

FACTORS CAUSING CONFLICTS IN SOUTH AFRICAN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY- A STUDY REVIEW

Benjamen Adeyemi

Department of Construction Management and Quantity Surveying,

University of Johannesburg, South Africa.

adeyemibensunkanmi@yahoo.com

Clinton Aigbavboa

Department of Construction Management and Quantity Surveying,

University of Johannesburg, South Africa.

caigbavboa@uj.ac.za

Abstract

Conflict is a misunderstanding which usually occurs in the construction industry over decision or sharing of ideas and views in the construction industry. This paper reviewed past literature on factors causing conflict, and the impact of conflicts on performance in the South African construction industry. Some of the factors that causes conflict in the construction industry are; lack of management among professionals, inaccurate specification of tasks, variation of construction circumstance, variation in range of task, situation on construction site, transformation of material, inappropriate high-standard of professionals, lack of confidence, diverse perception, language barriers, role uncertainty, personal interest, lack of information and individual behaviour. The study also contribute to the various impacts of conflict in South African construction industry.

Keywords

Construction Industry, Conflict Management, Conflict Impact, Conflict Stages. Conflict Factors.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Construction Industry is an essential component of any economy, Due to the part it plays in the economic development of a country. In every construction, industry conflict is unavoidable. Schramm [1] states that conflict is a severe disagreement as well as quarrel on things realized to be obligatory among the construction professionals. However, the variety of the construction industry as well as the participation of different professionals usually involves the occurrences of conflict. Conflicts frequently occur in construction industry, which has diverse effects on the performance of construction professionals. Conflict is a vital component of construction professionals, because it is unavoidable in the construction industry [2]. A rapid outline with the state of precedent measure shows that conflict is one of the mainly recognized features of human life. Conflicts continue to be a situation in the construction industry causing project delay among construction professionals [3]. One of the causes in delaying tasks in the construction industry is conflict amidst professionals. When conflict happens in construction industry, it leads to disagreement of views among professionals, which involve arguments to upset the project task and its development [4].

A research conducted by Loke [4] shows that faults in contract, imbursement disagreement, communication difficulties, the absenteeism of some professionals, lacking organization, administration and management hard work on the area of construction professionals, idealistically little tender by contractors are the bases that produced conflict in construction industry. In response to this, this study will subsequently review previous literature on factors that cause conflicts in the construction industry. These findings will be of enormous assistance to construction professionals by increasing their level of understanding on factors of conflict. This paper discusses the overview of conflicts and conflict management in section 2.1. In section 2.2, the paper reviews factors causing conflicts in South African construction industry. In section 2.3, the impacts of conflict on performance were discussed and stages of conflict in the construction industry were discussed in section 2.4. Followed by reseach methodology in section 3. While discussion of findings is been done in section 4. In section 5, the research were brought to conclusion.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview of conflict and conflict management

Jaffar et. al [5] state that conflict is an uncertainty or inquisitive, disagreement, mismatched behavior, argument or aggressive interaction. Conflict can take place between professionals, a set, unions and countries [6]. Miller and King [7] described conflict essentially as a divergence among two or more professionals over companionable ambitions in the construction industry. Conflict consequently is a situation of unsuited characters and ideas. It can involve intervention or disturbance by a professional in ways that can create another achievement less liable to be efficient.

Conflict among construction professionals is not strange, specifically highlight shave been positioned on conflict management in the current period such as the study by Latham study which described conflict as a destructive occurrence which desires to be minimized as well as probably eradicated from the construction industry [8],[9],[10].

Conflict is controlled using diverse methods based on interactive affairs or structural modification. Robinson *et al* [11] supports that managing conflict in the direction of helpful achievement is the greatest method in resolving conflict in the construction industry. Whenever conflict occurs, there is need to be able to manage the conflict appropriately, in order to be a constructive oblige, rather than a destructive oblige, which will intimidate professionals. Parker [12] state that if conflicts occur and are not handled appropriately, it will cause setback in tasks, indifference as well as inadequate actions in situations. This can lead total failure of the professionals in the construction industry.

