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A Study on the Importance of Motivation among The Managers in Construction Companies In Medan

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Abstract—Managers as the key employees have a very important role in maintaining the workforce performance which is critical to the construction companies’ success in the future. If motivated employees start with motivated managers probably it would seem plausible if the de-motivated ones start with de-motivated managers. This study aims to analyze the importance of motivated managers to their successors and construction companies’ success. In this study, a quantitative method was used and the study area was in Medan, North Sumatera. Questionnaire survey was distributed directly to construction companies in Medan which are listed in the Construction Services Development Board. A total of 60 managers responded and the completed questionnaires were analyzed using the descriptive analysis. The respondents acknowledged the importance of motivation among themselves to the projects and construction companies’ success, implying that it is vital to maintain the motivation and good performance of the workforce.

Keywords—construction companies, managers, motivation

I. INTRODUCTION

SUCCESSFUL managers require sophisticated and organizational skills, as well as the effectiveness to manage the multidisciplinary activities that approve of the ability to understand the organizational and behavioral elements in order to create the work environment that suits the team’s motivational needs and leads to project through effectively its multifunctional phases [1].

In the construction industries which often have unstructured work environments, managers are faced with many challenges internally and externally. Internally, managers must be able to deal with a variety of interfaces and provide support to their workforce. Externally, they must be kept up to date with the changes regarding markets, regulations, technology and other socioeconomic factors.

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reward, and being able to brief and inform [6].

According to Williams (1995) motivation can be defined as what causes people to act, the willingness of people to work in order to attain goals, the reason to do things and a directed behavior used to satisfy the needs [7]. According to Harris (1994) there are three determinants in terms of the basic goals that drive behavior such as rewards, negative consequences, and the impression management [8].

In order to have employees who are willing to work to achieve the company’s goals, the commitment to do that is very much dependent on their own wishes [9]. The employees’ wishes can be defined as the self-motivation that they possess to do the tasks. This self-motivation can only happen when their needs and the requirement of the organisation are converged [9].

Therefore in an organisation, motivation can be seen as related to two different, but related ideas: the individual’s point of view and the organization’s or manager’s stand point. Individuals see motivation as an internal state or driving forces within a person, due to the unfulfilled needs that will make the person choose between alternative forms of actions in order to achieve desired goals.

Goals may be tangible, such as higher pay, bonus and benefits or intangible rewards such as reputation, respect, recognition or achievement [5][9].

Mathis (2001) reveals the motivational process that occurs in our everyday lives. Needs, especially those unfulfilled ones are drivers or forces that will initiate certain behavior in individuals. The unfulfilled needs can often create tension in individuals [9].

On the other hand, a manager views motivation as the expenditure of effort to accomplish results [2]. The efforts are performed in a company or organization, it comes from three groups of people: the individual, the manager and the group of people or the employees. Therefore, individuals and managers view motivation differently.

One of the motivation models under the need or content theory is Theory X and Theory Y which have been developed by Douglas McGregor [11]. This theory describes the views or perception of managers with regards to their employees. The Theory X manager views the employees in terms of the following characteristics: inherently dislike work, preferring to avoid work and to be pushed to work, having no ambition, being irresponsible, being unable to cope with changes, feeling that work is of secondary importance, and having no leadership [12].

On the other hand, Theory Y manager views their employees in terms of the following characteristics: willing to work; work is regarded to be as natural as play or rest, willing to accept responsibilities since work brings satisfaction, capable of directing themselves (self-direction), being capable of self-control, frequently using imagination, Ingenuity and creativity in accomplishing tasks [13].

It can be concluded that managers in theory X are pessimistic, while managers in theory Y are optimistic. Therefore, managers must try to shift their attention from adopting theory X to theory Y. This is because assumptions are seen as the most appropriate perspectives to assess the leader effectiveness in terms of the leader’s influence to the follower’s performance [14].

Both of the LEM theory and the Path Goal theory are related to the leader’s impact upon the follower motivation. The LEM theory uses an expansion of the goal theory of motivation, and the Path Goal theory uses the expectancy theory of motivation.

Wofford (1979) proposes a Model of Leadership where the manager or leader motivation is one of the manager’s behaviors that will influence the follower’s performance. This means that the follower motivation depends on the motivation of the manager himself. That is why it is very important to have a motivated manager who is able to create a workplace that suits the follower motivation so that they can be self-motivated.

Therefore, the manager must look at the environment and make sure that it is one in which the manager himself or herself can be motivated. And as a leader for a team, a manager should consider the right environment for his or her people to be motivated [7].

The managers must be proactive in order to be effective and efficient leaders in responding to competitive threats as well as opportunities in the uncertain changes taking place in the environment of the industry [15][16].

Nevertheless, motivation, whether seen from the individual’s or the organization’s point of view addresses the same issue: that is, achieving goals held by the individual or organization. These goals can only be achieved through the cooperation between the individual and organization. People need organization to achieve their goals and organization needs people to achieve its goals. An organization through its managers should take care of its employees by practicing good motivation and leadership styles.

Good motivation practices will lead to effective and efficient organization and some good motivation practices are: the managers should be sensitive to the differences in needs and values among the people that are supervised, increase the employees’ expectations so that their efforts will lead to effective performance, and encourage the subordinates to set performance goals that are specific, challenging and attainable [6].

