

Management Approaches in the Construction Sector as Experienced By Employees: A Decolonial Study

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31920/3050-2292/2024/v1n2a5>

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Abstract

This is a decolonial inquiry on the management approaches in the construction sector as experienced by the employees. The study explores and describes managerial frameworks adopted by a construction company with an objective of describing how the construction companies can be managed to reflect decoloniality. Employing semi-structured interviews and talking circles, the study collected data from a total of ten employees in a construction company and discovered that these employees are not happy as a result of the way they are being managed. The company's workplace is characterised by dictatorship and marginalisation of the key role players in the realisation of the organisational objectives. This is because the managerial frameworks employed in managing the African workforce are foreign and at odds with the context's dynamics. The use of foreign exploitative management approaches in Africa leads to the creation of an uncondusive working environment. The study recommends that an Afrocentric Management Approach grounded on the

concept of Ubuntu be adopted by the construction company. The Afrocentric Management Approach is informed by indigenous knowledge, entails a culturally inclusive framework that embraces diversity and therefore suitable for managing the African workforce.

Keywords: *Decoloniality, Indigenous, Ubuntu, Afrocentric Management.*

Introduction

Management is quite an important concept, not only as the field of study but also as the function that defines the growth and the survival of an organisation. This is the case especially with the realisation that globalisation has become a convention and the way of being for organisations. The dawn of globalisation demands that organisations be able to compete on a global space and keep up with the developments and changes. With this being said, it is also submitted that as the result of globalisation, organisations' employees are becoming quite diversified in terms of ethnicity as well as culture among other things (Barker & Angelopulo 2013). As realised, the situation necessitates that organisations undergo changes in order to keep up with the developments and device means to effectively manage the heterogeneous workforce in their respective working spaces. This is because how well an organisation does, is driven by how much employees apply themselves which is dependent on how such employees are being managed (Kamoche 2011). This raises a question on what could possibly happen with the organisations that are unable to effectively manage their diversified employees.

This inquiry's purpose is to explore the management approaches adopted by an organisation and gauge the employees' perception of the adopted management approach. The sampled participants for both the talking-circles and the interviews include ten employees of a construction company because these are the people who are frequently on site and possess the first-hand experience of what is happening in the construction site. The study also explores management approaches by reviewing the literature on management. The study then makes a contribution to the development of an Afrocentric Management Approach by drawing from literature and the findings thereof. In exploring the management approaches, the focus is on the elements that include the humanness of the approach, reciprocity, inclusivity, relationships, respect, communication networks, the flow of messages

and formality of messages, the orientation of messages, the traditions of communication as well as the channels employed for communication together with the leadership styles.

Objectives

Objective 1: To explore and describe the employees' perception of the adopted management approach.

Objective 2: To describe how the construction organisations should be managed to reflect decoloniality.

Research questions

- 1 How is the adopted management approach perceived by the employees?
- 2 To what extent does the management approach adopted by the construction company reflect decoloniality?

Theoretical Framework: Ubuntu

The current decolonial study employs ubuntu as the theoretical framework and this concept can be understood as entailing humanness which is an African way of living (Eke & Onwuatuegwu 2021; Fagunwa 2019; Omodan & Tsotetsi 2019). Emanating from a phrase '*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*' which when directly translated is "one is, because of others" or "a person is a person through other people", ubuntu is mainly about the relationships that one has and forms with others as the way of living (Mabvurira 2020). Despite this being a Zulu phrase, this is a widely shared concept in Africa and across the globe coming through various languages including among others, *Utu* in Swahili, *Vhuthu* in Venda, *Unhu* in Shona (Maumela, Nkwamondo & Marwala 2020; Odari 2020). The concept of ubuntu is grounded upon absolute righteousness and carries the characteristics of respect, sharing, caring, humanness, compassion as well as equity among other traits (Maumela, Nkwamondo & Marwala 2020; Sanusi & Spahn 2020).

