A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS THE PROJECT MANAGEMENT APPROACH AT MINING COMPANY IN GAUTENG – SOUTH AFRICA

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Abstract

Purpose of the study was to assess employee attitudes and perceptions towards the project management approach at a mining company in Gauteng. A sample of 105 respondents participated in the study. A quantitative research approach was used in this study. A questionnaire that had three sections was used as a research instrument. The results showed that employees had negative perceptions towards the project management approach at the mine. The areas which revealed negative perceptions included lack of trust in management, negative attitude towards projects, negative perceptions towards the need for projects as justified by management, lack of employee participation in decision making, lack of organisational support and organisational capability. However, despite negative perceptions, employees confirmed support for the organisational projects to ensure its success. The implication is that the negative perceptions would breed resentment if not addressed on time, which may lead into resistance towards projects undertaken by the mine. It is recommended that the organisation reengineers its approach to undertaking projects to allow more participation by all employee levels through consultation, communication and training in project management. Periodic surveys of this nature would serve to highlight the factors that may lead to negative attitudes and perceptions which ultimately weigh down the organisation.

Keywords: Attitudes, Employees, Gauteng, Perceptions, Project management approach

INTRODUCTION

All around the world, organisations undertake projects of various sizes during their lifecycles in order to achieve specific objectives and meet stakeholder expectations. The objective may be cost reduction, safety improvement or production improvement, among other reasons. While considerable knowledge has been built up around project management skills to identify and describe best practices applicable to most projects, many organisations still find it important to tailor project management methodologies to meet each organisation's particular needs. The organisation being studied is no exception as far as having its own approach to project management. Employees constitute an essential part of the project stakeholders by virtue of their engagement in projects. It is imperative that employee attitudes and perceptions (Kulatunga, Amaratunga, Haigh and Rameezdeen, 2006) be understood in order to determine and structure intervention methods to correct negative attitudes and reinforce positive attitudes towards various facets of the organisation. In this study, project management approach refers to how projects are conceptualised, initiated, planned, implemented and controlled.

The organisation under study is a mining company located in Gauteng, South Africa. Despite being one of the major mines in Africa and in the world, the mine continues to face stiff competition from other producers, coupled with pressure emanating from stringent conditions on quality specifications imposed by mineral buyers. The mine undertakes various projects to cost effectively meet quality requirements by various clients. Despite numerous studies on project management, the attitudes and perceptions of employees towards the projects management approach in South Africa have not been studied. Yet, attitudes and perceptions have implications on the success of the projects and organisational performance. Conducting similar studies in the South African context would provide a tailored solution for use in resolving issues emanating from attitudes and perceptions. This study is contributing towards that, focusing on the employee attitudes and perceptions at a mining company undertaking mining project.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The objectives of the study were to determine the attitudes and perceptions of employees towards the project management approach at a mine in Gauteng and to assess the implications of the attitudes and perceptions on the project success and organisational performance. In line with these objectives, literature on attitudes and perceptions were reviewed.

Attitudes and Perceptions

An attitude is a personal or emotional feeling expressed by a person. It refers to the manner in which a person acts when dealing with a specific situation. Pickens (2007) defines an attitude as

