



Workforce Sustainability in the Construction Sector

Development of a Workforce Sustainability Model for Construction

*John Gambatese, Ali Karakhan, and Denise Simmons.
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Overview

Relative to other sectors, the construction workforce has experienced high turnover rates and poor safety performance over the last few decades. The industry has also struggled to retain existing workers and recruit new ones to construction careers. Using the Delphi method, the authors interviewed industry professionals and academics to identify the characteristics of a sustainable construction workforce, and to create an instrument construction employers could use to assess workforce sustainability.

Key Findings

- Workforce sustainability is a property of a workforce that reflects the extent to which the workforce can perform its desired function over a selected period of time.
- Workforce sustainability is based on the perspective of the workforce and how the workforce feels with respect to their employment; it can be enhanced through actions by an organization.
- Eight major attributes contribute to construction workforce sustainability:
 - Nurturing: Workers must feel supported.
 - Diversity: Workers must feel welcomed and accepted, whatever their personal characteristics.
 - Equity: Workers must feel that they are treated fairly compared to other workers.
 - Health and Well-being: The workplace must be made as safe and healthy as possible.
 - Connectivity: There must be good communication linking workers to management and to one another.
 - Value: Workers must feel respected and appreciated by others and by the employer.
 - Community: Workers must feel camaraderie and see themselves as part of a team.
 - Maturity: A mature workforce is one in which all members share accountability and problem-solving responsibilities.
- By using the Workforce Sustainability Assessment Tool, organizations in the construction sector can assess their workforce sustainability and identify areas for improvement.

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