

Clients' Needs and Satisfaction in Construction Industries

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Abstract

Management of clients and stakeholders has become a potential changes that affecting construction industries and the professional ethics at large. Clients' needs and satisfaction has been a problematic issue in many countries in the world. This is because many construction industries projects failing to fulfill the client need and satisfaction result expectation. Client need and satisfaction in the field of construction play an essential role in suggestion whether the project will be successful in the implementation or phases. Customer satisfaction in the construction aspect has been considered as a dimension of quality. This paper has consulted many literatures' regarding Client need and satisfaction, majority of the responds was not satisfactory at the end of project completion. If the client needs can be properly identified and address, then their needs and satisfaction can be sought with more optimism or else client needs and satisfaction will remain at random practice.

Key words: Client's needs, satisfaction, construction industries.

Introduction

Construction client satisfaction concept developed based on the concept of customer satisfaction in the perspective of business. Client is the sponsor of services and the prime business decision maker in the project team. In contrast perspective client is often regarded as employer as well as responsible for paying bill (Fewing, 2013). Client need and satisfaction in the field of construction play an essential role in suggestion whether the project will be successful in the line of implementation or phases. Identifying and satisfying the needs of client for the present and global aggressive of the construction industries has become critical. Client need and satisfaction is essential and is becoming necessary for the construction participant to improve their performance for their sustainability in the global market. The need and satisfaction has been motivated as a result of the globalization that has become now essential for persistence of service Providers such as consultants and contractors. Satisfaction is a complex phenomenon that has to do with psychological concept and is difficult to measures. Dissatisfaction that experienced by the client in the construction sector and other blames are mostly related to the attribute of over running project costs, delayed completion, sub-standard performance of service providers including contractors and consultants (NAO, 2001). Therefore client need and satisfaction can be considered as “comparison between the product, service and a certain standard” (Churchill and Serprenant, 1982; Churchill, 2001).

Construction industry has been ranked among the top four out of about twenty economic sectors in terms of inter-sector linkages. The importance of this sector as an agent of development is enhanced by its ability to provide gainful employment for the teeming population of the nation. According to Roy (2005) “it is evidenced that noticeable development and the aesthetic transformation of the environment is bound up with and predicated on the construction industry”. Construction industry is a major index as a factor in the social and political integration of the society and ranks as one of the major budgetary areas of developing economies (Nwachukwu, 2008).

The Objectives of the Study

The study is aimed at identifying and analysing client’s needs and satisfaction in construction industries. What the clients determined as their need and satisfactions that has related to quality, cost and time in construction industries regardless the client is private, commercial, quasi-government and government client. The analysis will reflect the strength of each category of client’s needs and satisfactions and what the majority of the clients get satisfy and what are the success of both the clients and industries during the project work in order to reduce disputes and conflicts between two parties that in most cases ended to the court decision.

Methodology

The researcher has used secondary data and qualitative analysis method in providing information that has to do with clients’ need and satisfactions in construction industries. The literature review of this present research also focused on clients’ need and satisfactions that has to do with the clients’ satisfaction in relation to quality, cost and time in construction industries regardless the client is private, commercial, quasi-government and government client. The analysis of the results finding obtained from journals, articles, online papers, hard and soft copies books that reflect the strength of each category of client’s needs and satisfactions and what the majority of the clients get satisfy and what are the success of both the clients and industries of both the clients and industries during the project work in order to reduce disputes and conflicts between two parties that in most cases ended in court decision.

Concept of Need and Satisfactions

Right from the time when human was created, satisfaction has been a main concern. Satisfaction is a complex phenomenon, because it is something that has to do with psychological concept that is very difficult to measure advocated that “satisfaction was an act of comparison between an individual’s insight of an outcome and its expectation for that outcome. The levels of satisfaction achieved hence are

dependent on an individual's perception thinking" (Oliver, 1999; Oliver, 1989).