a mind-set or tendency to act in a particular way due to both an individual's experience and temperament and that an attitude includes three components: an affect (feeling), cognition (a thought or belief) and behaviour (an action). Attitudes define how individuals see a situation, as well as define how different individuals behave towards the situation. Pickens (2007) notes that attitudes influence decisions, guide behaviours and impact what we selectively remember, and that attitudes come in different strengths. Eirich and Corbett (2007) note that despite empirical research not supporting the use of attitudes as a direct proxy for behaviours, it is generally accepted that attitudes have an indirect impact on behaviour together with other variables like social norms. A number of theories, including Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour, have sought to model the translation of attitudes into behaviours (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Ajzen's Theory of planned behaviour model
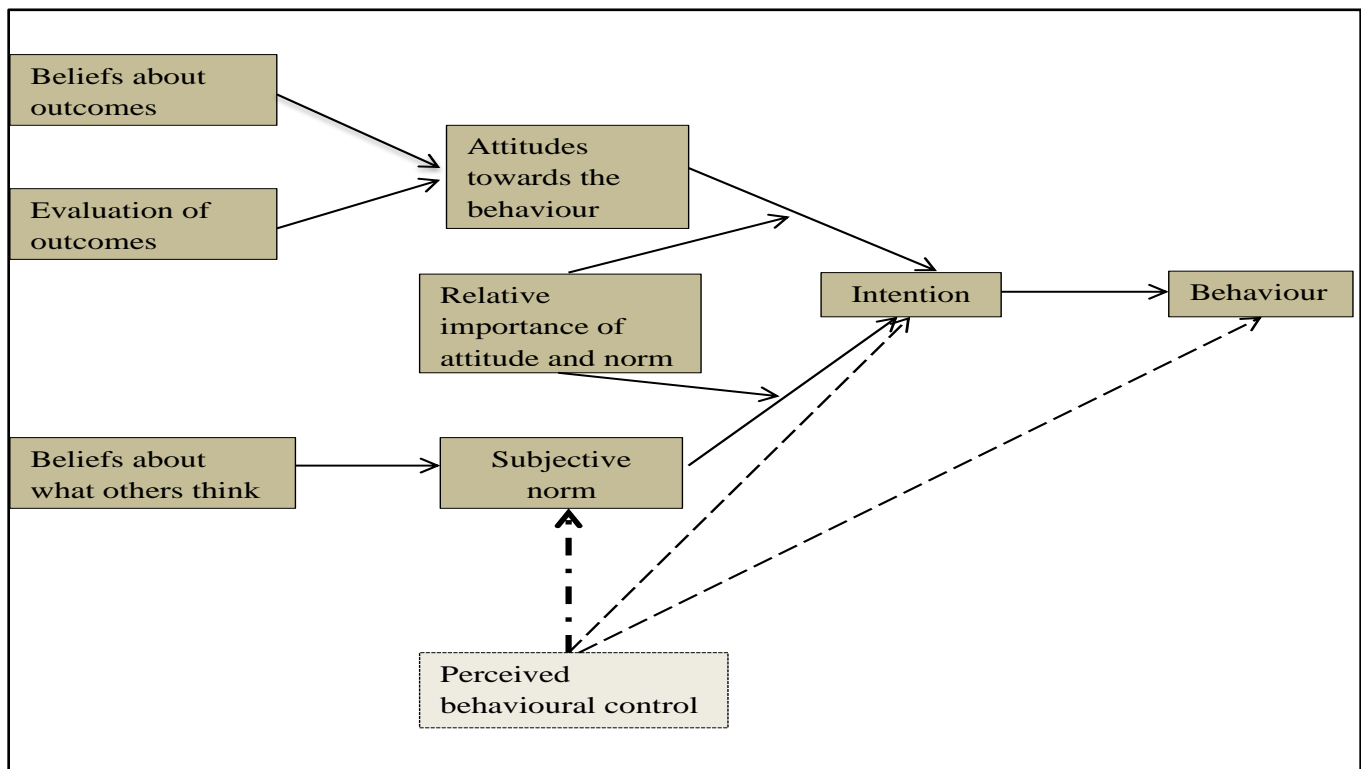
Source: Eirich and Corbett (2007:3)

The Theory of Planned Behaviour emphasizes that human behaviours are governed not only by personal attitudes, but also by social pressures and a sense of control. The theory assumes that rational considerations govern the choices and behaviours of individuals (Ajzen and Fishbein, 2005). In line with the theory of reasoned action, behaviour is determined by the intentions of individuals, their explicit plans or motivations to commit a specific act.

Theoretical aspects of perceptions

According to Eirich (2007), perception refers to the process of interpretation by which individuals ascribe meaning to things. Kotler and Keller (2012) define perception as the process by which individuals select, organise, and interpret information inputs to create a meaningful picture of the world. In view of the fact that perceptions are derived from incomplete information and limited observation, an individual's decisions and actions will be inherently affected owing to the perceptual biases that occur (Hitt, Miller and Collela, 2006).

A number of researchers have noted the link between the perceptual process and the interpretation of information, arguing that the interpretation of information is based on the perceptual process (Davidson 2014; Wong, Wong and Ngo 2012; Robbin, 2008). It can therefore be argued that, during project execution, employees create own perspectives and interpretations of what is going to happen, what others think and how they are perceived. If there is lack of information about the project, employees' own perspectives and interpretation of the project are more likely to be observed.

Managing perceptions

By understanding how workers see the world, managers gain a better position to enhance chances of project success and facilitate a productive workplace (Shah 2011). With deeper insights into how people understand the world, managers can better comprehend the ways in which humans make decisions and why they behave in certain ways.