Ubuntu appears to be a very crucial concept in South Africa as this according to Broodryk (2005) is also incorporated in the country's legislative framework manifested in the White paper and the constitution as well through the upholding of the *Batho Pele* principle. From an African perspective, relationships are of crucial importance in one's life and the progress of the community. This according to Mbigi (2005);

Ngubane and Makua (2021), speaks to the nature of African communities being collectivistic as opposed to being individualistic. As the way of living for Africans, the concept of ubuntu according to Broodryk (2005) can be seen as a 'practical approach' to both life as well as work since these form part of human activities. While taking this into cognisance, it should be always borne in mind that the concept of ubuntu is manifested through one's actions including how they think, talk as well as deal with matters (Broodryk 2005). With this being said, managers and employees are humans and the working space resembles a living space such as a village or community where relationships are formed. Thus, Mbigi (2005); Omodan and Tsotetsi (2019) are of the view that the working space in Africa could be changed for the better if the concept of ubuntu is incorporated in the way things are done in an organisation. This is a belief held in the current study as well that if things could be done the African way in African organisations, a number of problems existing in these organisations could be done away with. It is because of what ubuntu brings in an organisational setting which include solidarity, tolerance, cohesion and these are believed that they will give employees a sense of belonging as they get treated in a humanistic manner that is African in its nature (Broodryk 2005; Rai 2018). This in particular is argued to be an approach that will make all the employees regardless of the occupation, race and gender to be meaningful role players in an organisation and contribute in the decision-making processes.

The incorporation of ubuntu in a working space entails the adoption of a 'people-centred' approach to management where the managers ensure that the working environment is conducive, it is a place of happiness and care (Masango 2002). Not only that, but the managers ought to show interest on the barriers curtailing the employees' efficiency and learn more about the employment of the concept to enhance productivity. This is because of the belief that fulfilled and happy employees are productive employees and the realisation of this vests on the prevalence of faith in the workspace, the unity resembling that of a family, financial savviness, fitness in all aspects as well as working in a space that is fun (Broodryk 2005; Mahmood *et al* 2012). It is submitted in this study that when one is successfully doing what they love, the feeling of happiness and fulfilment is realised (Broodryk 2005). Now if an employee in a working space has fallen in love with being productive, the issues of insubordination in working spaces could be the things of the past (Broodryk 2005; Mahmood *et al* 2012).

Literature Review

This is a review of literature on the development of the management approaches that inform the practice of management in organisations today preceded by an overview of the construction industry and its management in South Africa.

The construction sector

The construction industry in South Africa as it is known originates from the British construction and entails a significant driver of the development of this country's economy (Osunsanmi, Aigbavboa & Oke 2018). This sector is responsible for the creation of a possibility and an atmosphere where the trading of labour, equipment and capital among other resources for the construction of infrastructure to happen (Osunsanmi *et al* 2018). This puts the construction sector at the core when it comes to the realisation of the government's objectives through the development of the country's infrastructure and the provision of its diversified activities as well as expertise (Ofori 2015; Skeepers & Mbohwa 2015). These are divided into civil engineering and building in which the former consists of the development of infrastructure including the dams, roads, bridges as well as the ports (Adugna 2015). The latter includes the erection of residential and non-residential dwellings that include houses together with the offices (Adugna 2015). Cottle (2014b) adds a third division which is responsible for the manufacturing of the material for building and the civil engineering. Keeping in mind that the construction sector renders a wide range of service, one would therefore expect to find diversified professions and skills in this sector and these include engineering, architecture, plumbing, carpentry as well as quantity surveying among others (Adugna 2015).

Management of the companies in construction

As a convention, South African policies of the previous political dispensation curtailed the growth of the construction industry hence the growth witnessed after the year 1994 when the new regime was introduced (Oyewobi *et al* 2014). Despite the noticed growth of the sector from 1994, in 2015, this sector started not doing well as the result of strikes which led to the delays in the completion of other projects (Osunsanmi *et al* 2018). This is one of the biggest criticism that the construction sector has been receiving, the delays in the completion of projects by the organisations within the sector (Adugna 2015). As the

result, the clientele of this sector started showing dissatisfaction because of inadequate performance by the contractors in the sector (Oyewobi *et al* 2014). When it comes to the delivery of social housing, this sector has a backlog of more than two million houses (Cottle 2014b). In making a general inference on this, one may submit that a strike in the workplace is the result of disagreements between the workforce and the management. One could possibly wonder what is the possible cause of such disagreements between these two parties. A simple response would be the misalignments of interests for both parties and perhaps the disappointments arising when one party's expectations are not met. Now in this case, it is the workers that are expressing dissatisfaction and such is a revelation that there is something going on with management. The undeniable fact attributed to the incompetence of the companies in this sector is none other than that of inadequate and ineffective management (Bikitsha & Amoah 2022). Baloyi & Bekker (2011); Bikitsha & Amoah (2022); Sebone & Barry (2009) argue that the South African construction organisations lack efficacy and proper management and this is manifested through the absence of communication, ineffective transmission and exchange of information as well as the absence of integrating information.

