

HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES

Exploring Characteristics of Students in Construction Management

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The construction industry employs more than 6.3 million people each year worldwide, making it one of the largest industries in the world. It is an international industry that attracts individuals from various disciplines and backgrounds. In the United States, difficulties exist with recruiting new employees and directing students into this career path. According to the U.S. Department of Labor's *Occupational Outlook Handbook 2014–2015*, the position of construction manager is projected to grow 16% from 2012 to 2022 (<http://www.bls.gov/ooh/management/construction-managers.htm>). Very little research has been done to understand what attracts workers to this industry. In this project, grounded research was conducted to understand typical career decision-making theories. Using existing theories, we developed a survey and methodology to collect data about the career choice of construction management students and investigated the qualities and personality characteristics of students to determine their suitability for the construction industry. The data collected described the demographics and career influences in terms of experiences and

relationships. We revised and replicated the methodology of a study completed in 2004 so that we could understand any statistically significant differences between students today and those from 11 years ago. The survey was given only to students currently enrolled in a construction management program in a 4-year accredited institution and had three parts: (1) demographics (age, gender, race, etc.), (2) major decision making (e.g., work experience, personal influences), and (3) influence in choosing major (e.g., parent, teacher). We used the web-based survey software tool Qualtrics to distribute the survey, capture data, and analyze the results. This research will lead to the broader distribution of the survey to several universities in the United States. The analysis of the data allows us to identify differences and similarities between construction management students in 2004 and today. Results may be used by leaders in the construction industry to assess current recruitment techniques.

Research advisor Daphene Koch writes, "This project provided a great way for Wei Li to expand on data from the original survey in 2004. Having a fresh set of eyes allowed for better data analysis and brought up-to-date questions that apply to construction management students currently attending universities."