Manifestation of attitudes and perceptions in projects

Projects bring about changes which may be desirable to some employees and undesirable to others. In some cases, projects lead to some employees being laid off while some moved to new positions depending on skills required. It is imperative to note how attitudes and perceptions manifest themselves. Manifestation of attitudes and perceptions towards projects can be explained in terms of action taken by the affected individuals in response to action taken on the project management approach. According to Schwalbe (2009), projects are undertaken to create a unique product or service and projects can bring about changes to improve on the existing process. In a study on Japanese aid workers, Inamori, Analoui and Kakabadse (2012) found that positive perception about work was related to higher organisational performance and conversely, the negative perception was related to lower organisational performance and negative behaviour.

Perception variables

A review of literature has shown the following variables that could have some influence upon employees' reaction to organisational decisions:

- **Procedural justice**

The expression procedural justice is related to workers assessment of fairness in the application of policies and procedures in the organisation (Ngodo, 2008). The same author describes components of procedural justice as procedures, incentives, fairness, and information. Studies by Sapienza and Schweiger (2002) concluded that perceptions on procedural justice had an influence on trust in management. Gopinath and Becker (2000) stress the impact of fairness of organisational policies and procedures on employees' decision making and reactions to organisational decisions. Shah (2011) had similar findings, noting that employees can develop positive attitudes and behaviours for organisational change on the basis of distributive and procedural justice.

- **Trust in top management**

Honesty in communication has a significant impact on employee perception of the organisation. Employees who are confident that employers are trustworthy and forthcoming in what they say are more likely to support the company and its goals, even during difficult times. Untrustworthiness on the part of management causes employees to lose confidence in the leadership. Analoui and Almadhoun (2006) and Chung and Lo (2007) noted that a manager's behaviour bears considerable influence on the subordinate's behaviour which ultimately has an influence on organisational performance. Philippe and Koehler (2005) concluded that managers who behave blindly with little or no regard to employee reaction would soon realise that their actions are not ignored.

- **Participation in decision making**

Brown (2011) noted that allowing employees to participate in decision making gives them an opportunity to exert some influence over decisions which may affect them. The platform allows employees to clear uncertainties by obtaining more information about the project and its consequences early enough for them to raise any concerns. Participative goal setting results in higher goal acceptance than goal assignment (Brown, 2011). According to Horsford (2013), high performance organizations promote employee participation in decision making as management considers it an employee right to participate in decisions that will affect them. This in turn creates an environment that promotes employee satisfaction and raising organisational performance.

- **Fear of the unknown**

According to Brown (2011), moving to something new from old creates anxiety which could be compounded by lack of information or understanding which leaves a vacuum that is prone to rumour, speculation and insecurity. A new project can create such a situation through the introduction of new equipment or new procedures altogether. Cao, Han, Hirschleifer and Zhang (2011) highlighted fear of the unknown as being a result of familiarity bias which causes individuals to focus on the negatives in evaluating new decisions in the organisation.

- **Organisational capability**

An organisation is able to assess whether its project management processes are adequate by using the project management maturity model to measure its management of projects against best practice and its competitors. A survey undertaken on actual project management capability versus perceived capability has shown that the perceived capability is far higher than the actual capability to deliver, leading to the conclusion that organisations do not know what they do not know (Porter, 2007).

- **Organisational support**

Organizational support theory (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002) holds that in order to meet socio-emotional needs and to assess the benefits of increased work effort, employees form a general perception concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. This theory has been used to explain the relationship between the workplace perceptions of the employee and their attitudes and behaviour towards employer.

- **Perceived need for projects**

Proper communication from management to employees assists in understanding the situation in an organisation or the need for undertaking certain organisational decisions (Kotter and Cohen, 2002). Communication serves to legitimise an organisation's decision to pursue a course of action and facilitating employees' acceptance of the course to be pursued. Failure to adequately communicate allows creation of a less than ideal perception of the situation or organisation, allowing rumours or inaccurate information to fill in the existing voids.

- **Attitude towards projects**

An individual with attitudes regarding a situation or idea is likely to approach such a situation or idea with a set of predetermined behaviours essentially demonstrating a form of preference. According to Chirumbolo and Areni (2005), the evaluation of current decisions by employees is based on experiences with other decisions in the organisation. These experiences may promote a negative or positive attitude about an organisation's handling of projects.