Classical Management Approach

This is the oldest school of thought in the field of management comprised of theoretical contributions from Frederick Taylor of the Scientific Management Theory, Henry Fayol of the Administrative Management Theory as well as Karl Emil Maximilian of the Bureaucratic Theory of Management (Pindur *et al* 1995).

Scientific Management Theory

The Scientific Management Theory also known as the time and motion study was according to Mahmood *et al* (2012) established by FW Taylor in 1911. The premise of Scientific Management Theory is the training of workers and the division of labour between management and workers based on four principles to enhance efficiency (Taylor 1911; Mahmood *et al* 2012; Mumby 2012). Principles referred to in this regard include identifying the best way of carrying out a task; training workers according to the best way of executing a task; remunerating workers according to their productivity and the division of labour (Chasi & De Wet 2008).

Administrative Management Theory

The Administrative Management Theory established by Henry Fayol in 1916 and has its focus on management in terms of functions as well as principles (Mahmood *et al* 2012). The functions of management include planning, organising, commanding, coordinating and monitoring (Fayol 1923; Pindur, Rogers & Kim 1995; Nothhaft 2010; Miller 2012). The principles of management include the division of work; authority; discipline; unity of command; unity of direction; subordination of individual interest to the general interest; remuneration; centralisation; scalar chain; order; equity; stability of tenure of personnel; initiative as well as *Espirit de Corps* (Mahmood *et al* 2012; Miller 2012).

Bureaucratic Theory of Management

The Bureaucratic Theory of Management was conceptualised by Max Weber in 1947 which is a theory that focus on organisational structure in a sense of creating strong lines of control and authority as well as the segmentation of an organisation into hierarchies (Mahmood *et al* 2012; Pindur *et al* 1995). This theory vests on the principles of written rules; systems of tasks and relationships; specialised training; hierarchy of authority; clearly defined roles; paper work; fair evaluation and reward as well as the maintenance of ideal bureaucracy (Mahmood *et al* 2012; Chasi & De Wet 2008).

Looking at the Classical approach, one can conclude that this school of thought reflects a positional tradition view of organisational communication. This is to say that the flow of communication in the Classical approach is top-down, centralised, prescriptive as well as formal; the messages are always task-oriented and defined by the policies of an organisation. It is further argued that the Classical approach is inhumane as it serves to treat human beings as cogs in a machine (Mahmood *et al* 2012). Not only that but from a decolonial stance, the Classical approach falls short of flexibility so to enable it to be suitable for contexts such as Africa where the employees' background and culture is diversified. The Classical approach also fails to make provision for the consideration of the environment in which the organisations operate. Furthermore, the inadequacy of this approach stems from its nature of overlooking the importance of reciprocal communication in an organisation, it overlooks the importance of relationships and also overlooks inclusivity and the importance of respect for workers who remain crucial stakeholders of an organisation.

Human Relations Approach

The Human Relations Approach is vested on the relationships that exist in an organisation as the major driving force of productivity (Pindur *et al* 1995). The theoretical contributors of the Human Relations Approach are Elton Mayo together with Abraham Maslow as well as Douglas McGregor (Pindur *et al* 1995). *Ibid* in their review of history of management discuss Douglas McGregor's theory X and theory Y which also contributed to the development of the Human Relations approach conceptualised in the 1950s. Theory X in this case is on the negative extreme based on the traditional view of management that is autocratic and theory Y is on the positive extreme based on behaviour and new information in a sense that it perceives employees as capable, responsible as well as diligent individuals as opposed to theory X which perceives employees as tools that are lazy to think and require force or threat to execute (Miller 2012; McGregor 1960; Pindur *et al* 1995). The Human Relations Approach to management appears to be more humane than the Classical approach but also lacks flexibility to be adapted for contexts such as Africa which consists of the diversified workforce in terms of background and culture. The Human Relations Approach also does not make any provision for the consideration of the context in which an organisation operates and overlooks inclusivity as well as the importance of respect for the workers.

