

REGENT BUSINESS SCHOOL

THE CLASS OF 2014

MBA GRADUANDS EXCEL IN THEIR DISSERTATIONS

At REGENT Business School, all MBA students are expected to complete a Dissertation in partial fulfilment of their Master of Business Administration Degree. It has now come to pass as a benchmark for international practice. The main purpose of the MBA Dissertation is to condense all that a student has learned from particular courses into one long project. The dissertation is much like "written proof" that an MBA candidate has indeed learned the material and understood it well enough to write about it on a major academic level.

The Dissertation is the culmination of a student's MBA programme and it is one of the most important means by which Masters' quality is identified and assessed. It is an individual undertaking and the final responsibility for its successful planning and completion rests with the student, though tutorial and supervisory guidance is given. The Dissertation, therefore, requires a student to display evidence of his or her ability to work independently and ethically in both researching and presenting a topic of choice, and to sustain these skills in an extended exercise. Dissertations normally involve formulating an original idea or area of inquiry which is either quantitative (e.g., typically involves either an empirically based, provable hypotheses) or is qualitative (e.g., includes explorative outcomes, along with data collection and analysis). It is expected that a thesis contributes one or more of the following for it to be deemed acceptable: a new perspective, a new application, uncover new implications or make fact-based predictions.

In respect of the above, we outline below the Abstracts of a few MBA dissertations that that have excelled in terms of their overall assessment.

Anthony Diesel

A Comparative Analysis of the Business Strategies implemented in Developing Sustainable Community Projects: A Study Involving an Agricultural Project (Alfred Nzo District) and a Sewing Project (O.R. Tambo District) in the Province of the Eastern Cape, South Africa

The major aim of Anthony Diesel's dissertation was to compare and contrast the business strategies of community projects to determine a sustainable business model. The study

setting was both a rural and a semi-urban environment in two districts within the Eastern Cape, namely the Alfred Nzo district and O.R. Tambo district.

In the dissertation, it is contended that between 40% and 50% of South Africa's population can be classified as living in poverty. Community projects promote self-sustaining income generation through the development of community initiatives, but do not always work as planned. There are those community projects that grow and continue to develop and those that fail. Identifying particular strategies to create a sustainable business model for these projects that can be applied in other similar settings would help to limit the failure rate of these projects once the supply of external funding ceases.

Qualitative, inductive methodology was used through the application of an exploratory strategy, as the study attempted to find the elements that distinguish a successful project from an unsuccessful one. The study attempted to identify patterns or ideas that could form the basis of further research, but also to come up with business strategy component suggestions and a business model that could be replicated at the onset of other projects.

Non-probability sampling, using the quota method, was adopted to ensure that the targeted groups (NGO managers, community leaders and project participants) were adequately represented. The majority of participants from the projects in the community were female, over the age of 40 and possessed a level of formal education below that of a matriculate.

The study found that by having a business strategy, a complete business plan, a marketing strategy, realistic start-up capital and providing essential training and mentoring to participants in the projects, a foundation for a successful project can be provided. In addition, community involvement from the design stage of a project is essential to ensure ownership and commitment to the project.

The value of this study has been the generation of recommended steps that can be followed to provide start-up community-based projects with a business strategy that will assist the projects to remain operational and sustainable.

Monde Magaba

The Impact of Technological Changes on Project Management at a Company Operating in the Construction Industry

This study investigated the impact that technological changes have on the construction industry. In recent years, the construction industry has been forced to investigate ways to improve the delivery of projects. Construction projects are becoming more and more complex and clients are demanding improved products and services. The construction industry experiences inefficiency problems that are caused by the dispersed nature of the organisations in the industry. This leads to poor communication and insufficient transfer

of information when it is needed. This has challenged the construction industry to be more efficient, innovative and to implement and use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools to facilitate the improvements required. However, due to the dynamic changes in technology, many organisations have implemented ICT solutions that do not meet their needs. Project managers are expected to integrate the work of all the companies involved in a project. As a result, there is a constant need for information throughout the lifecycle of a project. Therefore, communication of project information a project is critical.

This study was conducted using a single method approach focusing on collecting and analysing quantitative data. The survey strategy, through the use of questionnaires, was the design used in the study. Random sampling was used to sample 20 employees out of a population of 87 employees.

The findings from the literature review and the data analysis revealed that communication is a problem in the industry and exerts an influence on project management. Furthermore, the findings showed that the implementation of ICT tools greatly improves the delivery of projects, but more needs to be done to improve the adoption of ICT by employees and organisations.