- **Organisational commitment**

Stup (2006) defines organisational commitment as the relative strength of an employee's attachment or involvement with the organisation where employed. Miller and Lee (2001) noted organisational commitment as that which is characterised by employees' acceptance of organisational goals and willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organisation. Individuals with a strong commitment to the organisation are therefore more likely to be supportive of organisational undertakings.

METHODOLOGY

The study and population

In line with Creswell (1994), a quantitative research approach was used in this study. Quantitative method involves the use of numerical and statistical analyses of measurements that examine social phenomena (Cooper and Schindler, 2011). The target population was limited to mine employees in Gauteng and the sampling frame was constructed from the company database.

Sampling design

A probability random sampling method was used and this gave every employee an equal chance of being selected. There were 220 permanent employees and the sample size was determined using a statistical formula. Using the formula, the sample size required was 89 employees from the mine. Since not all employees would respond to the questionnaire this necessitated adjustments for attrition rates and 30% was provided for those sampled employees who would not respond to the questionnaire. An adjustment for these employees gave a sample size of 117 employees. Of the 117 questionnaires distributed, 105 were completed in full while 12 were incomplete, giving a response rate of 90%. The 12 questionnaires were classified as incomplete and not suitable for inclusion in the analysis of data.

Research instrument

A structured questionnaire was used as the research instrument. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) highlight the widespread use of the questionnaire in surveys with exploratory or descriptive purposes. The questionnaire items were based on the literature reviewed and the construction was guided by other research instruments in similar studies. A questionnaire with three sections was constructed. Section A provided socio-demographic information, section B asked questions which enabled the establishment of attitudes and perceptions while section C

comprised of one open ended question to gather additional information about the respondents' attitudes and perceptions.

Validity and reliability

The validity of the questionnaire was established by asking workmates and colleagues to comment on the relevance, balance and adequacy of the questionnaire in relation to the research objectives. The content validity of the questionnaire was tested by the supervisor and other experts from a local university who ensured that the items were consistent with the objectives set and the language was suitable for the various levels of employees.

Further, the questionnaire was tested for internal consistency and reliability by calculating the Cronbach's Alpha value for the items on the scale (Table 1).

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.892	24

The analysis of the questionnaire gave Alpha values of more than 0.7 for all the items and the whole scale had a value of 0.892. The research instrument was deemed reliable based on this alpha statistic.

Data collection

A meeting was set up with the General Manager of the mine to present the research request letter. Permission to undertake the research was granted in writing. All participants were shown a copy of the research approval letter and were given an explanation on the purpose of the study and that participation was voluntary. Data collection lasted two weeks.

Data analysis

Data from the research instrument were recorded using numerical codes to categorise responses on each item on the questionnaire. An Excel spreadsheet was used to load the data which was then exported to the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS software package) for analysis. The frequencies and percentages were summarized in tables and charts. The analysis of data included cross tabulation and correlation analysis to measure the degree of association between the variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic information

The majority of the respondents were male (81.9%) (Figure 2), indicating that that mine employees are still dominated by male.

Figure 2: Gender of respondents
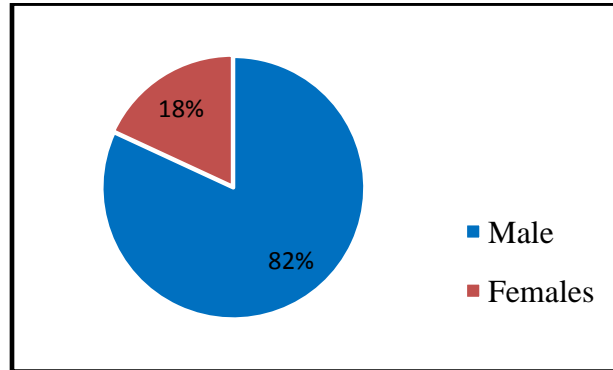
The age distribution of the respondents was analysed (Table 2).

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by age

Valid (yrs)	Frequency	(%)	Valid (%)	Cumulative (%)
<20	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
>50	4	3.8	3.8	3.8
21 to 30	40	38.1	38.1	41.9
31 to 40	44	41.9	41.9	83.8
41 to 50	17	16.2	16.2	100.0
Total	**105**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

As shown from the table, all the respondents were above 20 years. The majority of the employees at the mine were aged 31 – 40 years (42%) while those above 50 years were 3.8%.

