capacity building trainings. However, the corporation does not practically associate these training inputs to the employees' motivation in order to bring about quality and productivity of its construction projects. Accordingly, there are no as such best recorded quality and productivity management practices perse.

i.e. Planned activities and clear procedures for their implementation there by resulting in outcomes and profits for the ECDSWCo.

To reiterate, this study is inductive in its approach in that those theories of motivation related to quality and productivity are considered to assess their applications in the construction industry. This has been aimed at using the collected empirical qualitative data for supporting or failing to accept their core assumptions or arguments in this study. Accordingly, it can be conclude that these study findings could not provide empirical evidence to support for the endorsement of all of those theories of motivation for the workplaces in the ECDSWCo.

In conclusion, the different motivational factors or mechanisms that have been implemented in the construction project sites and office-driven factors could drive each employee to perform quality tasks and produce quality products by improving his or her quality of performance, and by increasing his/her labour productivity. By so doing, they may contribute to his/her very best effort at accomplishing works in a more or less efficient and effective way(s) and achieving better possible outcomes without compromising quality and productivity in the ECDSWCo.

### 5.3. Recommendations

Based on those conclusions drawn from empirical-based major findings in the study, it is possible and plausible to forward the following suggestions for action by concerned stakeholders at different levels:

- The Board of Directors and the top management of the Corporation seem appropriate to be advised to design comprehensive motivation mechanisms package with active participation and consensus of the employees.
- It seems appropriate to be clear and well-tailored operational definitions of motivation, quality, and productivity to each Sector, Centre and Corporate Service and by professions in the ECDSWCo.
- The Corporation should clearly stipulate applicable motivation mechanisms (which best consider both intrinsic and extrinsic aspects) for the required specific quality of job and products, and labour productivity to be improved in each Sector, Centre or Corporate Service.
- The concerted offices and officials at different levels in the ECDSWCo should create sensitization and awareness of all relevant issues designed to implement towards motivating and improving quality and productivity in its overall Organizational structure.
- Those concerned bodies in the Corporation should first clearly identify potential encountered challenges and then address them based on its current and future directions to do so, they should collect available relevant best practices elsewhere in the world and then tailor and contextualize them for the Corporation as whole and for each Sector, Centre and Service, according to targeted expectations from professionals and administrative staff.
- As this study was conducted based on required qualitative sample size and using qualitative research methods; further studies should be designed and conducted using sequential mixed methods research by beginning with such a qualitative study at each Sector, Centre, and Corporate Service, followed by comprehensive quantitative study

to reach at the effective and efficient practice of motivating employees to improve quality and labour productivity in the Corporation.

- Finally, the study findings have implications for business policy in the construction industry, for those practising professionals, interventions, and for further studies at different levels and various contexts at large.

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## **APPENDIX**

### **Appendix: Interview Guide**

**St. Mary's University**

**School of Graduate Studies**

**Institute of Quality and Productivity Management**

**Research Questions for Informants**

#### **I. INFORMANT PROFILE**

- a. Position in the Corporation
- b. Age of the informant
- c. Duration of stay in the Corporation
- d. Educational status (specialization) of the informant
- e. Work experience

#### **II. GENERAL ISSUES**

- 2.1. In your opinion, what has been done to properly handle the employees in the Corporation?
- 2.2. What has been undertaken to motivate those:
  - 2.2.1. Administrative workers?
  - 2.2.2. Professionals/employees in the core processes?
- 2.3. What do you think about the results of those practices of motivating the worker's in the Company?

#### **III. QUESTIONS RELATED TO MOTIVATION**

- 3.1. What is motivation for you?
- 3.2. What types of practical method of motivating employees are being implemented in the Corporation?
- 3.3. What types of practical motivational methods are used in your Corporation to accomplish quality of works in:
  - 3.3.1. Building and Urban Design & Supervision Sector?
  - 3.3.2. Geo-technical Investigation, Engineering & Underground Sector?
  - 3.3.3. Water & Energy Design and Supervision Sector?
  - 3.3.4. Transport Design & Supervision Sector?
  - 3.3.5. Research, Laboratory & Training Centre?
  - 3.3.6. Surveying Geo-spatial and Civil Informatics Centre?