Christopher Warren Hastings

Evaluation of the Leadership Styles on Employee Motivation and Commitment at Selected Private Hospitals in Gauteng, South Africa

This study aimed to provide an examination of the leadership styles and the impact they have on employee motivation and commitment within the private healthcare sector of South Africa. The study was conducted at selected hospitals in Gauteng, within one of South Africa's leading private healthcare organisations

Quantitative, descriptive survey design was used with a structured questionnaire as data collection instrument. The useable survey comprised 40 individual responses from 40 questionnaires distributed, giving a response rate of 100 percent.

The findings show that transactional, autocratic and transformational leadership styles are prevalent in the hospitals under the study. Furthermore, it was found that employees within the organisation generally exhibited high levels of motivation and commitment, even though areas of employee morale, reward and recognition, job constraints and job requirements were found to be areas where leadership and inspiration were lacking.

Recommendations were made for improvements in areas where there was a decrease in employee motivation and commitment. Leadership styles may need to adapt to the environment or change in the business in order to reignite motivation and commitment. Further research specifically relating to the impact that leadership styles have on

employee morale, and reward and recognition programmes was recommended, in conjunction with leaders researching and developing strategies to understand employees' job constraints and requirements more comprehensively.

Pius Mahimbi

An Evaluation of the Perceived Impact of In-Patient Catering Outsourcing on Patient Care in Kunene Regional Health Directorate, Namibia

Outsourcing is a method that enables transferring activities or tasks that are traditionally performed in-house, to a specialist provider. The findings from the literature on in-patient catering outsourcing are for the most part inconclusive. The purpose of this research is to evaluate the perceived impact of outsourced in-patient catering services in Kunene Regional Health Directorate on patient care, and to identify specific risks and benefits of in-patient catering outsourcing. The research further examines the outsourcing provider's level of compliance with food safety regulations and environmental laws, and enables recommendations to be made on how to improve the delivery of outsourced in-patient catering services in Kunene Regional Health Directorate.

In this cross-sectional descriptive survey, a quantitative research method was mainly utilized. Self-administered structured questionnaires were filled by 229 staff members in all three district hospitals of Kunene Regional Health Directorate, Namibia. The response to the questionnaire reached 87.7% and revealed the following: top four benefits or advantages of outsourcing are improved quantity and quality of in-patient meals, improved in-patient catering services, enhanced in-patient food safety, and improved focus on core activities (patient healthcare or service). Top four risks or disadvantages of outsourcing are bad publicity (poor catering services taint MoHSS' name), quality problems, loss of MoHSS' managerial control to outsourcing provider over how catering services are provided, and financial risks. Majority of the respondents perceived the in-patient catering outsourcing in their district hospitals as successful; with top four critical success factors for outsourcing being good relationships with in-patient catering outsourcing provider, effective communication throughout the process of outsourcing, regular site visits to the in-patient catering services, and strict control and supervision of in-patient catering staff by the outsourcing provider. Majority of the respondents had the opinion that in-patient outsourcing provider complied with food safety regulations and environmental laws; although some improvements still need to be implemented.

The impact of in-patient catering outsourcing on patient care is seen through provision of healthy meals to patients to meet their dietary needs, aid the speed of recovery, minimise susceptibility to infections, and promote physical and mental wellbeing. Successful in-patient catering outsourcing requires that outsourcing providers closely collaborate with all other stakeholders such as in-patients themselves and their relatives, dieticians, doctors,

nurses, and Administration personnel. Furthermore, in-patient catering outsourcing relationship needs to be optimally supervised at all times in order to positively impact on patient care.

This research exposes, for the first time, the scope of in-patient catering outsourcing in district hospitals in Kunene Regional Health Directorate in Namibia, and presents end-user perceptions in promoting quality in-patient meals and enhanced patient care.

Elmien Smith

The Impact of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Rewards on Employee Motivation at a Medical Devices Company in South Africa

In a competitive business environment, the concept of rewards and employee motivation has become a popular point of discussion in many successful organisations. Companies need to review their reward systems in order to improve employee motivation, increase performance and stay competitive.

The main purpose of this research was to investigate the role that intrinsic and extrinsic rewards play in motivating employees. This study in assessment of this problem adopted an explanatory research design using quantitative methodology and a survey strategy carried out among employees at a medical devices company in South Africa in order to assess these.

The research had the following three essential objectives: to ascertain whether employees value rewards as motivation factors, to establish the extent to which employees are satisfied with current reward systems, and to identify which rewards (extrinsic or intrinsic) employees consider most beneficial. Forty (40) questionnaires were collected from respondents in order to explore and analyse their opinions on these topics.

The analysis of the data collected from the questionnaires suggested that rewards are highly valued as a motivating factor by respondents. The research further suggested that employees were generally satisfied with, and benefited from the current rewards offered by the company. Additionally, it was found that employees were more motivated by intrinsic rewards rather than extrinsic rewards, although a thirteenth cheque and annual salary increases (extrinsic rewards) were the most ranked rewards for employees at the company.