2.2 Review of Factors causing conflicts in South African construction industry

A studies of by Spaho [13] stated some causes of conflict such as awful estimation, lack of communication, distrust among construction professionals, individual personality, reliance in work actions, diversities of goals, allocating inadequate resources. Construction conflicts can be

categorized into ways such as clearly wrong causes, possibly right but ambiguously expressed causes and exact reasons of conflicts [14]. The possibly wrong causes are source of construction correlated conflicts which are inaccurate specification of tasks, variation of construction circumstances, variations in range of works, situations on construction site, transformation of materials, inappropriate high-standard of professionals, etc. the whole causes signify accurate conditions tangibly essential in construction.

The conditions above happen in numerous construction tasks. While potentially right but unclearly formulated causes are deprived organization, impact, and inadequacy of early and appropriate materials delivered as to exact performance of construction professionals. True causes of conflicts comprise lack of communication.

Additionally, the researcher offers the opinions supporting the suggestion, which is specific on problems in communication, are factual as well as the uppermost common causes of conflicts in construction industry [14]. Yousry [15] state some causes of construction conflict, which might be numerous as well as miscellaneous. The collective reasons involve all the subsequent factors, which are shortage of resources, findings, equipment, services, dissimilar approaches, morals, and awareness, divergences about wants objectives, significances and benefits. Deprived communication, lack of managerial arrangement, lack of collaboration, absence of transparency in parts and tasks.

Rauzana et al [16] highlighted factors of conflicts among the fundamentals concerned in the construction tasks, which must be handled appropriately in order to evade shortages and delay of works. Conflict is a circumstance of the incidence of divergence among the ideals or objective to be accomplished together by each professional and in relative to other professionals. Several issues can cause conflict, such as issues of owners, contractors, consultants, work capacity, human capital, condition of contract, and external issues. These issues influence the effectiveness as well as the efficiency of task, in order to disturbed the tasks implementation [16].

Borvorn [17] recognized four causes of construction conflicts in South African which, which are errors, deficiencies and oversights on contract documents, miscalculating the actual amount of the project initially, different circumstances and participants involved in the project. In some

countries, where the allocation of budget is inadequate to general works, public works departments usually encounter numerous limitations, such as financial, skilled professionals and labours, and resources, mainly for huge organization tasks.

A study by Ng et al [18] states that conflicts can occur from managerial issues that might occur from organization, procedure and professionals. It can likewise occur from ambiguity as either inside or outside the construction industry. The outside ambiguity comprises of political risks, weather risks and so on.

Verma [19] recognized the mainly common factors that causes conflict in construction tasks as failure in communication; and disrespect; substandard paying attention skills and divergence of view, as well as these might lead to communication setback. The subsequent are the most important factor that causes of conflict through communication failure in construction tasks: misunderstanding of design drawing, a misinterpreted modifies caused setback in executing of significant works; breakdown to carry out directives. Table 1 shows the summary of previous factors affecting conflict in the construction industry.

Mohammed et al [20] on their assessment speculated that the choice of difference and complicated nature of the active way of life attached with incorporation in active beliefs could be very unapproachable; in this principle, being a multi ethnic alliance is smooth to have factors that cause conflict, which has been related to the culture. Conflict resolution and Project Management assert that disagreement instigate principally from inadequately designed plan procedure, as well as deciding this conflict recognized at a variety of stages of the task life cycle is a tremendously essential component of conflict resolution.

Table 1. Summary of factors causing conflict according to previous studies

Causes of conflicts	Authors
Inadequate trust	Warner (2000), Lam et al. (2007), Du et al. (2011)

Diverse Perceptions	Koontz and Wehrich (1998), Ohlendorf (2001), Englund and Bucero (2012)
Managerial procedures	Mulcahy (2005), Lam et al. (2007), Meredith and Mantel (2007), Ng et al. (2007), Mohammed et al. (2008)
Language barrier	Ng et al. (2007), CIPD (2008), Ochieng and Price (2009), Rees et al. (2012)
Role uncertainty	Lam et al (2007), CIPD (2008)
Communication Problem	Matta and Corby (2000), Ng et al. (2007), Mohammed et al (2008).
Personality Interests	Barki and Hartwick (2001), Vokić And Sontor (2009).
Lack of Information	Appelbaum et al. (1999), Lam et al. (2007).
Individual Behaviours	Rees et al. (2012)
uncertain Tasks	Lam et al. (2007)
Inadequate Coordination	Yousefi et al. (2010)
Negligence	Ng et al. (2007)
Extent of work	Vokić and Sontor(2009),Yousefi et al. (2010).