3.3.7. Corporate Service?

3.4. What types of motivation methods are implemented to bring about productivity of works in the Corporation's :

3.4.1. Building and Urban Design & Supervision Sector?

3.4.2. Geo-technical Investigation, Engineering & Underground Sector?

3.4.3. Water & Energy Design and Supervision Sector?

3.4.4. Transport Design & Supervision Sector?

3.4.5. Research, Laboratory & Training Centre?

3.4.6. Surveying Geo-spatial and Civil Informatics Centre?

3.4.7. Corporate Service?

#### **IV. QUESTIONS RELATED TO QUALITY**

4.1. What do you understand by quality?

4.2. In your opinion, how do you measure quality of different activities in the following Sectors of the Company:

4.2.1. Building and Urban Design & Supervision Sector?

4.2.2. Geo-technical Investigation, Engineering & Underground Sector?

4.2.3. Water & Energy Design and Supervision Sector?

4.2.4. Transport Design & Supervision Sector?

4.2.5. Research, Laboratory & Training Centre?

4.2.6. Surveying Geo-spatial and Civil Informatics Centre?

4.2.7. Corporate Service?

4.3. What is the actual practice of motivating employees to accomplish quality works in

4.3.1. Building and Urban Design & Supervision Sector?

4.3.2. Geo-technical Investigation, Engineering & Underground Sector?

4.3.3. Water & Energy Design and Supervision Sector?

4.3.4. Transport Design & Supervision Sector?

4.3.5. Research, Laboratory & Training Centre?

4.3.6. Surveying Geo-spatial and Civil Informatics Centre?

4.3.7. Corporate Service?

#### **V. QUESTIONS RELATED TO PRODUCTIVITY**

5.1. What is productivity to your understanding?

5.2. How do you measure productivity of the works of

5.2.1. Building and Urban Design & Supervision Sector?

5.2.2. Geo-technical Investigation, Engineering & Underground Sector?

- 5.2.3. Water & Energy Design and Supervision Sector?
- 5.2.4. Transport Design & Supervision Sector?
- 5.2.5. Research, Laboratory & Training Centre?
- 5.2.6. Surveying Geo-spatial and Civil Informatics Centre?
- 5.2.7. Corporate Service?

5.3. In your Corporation, how is productivity of works measured for the following Sectors?

- 5.3.1. Building and Urban Design & Supervision Sector?
- 5.3.2. Geo-technical Investigation, Engineering & Underground Sector?
- 5.3.3. Water & Energy Design and Supervision Sector?
- 5.3.4. Transport Design & Supervision Sector?
- 5.3.5. Research, Laboratory & Training Centre?
- 5.3.6. Surveying Geo-spatial and Civil Informatics Centre?
- 5.3.7. Corporate Service?

**VI. What types of challenges are encountered while trying to practice:-**

6.1. Quality of works in the Corporation's:

- 6.1.1. Building and Urban Design & Supervision Sector?
- 6.1.2. Geo-technical Investigation, Engineering & Underground Sector?
- 6.1.3. Water & Energy Design and Supervision Sector?
- 6.1.4. Transport Design & Supervision Sector?
- 6.1.5. Research, Laboratory & Training Centre?
- 6.1.6. Surveying Geo-spatial and Civil Informatics Centre?
- 6.1.7. Corporate Service?

6.2. Productivity of works in the Corporation's:

- 6.2.1. Building and Urban Design & Supervision Sector?
- 6.2.2. Geo-technical Investigation, Engineering & Underground Sector?
- 6.2.3. Water & Energy Design and Supervision Sector?
- 6.2.4. Transport Design & Supervision Sector?
- 6.2.5. Research, Laboratory & Training Centre?
- 6.2.6. Surveying Geo-spatial and Civil Informatics Centre?
- 6.2.7. Corporate Service?

## **VII. SUGGESTIONS**

- 7.1. Current practices and challenges related issues
- 7.2. Motivational measures taken or practised
- 7.3. Quality practice and challenges related factors
- 7.4. Productivity practice and challenges related issues
- 7.5. Any other relevant issues which have relationships which we have been discussing

**Thank you for your cooperation and valuable time!**