Abstract

Human resources are vital assets to the Singapore construction industry. This study identifies reasons causing female construction professionals to leave the industry. With an overwhelming thirteen times more men than women in the top echelons of Singapore construction industry, a study on job problems and discrimination that confront professional women in construction, as well as recommend measures to reduce the difficulties is warranted. Results were contrasted with research completed ten years ago to determine how the barriers have changed. The research determined whether female construction professionals had an accurate understanding of the industry prior to entering it.

Data for analysis came from 180 construction professionals, who responded to a self-administered questionnaire. It is concluded that salaries of male and female construction professionals are not significantly different. Barriers confronting women in construction had mostly abated in the last ten years. However, women still face considerable job problems. Flexible working structures and schemes to allow working from home are greatly welcomed. Actual evidence of discriminatory behavior is weak, however more than half the professional women acknowledged that construction is still biased towards them. Employers are encouraged to implement equal opportunities policies to realize the full potential of female employees. On a lighter note, respondents also revealed that they enjoy preferential treatment. Overall, construction had turned out as expected for most women. However, construction curriculum must provide students a clearer understanding of likely job problems and discrimination.