

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

FACULTY OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

DEPARTMENT OF QUANTITY SURVEYING

**AN INVESTIGATION ON THE EFFECTS OF HUMAN RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT ON CONTRACTOR PRODUCTIVITY AND  
PERFORMANCE IN ZIMBABWE**

By  
ASHTON MANYARA  
(P0072062Q)

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## ABSTRACT

Construction work is characterised by heavy products and in spite of all the technological advancement it remains a labour-intensive venture with site operatives accounting for up to 40% of total project expenditure. In spite of this, Human Resources Management is not given the attention it deserves particularly by the contractors who are responsible for carrying out most of the works and this has partly contributed to project time and costs overruns. This study discusses the general theoretical aspects of human resource management with the view of establishing a background for the discussion of people management in the construction industry. An autopsy of empirical studies conducted in various parts of the world provide indications that where Human Resources Management is given the attention it deserves, there is likely to be an improvement in the overall performance of the contractor. The research therefore aimed at investigating the effects of Human Resources Management of site operatives on contractor performance in Zimbabwe. The sub-objectives of the study were to find out how human resource was being managed by contractors, the contributions that human resource management had on the contractor's performance and the factors affecting the implementation of human resource management. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative research approaches and it targeted construction professionals responsible for Human Resource Management in contractor organisations registered under category A through to D with the Construction Industry Federation of Zimbabwe (CIFOZ) who have their offices in Harare including those undertaking works within the city. Thirty semi-structured questionnaires were randomly distributed, and twenty-three valid questionnaires were returned. The questionnaires were complimented by two follow up telephone interviews with Human Resource Managers within contractor organisations. Findings suggest that most contractors are aware of how Human Resource Management can bring competitiveness to their organisations through enhanced performance. Most contractors thus have standalone human resource departments coupled with human resource policies. However, some smaller contractors left the task of human resource planning, compensation, performance appraisal and health and safety matters to directors, foremen and administrative officers. What emerged from the study was that the lack of people management training of Project Managers, Site Managers and Foremen and the low levels of education of site operatives were the two most common hindrances to the implementation of Human Resource Management within the construction sector. Trained operatives are also being lost as a result of casualization of employment within the industry. Recommendation are put forward for contractors to provide construction managers with people management training and also to move towards eradicating casual employment through offering a series of contracts as resources are being lost by training temporary employees.