

The Impact of High Labour Turnover on Sustainable Housing Delivery in South Africa

Authors : Azola Agriette Mayeza, Madifedile Thasi

Abstract : Due to the contractual nature of jobs and employment opportunities in the construction industry and the seeming surplus of potential employees in South Africa, there is a little interest on the part of employers to put in place policies to retain experienced workers. Ironically these are the workers that the companies have expended significant resources on, in terms of training and capabilities development. The construction industry has been experiencing high materials wastages and health and safety issues to score very low on the sustainability agenda as regards resources management and safety. This study carried out an assessment of the poor retention of experienced workers in the construction industry on the capacity to deliver sustainable housing in South Africa. It highlights the economic, safety and resources conservation and other benefits accruable from a high retention of key employees to the South African construction industry towards the delivery of sustainable housing. It presents data that strongly support the hypothesis that high turnover of skilled employees as a result of the industry belief of zero incentive to retain employees beyond the contractual period, is responsible for the high wastages of resources in the industry and the safety issues. A high turnover of experienced employees in the construction industry was found to impact on the industry performance in terms of timely, cost effective and quality delivery of construction projects, particularly when measured against the government sustainable housing agenda. It also results in unplanned expenses required to train replacing employees during project executions as well as company goodwill which ultimately has a huge impact on sustainable housing delivery in South Africa.

Keywords : labour turnover, construction industry, sustainable housing, materials wastage, housing delivery, South Africa

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