TIME MANAGEMENT AS AN ENHANCER OF CONSTRUCTION PROFESSIONALS' DEVELOPMENT- THE QUANTITY SURVEYOR'S PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Time represents an extremely important non-renewable resource in human endeavour; it is of significant importance to investigate time management strategies practiced by quantity surveyors bearing in mind the importance of their role in economic recovery and sustainability. It is also worthy of note that construction activities are time bound, hence the need for effective time management by construction professionals. The aim of this study is to investigate impact of time management on quantity surveyors' professional development in Nigeria, while the objectives were to identify time interrupters, investigate time management techniques amongst quantity surveyors and evaluate the impact of effective time management on quantity surveyors professional development. Fifty four questionnaires were returned out of 100 questionnaires distributed to quantity surveyors domiciled in Edo State. Frequency counts of the responses were computed, from which the mean item score was calculated to obtain the relative importance index. The study assessed the effect of time interrupters with recourse to people and devices/processes on quantity surveyors; result indicates that clients/employers is the most significant time interrupter of quantity surveyor's professional development. while the results of time interrupters on quantity surveying professionals by devices/processes reveal that telephone has the most significant effect. Results from analysis of time management techniques practiced by quantity surveyors show that prioritising task and activities; and set a deadline for every task ranked highest. Respondents ranked client satisfaction as the most significant benefits of effective time management on quantity surveyors' career development. This study concludes that effective time management enhances professional development of quantity surveyors. It is therefore recommended that quantity surveyors should adopt effective time management techniques to enable them enhance their professional development.

Keywords: time, management, construction, professional, quantity surveyor.

INTRODUCTION

The performance of any activity relies on certain elements, one of which is time, which can be considered both a hard and flexible concept simultaneously. Within one society, individuals uses different concept to relate with time. The conception of time, its perception and management, depends on the culture we belong to as masterfully expressed by (Hall, 1959) in his seminal work The Silent Language, "Time talks. It speaks more plainly than words. The message it conveys comes through loud and clear. Because it is manipulated less consciously, it is subject to less distortion than the spoken language. It can shout the truth where words lie". The conception of time determines how we deal with it, and explains the patterns of our behaviour in life (Hall, 1959; Pant, 2016).

Time management means those behaviours that aim at achieving an effective use of time while performing certain goal-directed activities (Claessens *et al*., 2007). Although little work has examined time management in the context of professionals in the construction industry, a relatively large literature has investigated the concept in the management of organizations and in educational institutions. We draw on this literature in describing time management behaviours among quantity surveyors and how it impact on their capacity in projects delivery and professional development.

Several studies on perception and management of time have been conducted. In the business field include the study of (McCay, 1959; Drucker, 1967; Lakein, 1973) to recent study of (Hassan, 2003; Kannan and Tan,2005; Cockerell, 2016). The relationship of time management with non-strictly economic variables such as anxiety, physical and psychological well-being has also been analyzed (Macan, 1994; Ho, 2003; Misra and McKean, 2000; Pérez-González et al., 2003; Strazdins et al., 2011; Boixadós et al., 2012). In recent times several studies investigated how school principals, students and distant learners allocated their time, they include (Camburn *et al*., 2010; Goldring *et al*., 2008; Grissom *et al*., 2013; Horng *et al*., 2010; Spillane *et al*., 2007; Spillane and Hunt, 2010; Donaldson, 2011). However, there is little or no evidence from literature of time management practice by quantity surveyors.

In pursuit of a more enhanced understanding of quantity surveying time management practice and its connection to professional development, we proceed from the expectation that some quantity surveyors have greater capacity for investing their time on productive activities. This greater capacity for using time effectively is known both colloquially and in a relatively large literature in psychology and organizational behaviour as time management. That literature suggests that better time management skills—which include the ability to set achievable goals, identify priorities, monitor one's own progress, and remain organized (Claessens *et al*., 2007) can lead to more effective time use and ultimately more positive outcomes, including reduced job stress and increased job performance, in some settings.

Time management and its relationship to positive outcomes have largely been ignored in built environment researches. This paper helps fill this gap by examining impact of time management on quantity surveyors professional development in Nigeria. The objectives were to identify time interrupters, investigate time management techniques

amongst quantity surveyors and evaluate the impact of effective time management on quantity surveyors professional development.