Human Resource Approach

The Human Resource Approach is an amalgamation of both the human relations and the classical approach in a sense that workers would need to put in some effort in carrying out their duties as determined by their respective managers (Miller 2012; Mumby 2012). The Human Resources also takes into consideration the importance of relationships in a working space and makes provision that these employees have in themselves the cognitive abilities that positively contribute towards the realisation of the organisational objectives (Miller 2012; Mumby 2012). With this, one can therefore conclude that both the Human Relations Approach and the Human Resource Approach manifest a relational tradition view of organisational communication. This implies that communication in both the Human Relations and Human Resource approaches is relational, decentralised, informal and the messages are relationship-oriented. The

Human Resources Approach to management, just like the Human Relations Approach appears to be more humane than the Classical approach but lacks flexibility to be adaptable for contexts such as Africa which consists of diversified workforce in terms of background and culture. The Human Resources Approach also does not make any provision for the consideration of the context in which an organisation operates. Furthermore, this approach overlooks the importance of respect for the workers and also does not make any provision for inclusivity.

Knowledge-centric Approach

The Knowledge-centric Approach centres on both the creation as well as the maintenance of an organisational culture in which the workers are free to utilise the context in order to ascertain how reality can be created (Van Der Walt 2006). This is because within such a context, mutual trust; creativity; integrity and active empathy always prevail (Van Der Walt 2006). The premise of the Knowledge-centric Approach is vested on the notion that in an organisational context, knowledge is key to the performance of an organisation since this approach deals with not only the creation of knowledge but also the analysis and capturing of data from the source as well as communication of such to the organisational stakeholders (Wickramasinghe 2003). From this, one can conclude that the Knowledge-centric Management approach reflects a cultural tradition view of organisational communication. Meaning that communication in knowledge-centric approach is reciprocal, decentralised, informal and messages are culture-oriented. Just as the previous approaches, the Knowledge-centric Approach does not make any provision for flexibility so that it can be applied in contexts such as Africa where the workforce is diversified in terms of background and culture. Also, the Knowledge-centric Approach also misses the importance of catering for the environment in which the organisations operate.

Methodology

The research approach and design

Because this study seeks to comprehend an issue in its authentic context, *id est*, management in a construction company, it adopts a single case study design (Yin 2014; Cresswell 2013). The case study is executed when the study itself seeks to understand an issue existing in a real-world space

which makes the two, *id est*, the case and the context inseparable. So, this is understood as a thorough investigation of a certain specific event, subject, repository or setting which may vary in complexity (Bogdan & Biklen 2007; Creswell 2013). The researcher infers in this regard that the complexity of a case study will depend on a number of cases being studied. From this, it is understood that a case could refer to a number of things including but not limited to an individual, a group, an entity or society that is bounded (Creswell 2013; Merriam & Tisdell 2016). Understanding an issue in-depth, enables one to establish and present a rich description of data obtained through a thorough exploration of a phenomenon and this speaks to a qualitative approach congruent with the current decolonial inquiry (Wagner, Kawulich & Garner 2012). Also, the qualitative approach is the perfect approach for a study such as the current one as this seeks to comprehend the cultural and social context as well as the processes that contribute to the shaping of different behavioural patterns (Botha 2011; Wagner *et al* 2012).

Afrocentric indigenous paradigmatic position

In this study, the researcher adopts an Afrocentric indigenous paradigm as a paradigmatic position which entails a world view that has its focus on the shared facets of axiology, ontology, research methodologies and epistemology of the social groups that were historically oppressed or disempowered (Wagner *et al* 2012). As per Afrocentric indigenous paradigm, there are multiple realities and this paradigm vests on the belief that knowledge is relational (Wilson 2001). These multiple realities are shaped by the relationships or the connections that the human beings have with their environment including the living as well as the non-living and the cosmos (Wagner *et al* 2012). An Afrocentric indigenous paradigm seeks to decolonise indigenous ways of thinking by means of exposing the hegemony of the conventional epistemologies, de-linking from such a hegemonic myth and re-centring indigenous values and practices thereby placing indigenous issues and people into dominant and mainstream discourses (Kuokkanen 2000).

Research methods

The suitable research methods for the current study are semi-structured interviews and talking circles because these entail a two-way interaction between the researcher and the participants. Interviews entail a verbal

interaction between a researcher and the participant, whereas talking circles resemble a focus group but it differs due to its nature of being sacred (Lavallée 2009; Ragab & Arisha 2018). These are conversational methods congruent with a decolonial inquiry and are valuable information source aimed at obtaining rich descriptive data that helps the researcher to see the universe from the participants' perspective (Wagner *et al* 2012; Absolon 2019).