Table 3: Respondents' academic qualifications

Valid (Qualifications)	Frequency	(%)	Valid (%)	Cum (%)
Master's degree	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
Postgraduate Diploma	3	2.9	2.9	3.8
B Tech	12	11.4	11.4	15.2
National Diploma	8	7.6	7.6	22.9
National Certificate	1	1.0	1.0	23.8

Artisan	14	13.3	13.3	37.1
Senior Secondary certificate	60	57.1	57.1	94.3
Other (specify)	6	5.7	5.7	100.0
Total	105	100.0	100.0	

The highest qualification at the mine was a master's degree (1.0%) while the majority of employees had senior secondary certificates (57%).

Table 4 shows the distribution of the respondents by the number of years worked at the mine.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents by years worked at the mine

Valid (yrs)	Frequency	(%)	Valid (%)	Cumulative (%)
<5	21	20.0	1.1	1.1
>30	4	3.8	0	0
5 to 10	37	35.2	21.7	31.5
11 to 20	33	31.4	48.9	80.4
21 to 30	10	9.5	18.5	100.0
Total	**105**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The table shows that 35.2% of the respondents had been with the mine for 5 to 10 years while 3,8% had been there for more than 30 years.

In table 5, the distribution of respondents according to departments is shown. Most of the mine employees worked in the plant department (47.6%) while human resources department had the least number of employees (3.8%).

Table 5: Respondents breakdown by department

Valid (department)	Frequency	(%)	Valid (%)	Cumulative (%)
Plant	50	47.6	47.6	47.6
Engineering	21	20.0	20.0	67.6
Mining	25	23.8	23.8	91.4
Finance	5	4.8	4.8	96.2
Human Resources	4	3.8	3.8	100.0
Total	105	100.0	100.0	

Analysis of quantitative data

A total of 24 factors were studied to gauge employee attitudes and perceptions (Table 6).

Table 6: Attitudes and perceptions analysis by factor

Variable	Min	Max	Mean	Std. dev	N
Generally operator concerns are taken into consideration when doing projects	1	5	3.30	1.055	105
The changes brought about by projects are acceptable to me	1	5	3.11	0.964	105
Overall, the procedures and justification used for projects are understandable to me	1	5	3.44	0.950	105
In general, I am sceptical about benefits of projects implemented in this organisation	2	5	2.61	0.672	105
The organization really cares about my well-being	1	5	3.15	1.142	105
Reasons provided by top management for undertaking projects are not convincing	1	5	2.61	1.061	105
The organization ignores any issues I may raise on projects to be undertaken	1	5	2.67	0.977	105
There is two-way communication on projects being undertaken in this organisation	1	5	3.56	0.865	105
In general, I believe my employer's motives and intentions are good	1	5	2.94	1.036	105
I am satisfied with ways in which I can express my views on the way a project is being implemented	2	5	3.79	0.829	105
The organization values my contribution to its well-being	2	5	3.50	1.048	105
Projects here are well thought out and planned before implementation	1	5	3.40	0.947	105
Projects in this organisation are well thought out but badly implemented	1	5	3.14	0.871	105
Projects in this organisation are well executed irrespective of the level of planning	1	5	3.36	1.986	105
Generally projects are well planned, well implemented and commissioned well	2	5	3.64	0.810	105
In general, projects implemented make our jobs better	1	5	2.89	0.800	105
I trust top management	1	5	3.74	1.160	105
I feel positive toward this organization in general	1	5	2.77	1.012	105
Unknown consequences of projects frighten me	1	5	1.86	0.914	105
I leave projects to happen without any objection even if I do not agree with the approach	2	5	2.35	0.990	105
I really understand the need for undertaking some projects	1	5	2.61	0.700	105
I feel a sense of resistance to many projects among my colleagues	1	5	2.33	1.025	105
The known consequences of new projects still frighten me	1	5	2.54	0.899	105
I fully cooperate with the organization on any projects it undertakes	1	5	2.38	0.903	105

Of the 24 factors studied, the aggregate scores for all factors had a mean which ranged from 1.86 to 3.79. The overall mean for all the factors studied was 3.3. This result shows an overall negative perception towards the project management approach at the mine. Correlation

analysis was performed to gauge how each of the perceptions was linked to demographic information and the result indicated no significant correlations at the 99% confidence level. This indicated that demographic factors had no significant influence on the perceptions of employees towards project management approach.