2.3 Review of impacts of Conflicts on performance

Darling and Walker [21] states that conflict leads into change. Swanström *et* Weissmann [22] says change in advance leads to alteration as well editing more outcome into development as

well as survival. Conflict is capability to get alongside with professionals that make a decision of achievement or breakdown for each professional in incompatible circumstances Darling *et* Walker, [21].

The impact on professionals might improve or reduced innovation, efficiency Thomas [23], with development in construction tasks. The consequences on organization could be in form of organizational competence, usefulness and efficiency. The organizational component income and productivity can be impacted through proper conflict management in the construction industry. Thus the professionals and apex administration ought to review the above-mentioned scopes subsequent to applying the clarification to the conflict. Task conflicts take part in foremost responsibilities in improvement, making of eminence decision [24]. Conflict helps to in creativity and in producing new thoughts and values [25].

Kinicki and Kreitner, [26] conflict results to usual opposition among professionals and the organization work firmly to produce more; it is more beneficial to the construction industry. Conflict is seen as a disagreement among two thoughts, ambitions and professionals that develop construction industry performance. Constructive gives its professionals an opportunity to recognize the troubles. It motivates to new thoughts, knowledge, and increase among each professionals in the constructions.

Dysfunctional conflict regularly hold back professionals performance and results to reduce efficiency. Conflict direction is distinguished by opposing individual wellbeing superseding the general awareness in the construction industry. Professionals hold back information from each other. Some professionals might damage others' work, either deliberately or during light, conflict-encourages unconcern among the professionals' tasks [26].

The destructive impacts of conflicts are cost overruns, improved professional income, schedules, tasks owner situation, minimized professionals position, lower morale of professionals as well as condensed collaboration among professionals Warner [27].

2.4 STAGES OF CONFLICTS

Narh et al [28] states five stages of conflicts in the construction industry, which are latent, perceived, felt, manifest and conflict aftermath.

Latent conflict: This is the stage, which is considered as the first stage of conflict. Vaaland et al [29] characterized by conditions of four sources of conflict, which are:

Drive for autonomy: This usually occurs whenever a construction professional also pursues to manage above some actions that other professional assert as his personal individual.

Divergence of subunit goals: This happens whereby two professionals that must collaborate in some combined actions, which are not capable to attain their objectives.

Competition for scarce resources: This means the required demands of professionals for incomes is greater than the incomes that are obtainable in the construction work.

Role conflict: This kind of ideal gives the professionals a compilation of duty sets, individually of it consist of the major professionals getting mismatched duty demand from other professionals in his duty set [29].

Perceived conflict: Perceived conflict is a situation whereby one of the professionals to a conflict begins to experience or become aware of a conflict situation but none of the party is upset about it. Conflict can be or cannot be stem from a latent conflict and latent conflict can be present in an organization when people without any of the professionals experiencing conflict [29].

Felt conflict: This denotes the conflict stage in which a professional senses that he has misunderstandings with fellow professionals, however does not become worried about it. Pondy [30] states that conflict personalization happens from one transaction to another.

Manifest conflict: this situation occurs when conflict actions turn out to be apparent. That kind of behavior leads to open hostility. Vaaland et al [29] states that a professional tends to involve in conflicting character knowingly, but it is not necessary disturb other members of the organization ambitions as well as aims.

Conflict aftermath: Every conflict incident is among the series of incidents, which made the affairs in the midst of construction professionals. Construction industry are not closed systems, the area in which it is located minimized the situation of conflict [29].

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out using existing literatures from published researcher journals with the aim of assessing various factors causing conflict in South African construction industry. This study reviewed literatures on Factors causing conflict and impacts of conflict in the construction industry. A quantity analysis was utilized in carryout this study.

4. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

According to existing literatures on factors causing conflicts, the following factors were revealed. Jaffar et al [13] revealed that one of the factors causing conflict in Southern African construction industry is lack of confidence among the professionals. Lack of confidence usually creates a destructive impact on the performance of the professionals in South Africa.