Time Management and Job Outcomes

(Britton and Glynn, 1989) stated that intellectually productive people usually have more things that they would like to do, or need to do, than they have time. Hence, high demands on one's time are the characteristic of many construction professions such as quantity surveyors, architect, engineers and builders who have responsibility for the time-intensive tasks of managing construction projects within a specified schedule, managing different projects scattered across a wide geographical spread, updating their Continues Professional Development (CPD) requirements, building relationships among other members of the building team, and so forth.

Construction professionals in general and quantity surveyors specifically seek to provide their clients due satisfaction through efficient and timely service delivery with respect to cost, time, quality and any other performance indicator as desired by the client. In such profession, becoming more productive means finding ways to accomplish more within the given limited time. Managing one's time more ably is one way to fulfil this goal. It is therefore imperative for such professionals strictly adopt effective and efficient time management techniques.

Several studies demonstrate that time management predicts job performance. For example, car salesmen with better time management skills have higher sales (Barling *et al*., 1996). College students with better time management skills report higher grade point averages (Britton and Tesser, 2001; Macan *et al*., 1990). County extension directors with better time management skills are rated higher by their superiors (assistant regional directors) (Radhakrishna *et al*., 1991). To understand the association between time management and job performance, researchers have investigated a series of possible linkages. Most clearly, time management helps improve job efficiency by enabling professionals to allocate adequate time to their job's most important tasks (Hall and Hursch, 1982; Orpen, 1994; Schuler, 1979). This greater attention to high-priority work areas improves worker outcomes.

Studies also suggest that effective time management reduces job stress, which can be an important impediment to job performance (e.g., Jamal, 1984). (Claessens *et al*., 2004) documented that time control to reduced work strain and increased job performance in a study of engineers in a semiconductor manufacturer. In same vein (Adams and Jex, 1999; Jex and Elacqua, 1999) in their studies documented the positive association between time management and employee health, mediated by other factors such as perceived control and conflicts between the demand between work and family. Time management is also predictive of other factors that might influence job performance.

Professionals who manage time better report lower emotional exhaustion, the most important dimension of job burnout (Peeters and Rutte, 2005). Better time performance also enhances higher job satisfaction (Macan *et al*., 1990). Participants in time management training also report greater work/home balance (Green and Skinner, 2005). A long literature shows that satisfaction and satisfaction-related factors contribute to employee performance (see Judge *et al*., 2001).

Of course, better time management need not lead to better job performance under all conditions. Increasing job performance requires engaging in more productive behaviours. According to (Ajzen, 1991), human behaviour is a function in part of how much control one perceives he or she has over that behaviour. Control is constrained by resources, including time and skills; time management increases perceptions of control by relaxing some of these constraints (Macan, 1994). Professional may face several kinds of constraints and time interrupters while performing their professional duties. They include distraction from people in the form of client/employers, employees, family, prospects, vendors and suppliers. Other forms of time interrupters arises from devices and process they include telephone/mobile phone, social media (Whatsapp, Facebook, Instagram etc.), electrical outages, cash flow problems, computer/ laptop, network problems/ browsing data interruption, e-mails, inadequate supplies and traffic grid lock.

Components of Good Time Management

Research identifies a number of techniques and behaviours associated with effective management of time. For example, studies find that one can use time efficiently and productively by applying various time management technique: by setting short-term and long-term goals (Claessens *et al*., 2007; Macan, 1994; Britton and Tesser's, 1991); keeping time logs (Claessens *et al*., 2007; Macan, 1994); prioritizing tasks and activities (Claessens *et al*., 2007; Macan, 1994; McCay, 1959; Blanchard and Johnson, 1982; Lang, 1992; Britton and Tesser's, 1991); making to-do lists (Claessens *et al*., 2007; Macan, 1994; Drucker, 1967; Lakein,1973; Mackenzie, 1972; McCay, 1959; Hall and Hursch, 1982); planning activities and scheduling (Claessens *et al*., 2007; Macan, 1994 Drucker, 1967; Eilam and Aharon,2003); avoiding procrastination (Lay and Schouwenburg, 1993).