Resistance to the projects

The perceptions of the respondents were tested using the statement "*I will leave projects to proceed without any objection even if I do not agree with the approach*". There was significant positive correlation between respondents' reaction of voicing their objections on the project management and:

- The feeling that reasons provided by top management for undertaking projects are always convincing ($r = 0.489$, $n = 105$, $p < 0.0001$)

- Management listening or taking into consideration issue that the employees may raise during project undertaking ($r = 0.446$, $n = 105$, $p < 0.0001$)

- The belief that the employer's motives are good ($r = 0.550$, $n = 105$, $p < 0.0001$)

- The satisfaction with ways in which they can express their views on projects being undertaken ($r = 0.587$, $n = 105$, $p < 0.0001$).

- The feeling that the organisation really values their contribution to its wellbeing ($r = 0.559$, $n = 105$, $p < 0.0001$)

- Trust top management ($r = 0.466$, $n = 105$, $p < 0.0001$)

The positive correlations confirm the findings of Teven (2002) who states that individuals who dislike and think negatively about their superiors are less willing to communicate.

Support for the projects

This parameter was assessed using two statements; the first statement "*I fully cooperate with the organization on any project undertaken*" had a mean score of 2.38 indicating an agreement with the statement. There is significant positive correlation between respondents' full cooperation with the organisation on any projects undertaken and:

- The belief that the employer's motives and intentions are good ($r = 0.400$, $n = 105$, $p < 0.0001$)

- The perception that projects implemented make the employees' jobs better ($r = 0.521$, $n = 105$, $p < .0001$)

- Positive feeling towards the organisation ($r = 0.530$, $n = 105$, $p < 0.0001$)

- An understanding of the need for undertaking projects in the organisation (r = 0.544, n = 105, p < 0.0001)

The second statement "*The changes brought about by projects are acceptable to me*", had a mean score of 3.11 indicating that the majority of changes are not up to employee expectations. There is also a significant positive correlation between the employees' acceptance of the changes brought about by projects and:

- The perception that operator concerns are taken into consideration when doing projects (r = 0.633, n = 105, p < 0.0001)
- An employee's understanding of procedures and justification for projects (r = 0.430, n = 105, p < 0.0001)
- The perception that reasons provided by top management for projects are convincing (r = 502, n = 105, p < 0.0001)
- The perception that the organisation takes into consideration any issue that employees may raise on projects being undertaken (r = 0.417, n = 105, p < 0.0001)
- The belief that the employer's motives and intentions are good (r = 0.509, n = 105, p < 0.0001)
- The belief that the organisation values the employee contribution to its well-being. (r = 0.457, n = 105, p < 0.0001)
- The perception of projects being well planned, well implemented and well commissioned (r = 0.500, n = 105, p < 0.0001)
- Trust in top management (r = 0.507, n = 105, p < 0.0001)
- Employee understanding of the need for undertaking projects on the mine (r = 0.444, n = 105, p < 0.0001)
- Perception that projects make the employee's job better (r = 0.508, n = 105, p < 0.0001)

Attitude towards projects

The result from the statement "*In general, I am sceptical about benefits of projects implemented in this organization*" had a mean score of 2.61 indicating that perception was positive. As for the statement "*In general, projects implemented make our jobs better*", the mean score was 2.89 indicating that employees agreed that projects implemented made their jobs better.

- **Fear of known consequences of projects**

The result from the statement "*The known consequences of projects still frighten me*" had a mean score of 2.54 indicating that employees were afraid of known consequences of projects.

- **Fear of unknown consequence of projects**

From the statement '*Unknown consequences of projects frighten me*", the mean score of 1.86 showing that employees were worried about unknown consequences of projects undertaken by the mine.

- **Organisational commitment**

The statement "*I feel positive towards this organisation in general*" had a mean score of 2.77 indicating that employees were positive towards the organisation.

- **Trust in management**

The statement "*I trust top management*" had a mean score of 3.74 indicating mistrust of top management by employees. Spreitzer and Mishra (2002) found a positive correlation between trustworthiness of management and effective commitment confirming empirical findings of the relationship between trust in management and employee attitudinal outcomes.

The statement "*In general, I believe my employer's motives and intentions are good*", had a mean score of 2.94 indicating a positive perception of the employer's motives and intentions. However, employees somehow mistrust top management but still believe the organisation has good motives and intentions for them.

- **Perception on organizational support**

The statement "*The organization values my contribution to its well-being*" had a mean score of 3.5 indicating that employees felt the organisation does not value their contributions to its success.