Mitkus and Mitkus [2014] highlighted some factors causing conflicts in the construction industry which are inaccurate specification of tasks, variation of construction circumstances, variations in the range of works, situations on construction site, transformation of equipment, inappropriate high-standard of professionals. Inaccurate specification in any construction works will reduce professionals' satisfaction and it will have influence on the professionals. This can also lead to delay of the particular construction task. The variation of construction circumstances usually lead to disagreement among the professionals and which is among the major causing factors.

Whenever there are diverse situations in the construction industry, it affects the whole construction activities.

Yousry [15] state some causes of construction conflict factors which are shortage of resources, findings, equipment, services, dissimilar approaches, morals and awareness, divergences about wants objectives, significances and benefits. Deprived communication, lack of managerial arrangement, lack of collaboration, absence of transparency in parts and tasks. The shortage of resources can severely have an effect on the project delivery time to be accomplished. Because wasting of available resources in any construction industry might lead to inadequate funds to execute the project on time. In addition, deprived communication among the professionals is very vital factors affecting the performance of professionals. Whenever professionals find it difficult to interact with one another, in order to share ideas and knowledge for the accomplishment of construction tasks. But due to lack of communication and mutual relationship among the professionals. There should be regular interactions among the professionals in order to enhance construction performance.

According to Kinicki and Kreitner, [26] Constructive conflict is more beneficial to the construction industry. Conflict is seen as a disagreement among two thoughts, ambitions and professionals that develop construction industry performance. Constructive gives professionals and chances to recognize the issues and also motivates to new thoughts in the construction industry. While Destructive cause's setback to the construction professional's performance.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This article explored literatures on factors causing conflicts in South African construction industry. The explored literatures showed that there are many factors causing conflict in construction industry. Some of these factors are lack of management among professionals, inaccurate specification of tasks, variation of construction circumstances, variations in the range of works, situations on construction site, transformation of equipment, inappropriate high-standard of professionals, lack of confidence, diverse perception, language barriers, role uncertainty, personal interest, lack of information and individual behaviour. The study also explored some impacts of conflict. The study also shows that if conflict is well

managed, it will enhance the professionals' performance in the construction industry. In recommendation, the professionals should be creating enough room for decision making within the construction industry. In addition, these professionals for good performance in the construction industry should organise trainings and workshops.

REFERENCES

- 1 Schramm-Nielsen, J. (2002) "Conflict Management in Scandinavia" Department of International Communication and Management, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark
- 2 Altrais M.A, and Mohamed A.E, (2017). An Evaluation of Employees' Perception toward the Causes, Effects and Techniques of Conflict Management
- 3 Narh O.C, Owusu E.E, Oduro K, and Narh T.J, (2015).An Exploratory Study of Professional Conflicts and Disputes within the Construction Industry. International Journal of Managerial Studies and Research (IJMSR) Volume 3, Issue 12, December 2015, PP 44-65 ISSN 2349-0330
- 4 Loke Y.S, (2013). A study of causes and effects of conflict in construction industry. Page 1-91
- 5 N. Jaffar , A.H. Abdul Tharim, M. N . Shuib (2011). Procedure Engineering: Factors of Conflict in Construction Industry: A Literature Review).
- 6 Rahim, M.A. and Bonoma, T.V, (1979). Managing Organizational Conflict: A Model for Diagnosis and Intervention. Psychological Reports, 44: 1323-1344.
- 7 Miller, E. C. And King, M. E. (2005). A Glossary of Years and Concepts in Peace and Conflict Studies (2nd Edition), Addis Ababa: University Of Peace African Programme.
- 8 Latham M, (1994). "Constructing the team," HMSO Publications Centre, Crown

copyright, London.