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction and customer emphasis have become indispensable in aggressive step up in all area of production (Kotler, 2000). The important of customer satisfaction in the market place of competition is becoming intense (Jones and sasser, 1995). Companies use customer need and satisfaction strategy or measures in improving, monitoring, assessing products and service approach as well as encouraging and compensating workers. Similarly, satisfaction measurement improves community among the parties that permit mutual understanding and consensus as well as progress in the point targets and change. Customer satisfaction in the construction aspect has been considered as a dimension of quality as an important factor that indicating a project success (Palaneeswan et al., 2006). There is an argument with respect to adaptation of Total Quality Management (TQM) and progress toward the construction process, service quality and progress when determining feature of customer. Need and satisfaction has also gained attention in construction scheme (Koltler, 2006).

Construction Client Needs and Satisfactions

Construction client's need could be described as desire for modern facilities, refurbishment activities to improve the current facilities from sub-standard to desirable standard. In construction practice, there is no indication on whether there is a single approach to the need and satisfaction assessment (Koltler, 2006). Clients' needs-assessment in construction is described as:

- Client priorities appraisal mostly been ignored (Hughes, 2006).
- Client needs and satisfaction are often not seriously taking by the professional in the construction (Green, 1994).
- Client briefs are given insufficient time to develop (Green, 1994) etc.

Client need and satisfaction has a number of most commonly referred model that used in measurement and development in construction

industries which are employed in determining quality of services, excellence and performance (Cheng, 2008). Expectations that determine customer satisfaction is based on the assumption of the anticipation made on the basis of past experience. In a situation whereby clients have no experience, the client anticipation is hoped to be stronger of the production service process and have no effect on satisfaction. Basically, two general conceptualizations of customer satisfaction have been realized. Firstly, "transaction-specific that is specific and individual experience satisfaction. The second one is the cumulative satisfaction that is built on current experience, past experience and all anticipated future experience" (Koltler, 2006). Moreover, the background of the client experience takes essential roles in providing relevant standard of the contract and therefore affects the outcome of satisfaction assessment (Smith et al., 1967). Client satisfaction measurement is usually related with performance and quality assessment in the setting of product and service received by the client. Measurement of client need and satisfaction may ease finding innovative solution with respect to the project delivery, improvement for service providers such as consultants and contractors in the construction industries (Soetanto and Proverbs, 2004).

Parasuraram et al., (1988) argued that despite that any service industry is unique in some of their aspect or position. There are five broad universally dimensions of service quality that are applicable. These are: Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy. These are the basic on which ServQual model dimension was developed. Moreover, Zeithaml et al., (1981) defined the most common ten dimensions cited by clients in judging quality. These are:

- Tangible.
- Reliability.
- Responsiveness.
- Competence.
- Courtesy.
- Credibility.
- Security.
- Access.
- Communication and
- Understanding the client.

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and satisfaction will remain at random practice (Koltler, 2006).

Table 3.1 (Chinyio, 1999)

Key Categories	Satisfaction Attributes
COST	Project is carried out within contractually agreed budget
	Cost of changes are fairly priced
	Ability of client to make payments
	Payment for project is made as contractually agreed
	Ensures that cost estimates are in accordance with my requirements
	Allows flexibility for changes or modifications
QUALITY	Project quantity estimates are accurately billed
	Quality of project is of the desired standard
	Project design contains sufficient and accurate details
	Good client service
	Effective communication
	Contracting body has a record of recognised kite awards (credibility & reliability)
	Client actions and interactions
	Tender assessment of quality, not just price
	Project consultants are responsive to questions & clarifications
	Minimal reworks & defects
Project supply specifications contains sufficient details	
SAFETY and environment	Health & safety procedures are with no incidents
	Strategies for managing and assessing any project risks are in place
	Trusts my capability to deliver
TIME	Ensures that there is minimal defects in supply
	Project schedules are detailed & easy to understand
	Each phase of the project process is completed on time
	Ability to meet deadlines/ on-time delivery
	Communication flow is consistent
	Response to complaints is quick & productive

Chinyio Nzekwe-Excel

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Chapter 3: Development of Satisfaction Attributes

	Changes and cost of changes are introduced as early as possible
	Early involvement of contractor
	Sufficient time is allowed for tender

