



ISO 9001:2015 EMPLOYEE PREPAREDNESS AND WORK ENGAGEMENT AMONG CONSTRUCTION FIRMS IN DAVAO CITY, PHILIPPINES

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Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36713/epra12490>

DOI No: 10.36713/epra12490

ABSTRACT

As everyone in the quality game is aware, the world now has a new version of ISO 9001. ISO standards touch almost everything an organization does and it helps to make the world a safer and more efficient place. This drives the need to evaluate the effectiveness of the standard and make changes to drive continual improvement within the organizations and industry-wide. The study was primarily conducted to determine the relationship between ISO 9001:2015 employee preparedness and work engagement among construction firms in Davao City. This study utilized a descriptive correlational research approach since the study sought to establish the relationship between ISO 9001:2015 preparedness and employee engagement among the construction firms in Davao City. Primary data were gathered and used in the study. This academic undertaking involved a representative sample of employees of the top seven (7) construction firms in Davao City per projects with the Department of Public Works and Highways. This study found out that there is a strong relationship between ISO 9001:2015 preparedness and employee engagement among construction firms in Davao City. It indicates that most of the employees in the construction companies are well-versed in the ISO preparation and implementation phases. This is generally supported by the very high level of preparedness and employee engagement among the employees.

KEYWORDS: ISO 9001, Employee Preparedness, Work Engagement, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

There are many reasons for a company to implement a Quality Management System (QMS) based on the requirements of ISO 9001:2015. An organization can gain better control of their processes and focus more on customer requirements, which will lead to improved customer satisfaction. However, are there benefits for the employees of the company as well?

Implementing an ISO 9001:2015 compliant Quality Management System (QMS) normally requires a lot of work from a lot of people within an organization, but one aspect that it is possible to overlook is the importance of employee engagement. Nolan (2015) averred that companies have to consider gaining the hearts and minds of the organization's employees to achieve a smooth, efficient, and beneficial QMS implementation and operation, and less of a frustrating and problematic one. Moreover, Ramphal (2015) reminded that the habits, relationships, and disciplines established with the employee team during the implementation of the QMS can set the foundation for the future performance, so it is vital that employee engagement is established early in the implementation phase.

While people want to have security at work, most employees also want to be satisfied with the work they do, and engaging the employees in the processes of the Quality Management System can improve their job satisfaction



(Hammar, 2016). When people become part of the processes of the Quality Management System, and management recognizes how integral the people are, the job becomes more interesting and engaging. If the company management is willing to put the time and resources into training employees, then the employees will feel more appreciated and valued. These employees will be more likely engaged in their work and more focused and integrated with helping the company succeed.

The Philippines has several companies that have ISO certification and transitioned from the older ISO 9001:2008 certification to ISO 9001:2015 standards. In a case study of the Philippines' first company to have undergone transition – Sumisetsu Philippines, Inc. (SPI) – presented by SGS (2016), it was revealed that employee engagement is one of the very crucial matters that are looked into by accreditors. In the case of SPI, the ISO 9001:2015 certification employee engagement has increased as employees have become mindful of risk management within the company. This sense of involvement motivates them which reflects on their accomplishments and they strive to constantly improve the way of doing things at work.

The construction industry in Davao City has affirmed the need for quality standards, especially that the year 2017 is considered to be the golden age for infrastructure (Perez, 2016) because of President Duterte's Build Build Build agenda. The report quoted Engr. Ramon Allado, former president of the Davao Constructors Association Center, Inc., who said that with the current administration's thrust of fast-tracking infrastructure spending and facilitating investments, the industry is expected to boom on multiple folds. With this, it is but high time for the industry to engage its workforce well towards better company outcomes. However, the researcher has not come across a study specifically focusing on employees' preparedness on ISO 9001:2015 implementation and employees' work engagement, much more in Davao City's construction industry. Thus, this study was undertaken.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative research design utilizing the descriptive correlation technique of research. Descriptive research design was used to explain the subject phenomenon and to articulate what variables, conditions and attributes were present (Bordens and Abbott, 2002). Moreover, this kind of research is concerned with how what is or what exists is related to some preceding event that has influence or affected a present condition or event (Johnson, 2001). Specifically, this study utilized a correlational research approach since the study sought to establish the relationship between employee preparedness on ISO 9001:2015 implementation and work engagement of employees among the construction firms in Davao City. Primary data were gathered and used in the study. This academic undertaking involved a representative sample of employees of the top seven (7) construction firms in Davao City per projects with the Department of Public Works and Highways. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (Pearson r) was used to determine the significance of the relationship between employee preparedness on ISO 9001:2015 implementation and employee engagement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results, it was revealed that there is a strong correlation between employee engagement and employees' preparedness on ISO 9001:2015 implementation in term of all indicators except improvement and motivation.

The findings of this study have similar results with that of Qian, Shi and Zhou (2015) which highlights the interdependence of preparedness and employee engagement. The research findings revealed that relationship with the leaders is a significant factor in driving employee engagement. Employee engagement is about understanding one's role in an organization (Mone and London, 2014). This concept aligns with the role of top management which is to provide related resources according to the quality objectives (Fonseca and Lima, 2015).

The relatedness of these two concepts signifies the strong correlation of employee engagement and employees' preparedness on ISO 9001:2015 implementation. The role of communication and participation has not been confined on the top-down organizational set-up but also on the collaboration of relevant functions through policies and objectives under the factor of leadership. In support to this concept, the argument of Cullen, Edwards, Casper, and



Gue (2014) which states that the implementation of effective communication is imperative to achieve targeted goals, can be strengthened.

Table 1: Test of Relationship Between Employees’ Work Engagement and Employees’ Preparedness on ISO 9001:2015 Implementation

Table with 7 columns: Category, Test Type, Emotional Engagement, Rational Identification, Compatibility (Job Fit and Loyalty/Commitment), Team Orientation, Motivation. Rows include Context of the Organization, Leadership, Planning, Support, Operation, Performance Evaluation, and Improvement.

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

On the other hand, the insignificant relationship between improvement and motivation (R=.083, Sig.=.135) may be influenced by the level of employees’ drive to identify the need to evaluate the effectiveness of standard (Tricker, 2016). The significant changes on ISO 9001 as highlighted by Jonsson and Berglund (2016) may be hampered by the effect of little planning and preparation guidance that was conducted before the release of the latest version as emphasized by Ramphal (2015). In effect, the concept of motivation as stated by Gerhart and Fang (2015) which is dependent on the sense of feeling of recognition and accomplishment for meeting personal and goals may be remote. Olafsen, Halvari, Forest & Deci, (2015) argues that the concept that incentives and rewards have little effect on employees as motivational factors when they are not confident and could not identify their roles within the organization.



CONCLUSION

In terms of the relationship of the employee preparedness and employee engagement, results revealed a strong degree of correlation in all variables between employee preparedness and employee engagement which supported various related reference on the interrelationship, for example, of leadership and motivation of employees. However, results also revealed that motivation and improvement are not significantly correlated. This study found out that there is a strong relationship between ISO 9001:2015 preparedness and employee engagement among construction firms in Davao City. It indicates that most of the employees in the construction companies are well-versed in the ISO preparation and implementation phases. This is generally supported by the very high level of preparedness and employee engagement among the employees. The null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between employee preparedness and employee engagement is rejected as finding revealed a strong significant relationship except on improvement and motivation.

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