- 9 Loosemore M, Nguyen B.T, and N. Denis, "An Investigation into the Merits of Encouraging Conflict in the Construction industry," *Construction Management and Economics*, pp. 447-456
- 10 Gardner P.D (2005), *Project Management A Strategic Planning Approach*, Palgrave, 2005.
- 11 Robinson, J; Roy, W.J; Clifford, R.A.(1974). *Conflict Management in Community Groups*.University of Illinoisat Urbana-Champaign,North-Central Regional Extension
Publication No. 36-45.
- 12 Parker, J. (1974).Some ideas about working with people individually and in groups. Ohio
Cooperative ExtensionService.
- 13 Spahok, (2013). Organizational communication and conflict management. *Management*,
Vol. 18, 2013, 1, pp. 103-118
- 14 MitkusS, and Mitkus T. (2014). Causes of conflicts in a construction industry: a
communicational approach. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 110 (2014) 777 –
786
- 15 Yousry M.M, El-Halwany A.A, and Shiha (2013). Conflict Management and Preferred
Style for Resolving Conflict. *SUST Journal of Engineering and Computer Science (JECS)*,
Vol. 15, No. 2, 2014
- 16 Rauzana A, (2016). Causes of Conflicts and Disputes in Construction Projects. *IOSR
Journal of Mechanical and Civil Engineering (IOSR-JMCE)*e-ISSN: 2278-1684,p-ISSN:
2320-334X, Volume 13, Issue 5 Ver. VI (Sep. - Oct. 2016), PP 44-48
- 17 Borvorn I.N.A (2011). Common disputes related to public work projects in Thailand.
*Songklanakarin J. Sci. Technol.*33 (5), 565-573, Sep. - Oct. 2011
- 18 Ng, H.S., Pena-mora, F., & Tamaki, T. (2007). Dynamic conflict management in large-
scale design and construction projects. *Journal of Management in Engineering*, 23(2), 252-
266
- 19 Verma, V. K. (1998). *Conflict Management . The Project Management Institute Project
Management Handbook*, Ed Jeffrey Pinto.

- 20 Mohammed, U., Prabhakar, G., & White, G. (2008). Culture and Conflict Management Style of International Project Managers. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 1-11.
- 21 Darling, J.R. and Walker, W.E. (2001). Effective conflict management: use of the behavioural style model. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 22(5): 230-242.
- 22 Swanström, N.L.P. and Weissmann, M.S. (2005). Conflict, Conflict Prevention and Conflict management and beyond: a Conceptual exploration. A Concept Paper, Central Asia- Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, A Joint Transatlantic Research and Policy Center, John Hopkins University, Washington DC and Uppsala University, Sweden, pp. 1-30.
- 23 Thomas, K.W. (2009). Making conflict management a strategic advantage. White paper, Available online at https://www.cpp.com/pdfs/conflict_whitepaper.pdf, Accessed on 15-Jan-2013, pp. 1-9.
- 24 Holahan, P. and Mooney, A. (2004). Conflict in Project Teams: Gaining the Benefits, Avoiding the costs. *Current Issues in Technology Management*, Stevens Alliance for Technology Management, Stevens Institute of Technology, 8(3): 1-4.
- 25 Song, M., Dyer, B. and Thieme, R.J. (2006). Conflict management and Innovation performance: An Integrated contingency perspective. *Journal of Academy of Marketing Science*, 34(3): 341-356
- 26 Kinicki, A. & Kreithner, R. (2008). *Organizational Behaviour: Key Concepts, Skills and Best Practice*. New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies.
- 27 Warner, M. (2000). Conflict management in community based natural resource projects: experiences from Fiji and Papua New Guinea. Working Paper No. 135, Overseas

Development Institute, London, UK, pp. 1-40.

28 Narh O.C, Owusu E.E, Dr. Oduro-Apeatu K, Narh T.J (2015). An Exploratory Study of Profession

29 Vaaland, T.I. and Håkansson, H. (2003): Exploring inter-organizational conflict in complex projects: Industrial Marketing Management, Vol. 32, Issue 2, 127 – 138.

Walker,

30 Pondy, L. (1967) Organizational conflict: concepts and models. Administrative Science Quarterly, Vol. 17, 296-320.

BIOGRAPHIES

Benjamin Adeyemi is currently a fulltime Masters degree student, studying Construction Management at University of Johannesburg, South Africa. **Benjamin Adeyemi** holds a Bachelor of Technology in Quantity Surveying from Federal University of Technology, Akure.

Clinton Aigbavboa is an associate professor at University of Johannesburg. He is currently the Dean of Post graduate study at University of Johannesburg. **Prof. Clinton Aigbavboa** holds a PHD degree in Engineering management from University of Johannesburg. He has received national and international recognition in his field of research.