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Assessment of stakeholders' awareness of the construction health and and safety regulations on construction sites in South Africa

Masimula, Gcinithemba

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ABSTRACT

In 2009, the Construction Industry Development Board commissioned the study of construction health and safety in South Africa, which revealed that despite the advancement in legislation in the form of the Construction Regulations promulgated in July 2003, health and safety performance in South Africa is still poor and the enforcement of the legislation by the Department of Labour Inspectorate was found to be lacking. The research established that there is a need for developing strategies that would cultivate the culture of health and safety necessary to improve compliance in health and safety amongst the people in the construction industry.

This research report presents an assessment of stakeholders' awareness of the construction health and safety regulations on construction sites in South Africa. The main objective of the study was to identify the reasons for the occurrence of accidents on the construction sites, despite the existence of health and safety legislation. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the mixed methods approach was employed to collect data from the construction industry stakeholders, namely contractors, clients and designers / consultants. The questionnaire was used to collect data from the participants. The findings of the study indicated that health and safety is very important and should be prioritised just like any other issues in the construction industry. It was also found that human error, especially top management, is responsible for occupational accidents. This is because some organisations choose not to comply with the legislation on health and safety, while some workers choose not to utilise or fail to effectively utilise provided personal protective equipment prior to engaging in construction activities. Based on these findings, it was recommended that the Department of Labour Inspectorate should enforce health and safety legislation in the construction industry by regularly conducting site inspections and imposing penalties for non-compliance. It was also recommended that health and safety issues are every stakeholders' business and therefore, every participant in this regard should play his or her role in ensuring better working conditions for the people in the construction industry. It was also proposed that the Construction Industry Development Board should utilise health and safety records for companies as a grading criteria and non-complying contractors be downgraded in order to improve their performance.

Keywords: awareness, construction, health and safety, regulations, South Africa, stakeholders.