Therefore, a successful manager in the construction company is more or less related to his success to run a project exactly to cost, time, and quality and able to perform well as a leader who is able to motivate his team.

To understand that motivation is important to the success of a manager in leading his or her team, the next paragraph provides a brief explanation or general information on how a motivated manager as a leader to his team will have certain influence to the followers’ performance.

The Leader Environment Interaction (LEI) theory sees the performance of the follower more broadly. In this theory, the follower’s performance is seen as a function of the individual’s motivation, ability, role perception, and environmental constraints [14]. In this theory the motivational force is determined by the task goal whether it is the level, the specificity, and the commitment of the task goal, energy potential, and perceived effort requirement.

House in 1971 analyzed the effects of leadership behavior dimensions on the follower motivation using the expectancy model as a foundation. The Path-Goal theory of House can be seen as the most appropriate perspective to assess the leader effectiveness in terms of the leader’s influence to the follower’s performance [14].

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

From 60 respondents, 21 respondents (35%) are general managers, 16 respondents or 26.7% of them are project managers, 12 respondents or 20% of them are technical managers, and 11 respondents (18.3%) are marketing and financial managers. Since construction companies which are located in Medan mostly in south offices, usually there are only two to three managers for each of the companies and the project managers usually will be appointed or selected from the main offices in Jakarta if there are projects in North Sumatera, Aceh or Nias.

Most of the respondents have 6-10 years of experience in the construction industry (21 respondents, 35%), 18 respondents (30%) of them have 11-15 years of experience, 14 respondents (23.3%) have 16-20 years of experience, and 3 respondents (5%) out of them have more than 20 years of experience in the construction industry.

Most of the respondents are of the age between 30-39 years old (31.5%), 19 respondents (31.2%) are between 40-49 years old, 5 respondents (8.3%) are between 50-59 years old, 4 respondents (6.7%) are between 25-29 years old and 1 respondent (1.7%) is more than 60 years old. From 60 respondents, 55 respondents (91.7%) had Bachelor, 3 respondents (5%) had Master, and 2 respondents (3.3%) Diploma degrees as their academic qualifications.

Mostly the age of the construction companies where the respondents worked are more than 10 years (25 companies, 83%), and 3 construction companies (10.7%) are established between 5-10 years. This shows that mostly the companies classified in B (Big) classification are established for more than five years. 22 construction companies (78.6%) are local private companies and 6 (21.4%) are BUMN (Badan Usaha Milik Negara) or construction companies owned by the government.

The companies’ average project value per year are mostly between 10-50 billion rupiah (13 companies, 46.4%), 10 (35.7%) of them have the average project value per year of more than 20 billion rupiah, and 5 companies (17.9%) have less than 10 billion rupiah.

The third part is the part of related to motivated managers and their responsibility to create a happy workplace in which the employees are self-motivated so that the construction companies where they work to achieve the goals and to succeed, which start with a motivated manager. This statement is directly a source of information from the respondents on how important it is to identify what motivational factors have driven the managers in the construction companies to work.

Most of the respondents agreed that motivation had influenced their works’ performances (44 respondents, 73.3%), and 16 respondents (26.7%) strongly agreed about the statement. This shows that there are positive feedbacks from
all of the respondents, as can be seen in Fig. 1.

Fig. 1 Motivation influences the performance of the managers in the construction company

From the statement "creating a conducive workplace in which employees are self-motivated is the manager's responsibility" from 60 respondents, 37 respondents (61.7%) agreed to the statement, 22 out of them (36.7%) strongly agreed to the statement, and only 1 respondent (1.7%) had been neutral as can be seen in Fig. 5.

Fig. 5 Creating a conducive workplace in which employees are self-motivated is the manager's responsibility

From the statement that a motivated manager in the construction company's success had an important role in motivating the workers but when it came to the responsibility of the managers, most of them believed that creating a conducive workplace in which employees are self-motivated is the manager's responsibility and only 2 respondents (60.36%) strongly agreed to the statement, and only 1 respondent (1.74%) had been neutral to the statement.

V. CONCLUSION

The findings on this research explain that the successful managers in Medan's construction companies see motivation as a very important thing that influences their work performance. When the managers are motivated to achieve the organization's goals, they will influence and lead the construction company's success. There are certain qualifications in which a manager should be well regarded as successful and one of them is the ability to motivate the workforce. Managers need to make an effort to understand the psychological process if they want to be successful in the construction industry in achieving the organization's goals or targets. Therefore, to be effective in handling their project team or their subordinates, managers should have understanding of motivational forces as well as taking seriously the responsibility to create a happy work environment for the employees. More importantly, in the construction industry, the ability to build the project team, motivate others, create organizational structures and a happy workplace environment to the workers' motivational needs are required to make successful project management. However, it can be concluded that there were positive responses from the managers in Medan's construction companies on the importance of motivation in their work performance. But, we should not forget that the managers in the construction companies are also employees that need to be understood and whose motivation is of equal importance so that these key employees can perform their best in fulfilling their tasks as well as leading their team. Therefore, for further studies it will be interesting to conduct a study on factors that serve as the drivers for the managers in construction companies, and to see the comparison between the managers who work in the construction industry and the managers in other industries if they are given the same list of motivational factors to be contemplated.

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