The other statement "*The organization really cares about my well-being*" had a mean score of 3.15 also indicating that employees felt the organisation does not provide support to its employees. There is a significant positive correlation between support for projects and the perception on organisational support ("*The organisation values my contribution to it well-being*"); $r = 0.457$, $n = 105$, $p=0.001$. This observation confirms findings from previous studies that employees are more likely to take into account perceived organisational support when making decisions on issues regarding bringing change to the organisation (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002).

- **Perception on organizational capability**

This factor was measured by four statements. The statement "*Projects are well thought out and planned before implementation*" had a mean of 3.40 showing negative employee perception about how projects were planned. The statement "*Projects are well-executed irrespective of the level of planning*" had a mean of 3.36 indicating a negative perception about project implementation. The statement "*Projects in this organisation are well thought out but badly implemented*" had a mean of 3.14, also indicating a negative perception about project

implementation. The last statement "*Generally projects are well planned, well implemented and commissioned well*" had 3.64, still demonstrating a negative perception about project implementation and commissioning.

- **Perception on procedural justice**

This factor was assessed using three variables. The statement "*Overall, the procedures and justification used for making project decisions are understandable to me*" had a mean of 3.44 indicating a negative perception about the procedures used for justifying projects undertaken. The second statement "*There is two-way communication in projects being undertaken in this organisation*" had a mean of 3.56 indicating negative perception about communication between employees and management regarding projects undertaken. The statement "*This organisation ignores any issues I may raise on projects to being undertaken*" had a mean of 2.7 indicating that management was not receptive to ideas coming from lower level employees.

- **Perception on participation in decision-making process**

The statement "*I am satisfied with ways in which I can express my views on projects being implemented*" had a mean score of 3.79 indicating low employee involvement in decision making process. The statement, "*Operator concerns are taken into account on projects to be implemented*" had a mean score of 3.30 showing employee views were not taken into consideration on project implementation.

- **Perception on need for projects**

The statement, "*Reasons provided by top management for undertaking projects are not always convincing*" had a mean score of 2.61 indicating that employees were generally not always convinced by reasons given by top management for undertaking projects.

- **Colleagues' reactions to project management approach**

The statement "*I feel a sense of resistance to many projects among my colleagues*" had a mean score of 2.33 indicating that employees perceive a general resistance among their peers towards projects undertaken by the organisation.

CONCLUSION

Despite the negative perception on the majority of the variables tested on project management approach, employees still support new projects undertaken by the mine. Generally, the results indicate that employees would support organisational projects to ensure its success. In a survey by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) on the Zambian Industry in 2014, a similar finding was reported. In that study, respondents showed negative perceptions to the negative impact of mining industry on the environment, health and agriculture; however, their concerns did not diminish their acceptance of the mining industry (Best, 2013).

It is worth noting the respondents who were undecided (mean of 36.7% on undecided for all the factors). The maximum proportion for undecided employees was 60% while the minimum was 18.1%. This is important as it shows with proper plans, the organisation can turn the identified weakness into strengths and these employees could be won over to have positive perceptions about projects at the mine.

A communication gap between the managerial level and lower levels at the mine was raised. The perception that decisions are imposed by management and that information does not filter through to employees was highlighted. The implication is that management has information; however, the information does not cascade down to the lower employees, which leaves them to speculate facts.

To sum up, this research set out to assess attitudes and perceptions among the employees of a mine in Gauteng, South Africa. There were negative employee perceptions towards the project management approach used at the mine. However, the positive thing to note was the positive employee attitude towards the organisation and their willingness to cooperate with management on projects undertaken by the mine.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above findings, following recommendations are made:

- The involvement of employees in the generation and dissemination of information at the mine must be practiced as this would encourage employees to provide support towards projects undertaken by the mine.

- There is an urgent need for the organization to undertake project management programs structured for various levels within the organisation from supervisory level to managerial level to enhance project handling capabilities.

- Employee involvement should be accelerated to ensure any concerns raised on projects are taken into consideration.

- Regular employee satisfaction surveys of this nature should be undertaken so that management could be kept abreast of employee attitudes and perceptions.

- The negative perceptions reported in the study would breed resentment if not addressed on time, which may lead into resistance towards projects undertaken by the mine.

SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The study focused only on one mining company in Gauteng, hence the findings may not be generalised to other mining companies in South Africa. Therefore a country-wide research of this nature should be conducted within the various mining organisations.

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