Population and sampling

The concept of population is understood as the pool of subjects or people from which the study information is collected (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout 2014). That is, the total number of individuals, organisations or subjects that the sample is drawn from for the purpose of the study. It is understood that in South Africa there are 547 348 formally registered construction companies employing more than 1.2 million workers (dnb 2022; statista 2022; UP 2024). Because this is a single case study, one organisation is being studied and ten employees from the Gauteng site are sampled and studied. This organisation employs a total of 841 permanent employees in the Southern Africa region and the Gauteng site has 79 permanently employed workers. The studied sample is considered because the employees of an organisation are the ones with a lived experience of the organisation's management approach.

The sampling method employed in the current study is a non-probability sampling and the non-probability sampling type used is the purposive sampling. The selected sampling method is deemed appropriate because of its nature that it allows the researcher to rely on his experience to find the research participants using a certain specific criterion to identify the suitable participants (Wagner *et al* 2012). In applying the non-probability sampling, the Group Human Resource manager instructed the site manager to identify 10 employees who are employed on permanent basis and exclude the seasonal employees as well as those holding middle to senior managerial position. These are the employees that participated in the interviews and talking circles undertaken on the 26th and 27th of August 2021, the 2nd of September 2021 as well as the 8th of October 2021. The researcher was convinced that the 10 participants were in a position to assist in the generation of rich description of the management in this company and are representatives of the comprehensive workforce excluding the middle

and senior managers who are deemed not to be the recipient of the adopted managerial approach but the enforcers thereof. More employees could have been sampled but this was curtailed due to COVID-19 restrictions, time constraints and the unavailability of funding.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness can be ensured by employing the four criteria of transferability; confirmability; credibility and dependability (Krefting 1991; Wagner *et al* 2012). The researcher of the current study ensured the criterion of transferability by providing a detailed information pertaining to the participants, setting and context in order to make it possible for others to assess the extent of transferability of the findings. The researcher also considered confirmability by involving an auditor in this research project and credibility was ensured through prolonged engagement with the participants. Lastly, dependability was ensured through providing a detailed description of methods and techniques employed in conducting the current decolonial study.

Ethical considerations

The researcher of the current study ensured that the study was conducted in a manner that is ethical and does not infringe the rights of human beings in general as well as of those of the participants. The researcher also ensured that the current study is conducted ethically by adhering to the policy on research ethics, by obtaining an ethical clearance, by upholding the copyright act 125 of 1992 and the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013 as well as the Disaster Management Act 57 of 2002. The researcher of the current decolonial study also upheld the tenets of ubuntu and an indigenous research which include respect, reciprocity, relational accountability together with rights and responsibilities.

The participants of the current study were informed before participating in the study that they are participating in a research project. The researcher also ensured that the participant's sensitive information was protected and kept confidential as well as making it clear what the findings of the study will be used for. Fabrication and altering of collected data are other things that the researcher eliminated and refrained from.

Data Analysis

The thematic analysis used in this study is the general approach used to analyse qualitative data through the process of identifying patterns and themes from data (Wagner *et al* 2012). This kind of an approach to analysing data is exploited to gain or develop an understanding of a phenomena from the point of views of the participants or their experiences. In employing the thematic analysis approach for the current study, the researcher conducted and transcribed the interviews. Then the researcher intensively read the transcripts several times in order to identify themes. Then the researcher moved on to assigning codes to each theme which was preceded by deliberately probing the core meaning of a theme. The codes were established through the process of labelling and defining the major concern of a code, then describing how the code is identified when it surfaces as well as describing the exclusion and qualification thereof. The listing of negative as well as positive examples in order to eliminate confusion concluded the coding process. The coded themes were then identified from the data using different font colour corresponding to varying codes. Moving forward, the list of all codes was then developed together with their definitions, the researcher then applied the codes to the data and compared the new fragment of data with coded themes or alternatively developed a new code in a case where none of the available codes accommodated or applied to the data.

