Causes of Rivalry among Professionals in the Nigeria’s Construction Industry

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Abstract: Unhealthy rivalry among professionals in the Nigeria’s construction industry had been identified as a huge problem. Therefore, this study had investigated the causes of competition and rivalry among the existing professionals within the industry. Data for the study were collected through well-structured questionnaire directed to construction professionals in the construction firm and government ministries. Data collected were analysed using frequency distribution table and relative significance index. The study revealed that professionals themselves are the most significant cause of rivalry (95% percent significance) followed by the mode of award of contract (93%), Government (92%), Professional prejudice (81%), Education/training, and Payment for professional services (78%), Client preferences (77%), Conflicting/overlapping professional roles (76%), Godfatherism (75%) and Professional experience (71%). The study recommended that the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria should establish a council to clearly spell out the areas of professional practices of all the professions within the Nigerian construction industry and that the terms of collaboration between the various professionals and create a court of arbitration for adjudication in case of any dispute.

I. INTRODUCTION

It is important to understand the term “profession” before discussing the issue of professionalism in depth. [1] defined profession as an occupation requiring extensive education i.e. an occupation that requires extensive education or specialized training. Profession is a skilled occupation, usually one requiring specific education, training, knowledge or experience [2]. According to [3], the essence of the word “professionalism” can be defined as the possession and autonomous control of a body of specialized knowledge, which when combined with honorific status, confers power upon its holders. [1] described professionalism as the professional standards that involved the skill, competence, or character expected of a member of a highly trained profession. Professionalism can also be defined as a profession involving the exercising of body of unique, expert and knowledge. Professionals have always been linked with the notion of “service” so that a profession is described as a group of people organised to serve a body of specialized knowledge in the interests of society based on the perceived relationship [4], [5] Stated that it is automatically tied up with more practical concepts and expectations from the public, encompassing issues such as competence, responsibility and willingness to serve the public. [6] feels that the problem that faces any professional community is how it could regulate itself effectively to justify its autonomy, while ensuring that the clients of its members and society as a whole benefit from the profession’s and the individual professional’s actions, rather than becoming their victims. It is one of the ethical quality control. Construction industry plays a substantial role in a country’s economy, irrespective of the country’s levels of economic development [7]. The construction sector in a country’s economy is an important employer of a nation’s workforce as it employs between 2 to 10% of total workforce of most countries [8]. Nigeria had gained an impressive economic growth during the last three decades. Construction industry everywhere faces problem and challenges. These difficulties and challenges are present alongside a general situation of institutional weakness, professional rivalry among others. Many topic issues which have implications for the construction industry have, so far, only been discussed to a significant extent.

It is often considered that the issue of professional rivalries is not a matter of concern. The construction industry, by nature has many special problem and requirement. The importance of taking measure to improve the performance of the construction industry has now been recognized at various level of socio-economic development. The construction activity involves assembling materials and components designed and produced by a multitude of suppliers, working in a diversity of disciplines and technologies, in order to create what is regarded as ‘the built environment’. Such activities can include the planning, regulation, design, manufacture, construction, maintenance and eventual decommissioning of buildings and other structures. Their scale, complexity and intricacy varies enormously, ranging from work undertaken by small ‘jobbing’ builders, to international construction companies undertaking long-term, high-cost, complex and sometimes high-risk projects such as single or multiple major civil construction [9].
A formal design team may be assembled to plan the physical proceeding and to integrate those proceedings with other part and rivalries among this design and construction team may or may not hinder the execution of such project. Rivalries among the professionals in the construction industry refer to the degree of which professionals in the construction industry respond to competitive moves of other professionals in the industry. Rivalries among the professionals may manifest itself in a number of ways and the degree of rivalry in the construction industry is a function of a number of interacting structural features.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A starting point to analyzing the construction industry is to look at competitive rivalry. Rivalry is the relationship between two or more people who regularly compete with each other. Rivalry is intense and sometimes angry competition, action or position among individual or group who are given activity. This term describes the intensity of competition among existing professionals in the construction industry [10]. The Biblical story of the prodigal son is an example of the emotional rivalry between siblings. Who will receive the blessing from the parent? Who is the favorite? Who received the most attention? And who needs that attention now? One of the most precious resources that professionals fight about is the approval of their client [11]. If the clients show favoritism toward a particular professional it may escalate rivalry among the professionals. If entry to the industry is easy then competitive rivalries will likely be too high. Generally rivalry will be high if the professionals all have similar strategies. Rivalry is competing for the same objectives or for superiority in the same field. On the basis of our arguments with respect to the relational nature of competition, we predict that, in a given competitive environment, perceptions of rivalry between actors will vary meaningfully at the relationship, or dyad (couple), level. That is, actors will reliably identify certain opponents as rivals because of the relationships they have with these opponents. Again, this notion stands in contrast to the idea that competition is driven purely by the characteristics of a given competitive environment—that is, by the extent to which competitors are vying for scarce resources. Further, this prediction implies that the attributes of the individual actors cannot fully predict rivalry, and hence, competitive intensity [12]. If there are more professionals within an industry, there will be an increase in competition for same resources because rivalry is the act of competing for the same thing against another person. When an industry is growing rapidly professionals in such industry are able to increase profits because of the expansion. Professionals with high level of competition are more jealous if the rival is more powerful and dominating. The idea that rivalry between professionals in Nigeria’s construction industry could potentially be harmful to the working environment was a positive perception. Ultimately, many professionals may even refuse to believe that they exhibit such behavior toward others. Some professionals tend to display different traits of rivalry which could be indirect or direct behavior cited by [13]. Professional rivalries can be a powerful vehicle for self-discovery if the professionals step back and think analytically about the cause. Learning where you are weak, what values you cherish, and how to think big. If you struggle to rise to that level of self-reflection when it comes to your rival, the blood boiling effects of a competitor can sometimes be a beneficial to or well-being. Competition is a component of aggressive behavior, a key underpinning of this study is the idea that rivalry within an organization setting created obstacles to a strong working environment [14]. This behavior is manifested due to feelings of jealousy, envy and even fear that another person was competing for their job [13]. [15] attributed the causes of rivalry among the professionals to the followings:- professional quackery, education/training, government policies, payment for professional services, professional experience, godfatherism, client preference, mode of award of contract, professional prejudice, and conflict/overlapping of professional roles. [16], [17] attributed other causes of building collapse in Nigeria as related to the rivalry among professionals in the construction industry as socio-economic habits and owner construction syndrome. Causes of professional rivalry in Nigerian construction industry can be categorized as, unequal interest among professionals, absence of professional values, political undermining of professionals, poverty and greediness, environmental factors and lack of education [11].
III. METHODOLOGY