Strategic Decision Made by Construction Client

Decision making by the client in the construction scheme have to be plan. Initially client must make a decision whether first hand building service should be involved or not. It is from there that the underlined priorities will be attached to the project. The client main objective is then translated into goals. Identifying the client in the decision criteria accurately, evaluate as well as the client usage would definitely progress the Chances of delivering the project successfully. Strategic is used to point out decision concerning activities and resources that are critical which usually affect the project performance in the construction or organization. The choice made by the client or firm in construction scheme are

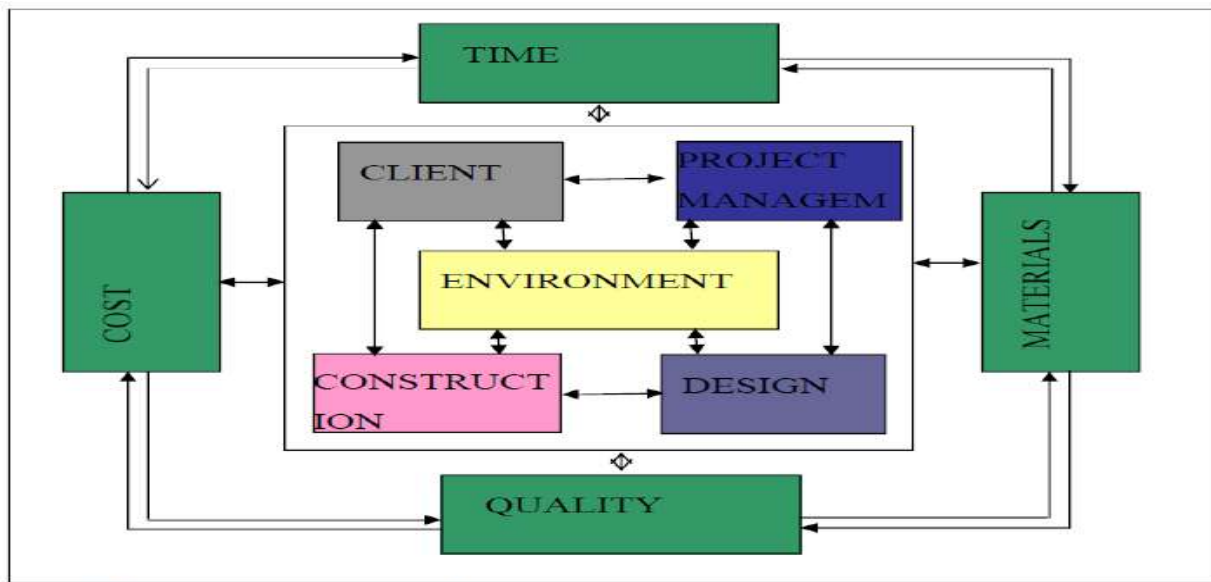
usually complicated and uncertain in form, the decision made by the client should also involve the goal of the activities formulation, identifying problems and evaluation(Koltler, 2006). The improper information from the client with respect to time for the purpose of satisfying sponsor of the project leads to decision predicament. Executive and decision makers of the industries help the client in coming out with positive conclusion (Schwenk, 1984). Lim and Ling (2002) understood that assigning of appropriate project team in delivering the project on time and budget, management competency, construction experience may all have essential effect on achieving a successful project. The business cases of the client also determine the client priority such as time certainty, price or function.

Relationship Between Client and Project Manager/Team

There is gross understanding of the effect on the project outcome with respect to good inter-relationship between the client and project team. "Project successes that link to harmonizing team aiming at the best result for the Client Companies' or individuals reports are many". Similarly, good number of events has happened where the role of the parties or project team were not defined or understood different from what others in the team judge and lastly the outcome were less than expected. Therefore establishing good relationship between the client and the project team right from the beginning of the project will largely determine how successful your project will be. Therefore spiritual co-operation, support and respect should look after right from the beginning because of essentiality. When project operate in argument, opposition,

certainly the objective will not be achieved. Therefore significant attention and detail should be taking care of, in relationship of project among the relevant parties. It will be also very good for the construction team to understand the role and responsibilities of each team as well as individuals that make up the overall team. The client is the one who determine the outcome require which then submitted to the project manager before any work commence. Clear inspiration of document written in detail with time baseline, grip point, precise detail is necessary because it facilitate understanding of the both parties sides. Project manager will be answerable for the outcome of project with respect to all deliverable such as performance, cost, time and scope. It is the responsibilities of project manager to determine the procedure of the project and not one of the team members. Project manager will equally ensure that project operated with proper care and attentiveness within the contractual stipulated time (Sweet, 2003).