Participants' demographics

Table 1: Age-group

| Age group | Number of participants |
|-----------|------------------------|
| 20-29 | 3 |
| 30-39 | 4 |
| 40-49 | 2 |
| 50-59 | 1 |
| Total | 10 |

Table 2: Cultural background

All the interviewed participants were Black Africans.

| Ethnic Group | Number of participants |
|--------------|------------------------|
| Zulu | 4 |
| Xhosa | 2 |
| Pedi | 1 |
| Sotho | 3 |
| Total | 10 |

Table 3: Educational background

The highest qualifications obtained by the participants comprised of a bachelor's degree, a national diploma as well as the high school certificate.

| Highest Qualification | Number of participants |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Bachelor degree | 1 |
| National Diploma | 5 |
| Secondary School Certificate | 4 |
| Total | 10 |

Table 4: Occupational roles

The interviewed participants comprised of general workers, an administrator and engineers.

| Occupation | Number of participants |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| General workers | 5 |
| Junior construction manager | 1 |
| Senior Quantity surveyor | 1 |
| Quantity surveyor | 1 |
| Site Engineer | 1 |
| Administrator | 1 |
| Total | 10 |

Table 5: Experience within the sector

The experiences of the participants range between one to fifteen years

| Number of years | Number of participants |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| 1-5 years | 7 |
| 6-10 years | 2 |
| 11-15 years | 1 |
| Total | 10 |

Findings

As repeatedly argued, this is a decolonial study which in a nutshell entails that decoloniality is adopted as the general position with a theoretical framework that is ubuntu. The study centred on investigating the perceptions that the employees of a construction company have with regards to the prevalent management approach in this organisation.

Looking at the demographical data of the current study's participants it is realised that this company is comprised of a diversified workforce as alluded to by one of the participants who stated that: *The workforce here is quite diversified, I mean on site we have people from all corners of South Africa and others from other countries, yeah, we are so diversified.* This is in par with the claims that the construction sector employs quite a diversified workforce in terms of literacy, occupation, culture as well origin among other things (Barker & Angelopulo 2013; Greeff 2015). It is also realised that the majority of employees not holding any managerial position in this company is black and below the age of forty. The realisation that the majority of the employees not holding any managerial positions consist of black workers is in par with the assertions that in South Africa, only 10% of the black workforce is holding the managerial positions as opposed to 52% of whites holding the managerial positions (Mangaliso 2001). The employment of blacks and keeping them in the lower positions is something that is done deliberately for the exploitation of "cheap black labour" to maximise the profits of the white employer (Cottle 2014; English & Le Jeune 2012). This come as no surprise as it appears in literature that today, the construction sector is still embedded with the colonial and apartheid practices (Fitchett 2009).

The study also discovered that the employees of the studied company are below the age of sixty years old with a varied experience ranging from a year to fifteen years in the workplace within the sector. As diverse as they are in terms of ethnicity, these employees possess qualifications

ranging from a Secondary School Certificates to Bachelor degrees affording them to play varying roles in the organisation.

It has also been discovered that to a certain extent, the employees of this company are excluded in the decision-making processes, they underwent both formal and informal training prior being appointed to their respective positions. Further discoveries reveal that some of the employees in this organisation perceive problems with the way they are being managed as they presume that the management of this organisation cares mostly about their gains and not the well-being of the workforce. They, the employees, see the prevalent management style in this organisation as autocratic with more importance placed on the occupational ranks and characterised by high degree of unnecessary control that leads to their dissatisfaction. The employees of this company cited exclusion as the top-down messages in this organisation do not cater for the diversified populace that is part of the organisation. It is however important to stress in this regard that the experiences of the employees who participated in the study vary, that is, some of the employees are satisfied with the way they are being managed in this company. This in particular leads to a conclusion that there is some discordance that prevails when it comes to how these employees are treated by the management.

Learnt from the literature, is that management in Africa is under-researched, that the management approaches employed by the organisations in this continent are imported, also, no managerial framework originated in Africa that exists (Jackson 2002b; Kamoche 2011; Karsten & Illa 2005; Pindure *et al* 2012). These imported management approaches according to literature are at odds with the African context (Beugre & Offodile 2001; Booysen 2001; Jackson 2002a).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The recommendations based on the findings of this study are that organisations in Africa and South Africa in particular need to undergo some transformation in terms of how they manage their workforce. The managers of organisations in this context need to understand that the workforce is diversified, develop an insight into this diversity and device means to manage such diversity. This study also recommends that organisations operating in an African context should be managed through the Afrocentric Management Approach which is in par with the dynamics of the context in which these organisations operate. The

managers of these organisations in Africa, need to understand that despite its importance, monetary benefits are not the only existing means motivate the African workforce, these are human being with abilities, emotions and needs among other things.