Studies suggest that people vary systematically in their time management behaviours and techniques. For example, (Macan *et al*., 1990) compared time management behaviours across demographic groups in a sample of undergraduate students. While time management behaviours did not differ by race, older and female subjects were more likely to be good time managers. Older students also had greater preference for organization. Other studies of undergraduate students found similar results (Trueman and Hartley, 1996; Misra and McKean, 2000).

Methodology

There are different methods to conduct study and different types of studies. Empirical studies demand clear methodology as it enhances its worth and validness. The effectiveness of any study depends upon its methodology, in which researcher describes detail method and procedure. The research approach of this study was quantitative. The study was descriptive survey type in nature. The population of the study consisted of 135 quantity surveyors practicing in Edo State, Nigeria. From the population, one hundred participant with academic and professional background in quantity surveying were selected using convenience sampling. The list of quantity surveyors and their business addresses were obtained from the register of quantity

surveyors in Edo state. Fifty four out of the targeted 100 questionnaires were responded to; therefore, 54 questionnaires were used in the analysis which represents 54%.

Instrumentation is considered a backbone of any study. Researchers are unable to conduct research without valid instrument. Questionnaires were developed regarding time management techniques and time interrupters on five point likert scale to collect relevant information from participants. Tools are vague and unreliable without taking experts opinions on it. Thus, Scales were validated by field experts by the process of pilot testing.

Data were analyzed by using descriptive tools aided by Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Results of the analysis are then presented through tables. Relative Importance Index (RII) was used to rank the effect of time interrupters; time management techniques and the importance of time management on professional development of quantity surveyors.

Pilot Test

Pilot study of the questionnaire is achieved by a scouting sample, which consisted of 27 questionnaires that is, 20 percent of the population. These questionnaires were distributed to quantity surveyors found suitable for the pilot study. The data gathered through the pilot study provided related information about the factors relating to time interrupters; time management techniques and the importance of time management on professional development of quantity surveyors in Edo State.

Reliability

The reliability test was conducted to verify the internal consistency of the variables in the constructs. Table 1 provides the Cronbach alpha (α) value for all the three constructs. Since Cronbach alpha (α) values for all the constructs are more than 0.700, the internal consistency among the variables belonging to the constructs is therefore acceptable.

Table 2
Cronbach alpha (α) value of the three main constructs

Construct name	Alpha
Time interrupters	0.990
Time management strategies	0.979
Importance of time management	0.973

Results

General Information

The respondents for the study were quantity surveyors domiciled within Edo State. General information on membership grade, highest academic qualification, years of experience and type of organisation were collected from the respondents and discussed as follows (see Table 2). With respect to professional membership grades

56% were corporate members, while the remaining 44% were probationer, graduate and fellow member. Respondents with B.Sc/B/Tech, HND and PGD as their highest academic qualification consist of 74%, while the remaining 26% obtained M.Sc/M.Tech,MBA and PhD. The average years of experience of the respondents are between 6 to 20 years, this is an indication that respondents possess the needed experience as it relates to the subject matter. Type of respondents organisation was distributes as follows 37% client base organisation, 37%, consultant base organisation and 26% contractor base organisation.

Table 2: Respondents characteristics

	Frequency	**Percent**
Membership Grade		
Graduate member	11	20
Probationer member	11	20
Corporate member	30	56
Fellow member	2	4
Total	**54**	**100**
Highest Academic Qualification		
HND	19	35
B.Sc/B.Tech	8	15
PGD	13	24
M.Sc/M.Tech	10	19
PhD	2	4
MBA	2	4
Total	**54**	**100**
Respondents years of experience		
0-5	7	13
6-10	9	17
11-15	17	31
16-20	9	17
21-25	8	15
Over 26	4	7
*Tota***l**	**54**	**100**
Respondent's type of organisation		
Client	20	37
Contractor	14	26
Consultant	20	37
Total	**54**	**100**

Time Management Practice and Techniques

Effect of Interrupters on Tasks Performance

The respondents were asked to establish the effect of time interrupters as it relates to clients/employers, employees, family, prospects and vendors/suppliers. From the analysis it was discovered that Client/Employers had the most significant impact with a RII of 0.78, followed by employee and family with RII of 0.70 and 0.69. The least human time interrupters identified in this study are prospects and vendors/suppliers with RII of 0.64 and 0.61 respectively. The results are as shown in the Table 3 below.