Field survey was the tool used in collecting data used to evaluate the cause of rivalry among the professionals in Nigerian construction industry. The questionnaire was administered to construction professionals (Architects, Builders, Quantity Surveyors, Engineers and other related disciplines). The study population comprised the construction professionals in the private and public service in the Nigerian construction industry. Primary data for the study were collected through the use of structured multiple choice questionnaire. Purposive sampling technique was adopted in the administration of the questionnaire to the respondents. The statistical tools used for this study include percentage, mean, and relative significance index RSI (also known as Index of Relative Importance, IRI or Relative Importance Index, RII) to determine which of the stated causes of rivalry is the most prevalent among the professionals in the Nigerian construction industry. The relative significance index ranking (RSI) was used for ranking of the factors studied. These methods had been used in construction research by authors such as, [18]-[22] among others. The Likert scale involving rating on interval scale of 5 and 1 developed for application in social sciences and management researches for quantification of qualitative variable were used. It elicited information from the building construction professionals concerning the causes of rivalries among professionals in Nigeria construction industry. The responses of the items on the questionnaire were obtained on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 to 5. “Strongly Agree” were scored 5, “Agreed” were scored 4, “Undecided” were scored 3, “Disagreed” were scored 2 and “Strongly Disagreed” were scored 1. [23] gave an equation that could be useful for determining Relative Significance Index (RSI) in prevalence data as:

\[ RSI = \frac{\sum \mu}{AN} \]

Where \( \mu \) is the weighting given to each factor by respondents;

\( A \) is the highest weight (i.e. 5 in this case);

\( N \) is the total number of respondents

But for this type of research work where a 5-point scale was used, the RSI shall be calculated via the equation:

\[ RSI = \frac{5a + 4b + 3c + 2d + e}{50} \]

Where:

\( a = \) number of respondents “strongly agree”

\( b = \) number of respondents “agreed”

\( c = \) number of respondents “undecided”

\( d = \) number of respondents “disagreed”

\( e = \) number of respondents “strongly disagreed”

\( N = \) sample size = 40

\( j = \) number of response categories = 5

IV. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The data obtained are hereby presented and analysed.

A. RESPONDENTS’ PROFILE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research subjects</th>
<th>Descriptions</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>NIQS</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Professional qualification
Table 1 showed the professional qualifications of respondents. The respondents cut across the professionals within the building construction sub-sector of the construction industry.

ASSESSING THE CAUSES OF RIVALRY AMONG THE PROFESSIONALS IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Table 2 identified the various causes of rivalry among the professionals in the construction industry and the ranking of the factors through the use Relative Significance Index (RSI).

Table 2: Causes of rivalry among professionals in the Nigerian construction industry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Original</th>
<th>Causes of rivalry among professionals in Nigerian construction industry</th>
<th>RSI</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Professionals within the industry</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mode of award of contract</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Professional prejudice</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Education/training</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Payment for professional services</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Client preference</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Conflicting/overlapping professional role</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Godfatherism</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Professional experience</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The professionals within the industry are the most significant causes of rivalry with RSI of 0.95. The mode of award of contract ranked second with RSI value of 0.93. Government ranked third with RSI value of 0.92. Among the factors considered, the professional experience of the respective professionals and godfatherism contribute the least to the causes of rivalry with RSI 0.71 and 0.75.

V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The battle for supremacy between the distinct professionals within the industry, according to this research, had been identified as the strongest factor causing rivalry.
Every professional within the industry is an emphatic specialist in his field and should be considered as such. Construction is a team work. Each professional contributes his knowledge as a part of the whole for a successful building production. The intent of one professional to usurp or take glory for the professional services rendered by the other has always created conflicts within the construction industry in Nigeria and hence constitutes a major cause of rivalry among the professionals. This is in agreement with the position of [13].

VI. CONCLUSION
The major cause of rivalry among professionals as identified by this research is the rivalry among the noticeable professionals within the industry. The interplay of the forces of rivalry among the professionals could affect the team spirit, a necessary parameter, in the successful execution of a project within the planned project duration. The in itself could have its adverse consequences.

VII. RECOMMENDATION
The government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria established Councils for the regulation of the practice areas of the distinct professional bodies within the construction sector. Their duties and responsibilities were well spelt out. It is hereby recommended that the government should go further by establishing a body to enforce compliance with the statutory rules and regulations spelt outareas of their professional co-operations. Aggrieved professionals should also be able to approach this body for arbitration when their rights to discharge of professional duties are infringed on.

REFERENCES