The Construction Project Management Success Interactive Model



Clients Need and Satisfaction Grouping (Chinyio, 1999):

- ✓ **Aesthetics:**
 - Beautiful working artifact.
 - Reputation building.

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- ✓ **Economic:**
 - Less price
 - Price of the product run into the budget.
 - Reducing tendering costs by inviting few buyers.
 - Harmonizing between capital and lifespan costs.
 - Take full advantage of taxation benefits.
 - Indication of steady price with minimal disparity.
- ✓ **Functionality:**
 - Structure to be competent with intended purpose.
 - Long lasting building.
 - Keep existing buildings active in the course of construction.
- ✓ **Quality:**
 - Quality of the product to match up with current standards.
 - Innovative design involving modern technology.
 - The building should reveal the client undertaking and appearance.
 - Ready for money value.
- ✓ **Relation:**
 - Quarrel avoidance.
 - Familiar with the contractor.
 - Wishes to be actively participate and kept informed throughout the project cycle.
 - Non-argumentative with the contractor.
 - Full of accountability throughout the project life cycle.
- ✓ **Safety:**
 - Less risk for the client exposure.
 - Foreseen of risk and doubtful related with the project.
- ✓ **Commitment:**
 - Clear distribution of obligation.
 - Flexibility to change the design in the course of construction
 - Stay away from claims.
- Certainty on construction or product.
- ✓ **Time:**
 - Shortage construction period.
 - Safe time of approval.
 - Past speed of design along the construction.
 - Immediate to start.
 - minimum delay with the activities

Key Ways to Be a Successful CLIENT (A guide for clients, first edition 2003):

- ✓ Offer strong leadership of client.
- ✓ Provide sufficient time at the right time.
- ✓ Gain knowledge from your own and other successful project.
- ✓ Build up and communicate a well-defined brief.
- ✓ Make a realistic financial obligation from the beginning.
- ✓ Agree to participate the course of action.
- ✓ Find the right people for the contract.
- ✓ Response and participate to the framework.
- ✓ Dedicate to sustainability.
- ✓ Endorse all key stage.

Successful Project/ Construction Industries

According to Cleland et al., (1986) a construction project termed as successful “if it pass four test criteria; completed on time, completed within the stipulated budget, completed in accordance with the primary agreed performance and quality standard and client’s satisfaction”. That is accepted by the intended clients or users regardless of the client is internal or from outside the organization. The above mention criteria demand for successful project implementation by the use of recognized management practices or skills of planning, organizing, directing and controlling. The concept of project lifecycle management, time management, conflict and management, networking, contract management, project choice and quality are also key factors that lead to a successful project. Critical Path Method (CPM) and Programme Evaluation and Review Techniques (PERT) equally assist to project success because it encourage to the profession

discipline through the definition of project scope, time scale or schedule and cost.

Changing of The Construction Industries

According to the lecture of Angela Nash (2013) on strategy construction project and programme management, the most efficient way of introducing change to sustained client as well as the construction industries, professional body from the blame, should undertake the following measures:

- Define the business terms or case.
- Describe what has to be achieved.
- Develop a plan and operate to the plan.
- Make use of resources in the working team environment.
- Successful delivery of the project should be accountable by the sponsor.
- Proper use of project manager skills to plan, monitor and sustaining process.
- Project manager skill should employ on the workers.
- Cordial relationship should be involve among the working team in the project.

Conclusion

The service providers in the construction industries including contractors and consultants should try to advance the understanding phenomenon of client need and satisfaction and develop associate measure criteria that would help to improve service quality and overall performance for better client needs and satisfaction as well as the profession at large.

Recommendations

This study strongly recommends that competent professionals in construction industries should insist in modern project management planning and control techniques used as a method of achieving the required targeted quality, cost and time frame in project implementation and execution process. Moreover, there is need for further research in how leadership affect the clients' and satisfaction in construction industries as well.

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