This study makes a call on the decolonisation of African epistemology and emphasise that the African scholars are mandated to continue undertaking research on management theory as it is of crucial importance as per the decoloniality of knowledge that Africans work on developing their episteme in order to decolonise knowledge in Africa. It is also of utmost importance that the academic institutions actively partake in the decolonisation of management by training the managers with an objective of eradicating the stretching history of 'dictatorship-management' in South Africa (Handford & Coetsee 2003; Thomas & Bendixen 2000).

The conceptualisation of the Afrocentric Management Approach as an alternative managerial framework is in actual fact aimed at addressing the short comings of other managerial approaches and is motivated by decoloniality as the general position of the current study. The researcher in this study believes and upholds the decolonial stance that the Africans know themselves and their environment better than anyone else and they know what will and will not work best for them. This implies that Africans should come up with solutions to their problems and not simply import solutions without putting these under a rigorous scrutiny. The same goes with the understanding of reality, knowledge production, determination what is of value to them as well as undertaking research using indigenous knowledge and applying indigenous methodologies.

Limitations of the Study

The current study aimed to investigate the perception of the management approach held by the employees of the construction company. The semi-structured interviews together with the talking circles were utilised to collect data and during the process, not all the required number of participants were available and the researcher had difficulty to get hold of other employees on-site due to unavailability of the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Due to this, the researcher had to rely on coincidence where an employee has left the site and conduct an interview using a limited time in which the employee left the site. Other employees could not be available for the talking circles due to work commitment and one participant left the talking circles before they were concluded

due to family matters demanding her attention. Despite all of this, the researcher maintains that the success of the study was neither curtailed nor compromised.

Contribution to Decoloniality

This study contributes to decoloniality of management in Africa through the employment of decolonial methods to conduct a study through the Afrocentric lens in an African context highlighting the Afrocentric theory. This is not only a contribution to management but it is also a contribution to indigenous epistemology and research as well. The study contributes to decoloniality through disobedience, that is, refusing to understand the concept of employee, organisation, communication, knowledge, needs, management and others from a Eurocentric lens. The study further contributes to decoloniality through harmonising knowledges informing the conceptualising management and through the presentation of a hybrid approach to managing African workforce. The contribution of the current study on decoloniality also extends to the positioning of the local knowledge in the centre through the employment of indigenous concepts such as ubuntu in the development of the Afrocentric Management Approach. The study also contributes to decoloniality through the shifting of the point of enunciation, the shift of reasoning as well as the geo- and body-political shift by employing the African lens to understand and interpret reality. This is done through delinking from the European theory as the sole foundation of truth and knowledge production.

Afrocentric Management Approach

It has been learnt thus far from the literature and the findings of this study that the conventional managerial frameworks are still to date put into practice by organisations in most parts of the world (Mahmood *et al* 2012). These are exploited today by organisations in order to reduce costs, enhance productivity and organisational efficiency (Pindur *et al* 1995). It is also understood that none of the existing management approaches were conceptualised in the former colonised regions (Africa or Asia or South America or Middle East) but they from France, USA, Britain, Germany, Japan and Australia (Pindur *et al* 2012).

Now withstanding the absence of an indigenous framework, the African scholars are calling for the conceptualisation of an approach that

is suitable for managing the African workforce, an approach that embraces diversity and a culturally inclusive approach which is regarded as an Afrocentric Management Approach (Louw & Jackson 2008; Mangaliso 2001; Nyambegera 2002). This is because according to Jackson (2002) the approaches used in Africa are Western approaches which appear not to be suitable for the African context. Therefore, in this study, a call for an adoption of an Afrocentric Management Approach which is an African or an indigenous approach to management that is based on the notion of 'Ubuntu' is made (Mangaliso 2001). This is an approach to management that is a people-centred, where the manager upholding this, is sensitive to customs and traditions outside theirs (Gambetti & Quigley 2013; Masango 2002). This approach is culturally inclusive, humanistic in its nature, decentralised and recognises the value added by employees in an organisation. The Afrocentric Approach as grounded upon Ubuntu, values the relationships in an organisation, upholds reciprocity and respect for the workforce. With this being said, the Afrocentric Management Approach is associated with a cultural tradition view of organisational communication. Meaning that communication in an Afrocentric approach is reciprocal, decentralised, informal and messages are culture-oriented.

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