Table 3: effect of time interrupters on the performance of professional tasks

Human/people time interrupters	**Relative Importance Index(RII)**	**Ranking**
Client/Employers	0.78	1
Employees	0.70	2
Family	0.69	3
Prospects	0.64	4
Vendors/Suppliers	0.61	5
Devices and process time interrupters	**Relative Importance Index(RII)**	**Ranking**
Telephone/mobile phone	0.83	1
Social media (WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram etc.)	0.77	2
Electrical outages	0.76	3
Cash flow problems	0.69	4
Computer/ Laptop	0.67	5
Network problems/ browsing data interruption	0.67	5
E-mails	0.66	7
Inadequate supplies	0.64	8
Traffic grid lock	0,64	8

From the analysis, the effect of devices and process time interrupters on quantity surveyors professional practice ranked telephone/mobile phone as the highest with a RII of 0.83, closely followed by Social media (WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram etc.) and electrical outages with RII of 0.77 and 0.76 respectively. Cash flow problems ranked 4th with of 0.6, Computer/ Laptop and Network problems/ browsing data interruption both ranked 5th with RII of 0.67. The least ranked devices and process time interrupters are inadequate supplies and Traffic grid lock with RII of 0.64. The results are as shown in the table 3 above.

Time Management Techniques

The respondents ranked time management techniques practiced by quantity surveyors, from analysis Prioritizing task and activities; and Set a deadline for every task both ranked 1st with RII of 0.89. Planning activities and creating to-do-list ranked 3rd and 4th respectively. Tied in 5th position are delegating assignment/duties and avoiding procrastination with RII of 0.83. The least ranked time management technique is out sourcing tasks and operation to third party/outsider with RII of 0.67. The results are as shown in the Table 4 below.

Table 4: Ranking of Time Management Techniques

Time Management Techniques	**Relative Importance Index(RII)**	**Ranking**
Prioritizing task and activities	0.89	1
Set a deadline for every task	0.89	1
Planning activities	0.87	3
Creating to-do-list	0.84	4
Delegating of assignment/duties	0.83	5
Avoiding procrastination	0.83	5
Identifying time interrupters and addressing them	0.79	7
Having a plan B	0.79	7
Eliminate unneeded tasks	0,79	7
Out sourcing tasks and operation to third party / outsider	0.67	10

Our results are consistent with previous studies conducted by (Lay and Schouwenburg, 1993; Alvarez Sainz, Ferrero and Ugidos, 2019, Islam *et al.*, 2021) that found that Prioritizing task and setting goals were associated with greater work accomplishment.

Benefits of Time Management on Professional Career

The respondents ranked the importance of time management on quantity surveyor's professional development, from analysis client's satisfaction ranked 1st with RII of 0.89. Meeting up with deadlines and survive competition ranked 2nd and 3rd with RII of 0.86 and 0.84. Tied in 4th position are Improved well-being and Get more job commission/offer with RII of 0.82. The least ranked impact of time management on professional development is reduces time spent on official work at home with RII of 0.80. The results are consistent with previous studies conducted by (Islam *et al.*, 2021)that proper time management will bring about better job performance. The results are as shown in the Table 5 below.

Table 5: Ranking benefits of time management

Benefits of Time Management	**Relative Importance Index(RII)**	**Ranking**
Satisfy clients	0.89	1
meeting up with deadlines	0.86	2
Survive competition	0.84	3
Improved well-being	0.82	4
Get more job commission/offer	0.82	4
Reduces time spent on official work at home	0.80	6

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CONCLUSIONS

Successful people utilise their time judiciously, this research highlights two aspects of time management. Firstly, some components of time interrupters have significant effect on time management. Secondly, it emphasises the need to understand time management techniques and adopting the right time management techniques, this is because it has significant benefits on job performance and professional development.

Employers and telephone/mobile phone significantly interrupts quantity surveyors productive time. With regards to time management techniques, prioritisation of tasks and Setting a deadline for every task are found to be effective time management techniques. Similarly, it is found that client's satisfaction and meeting up with deadlines are the most significant benefits emanating from proper time management other benefits include surviving competition, improved well-being, getting more job commission and reduced time spent on official work at home.

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