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Declaration

All papers in this publication have been through a review process involving a review of abstracts, peer review of full papers by at least two referees, reporting of comments to authors, revision of papers by authors and re-evaluation of the revised papers to ensure quality of content.

THE JOB SATISFACTION OF BLACK FEMALE QUANTITY SURVEYORS

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Black women face discrimination in the quantity surveying profession hence experiencing tension to balance their careers and life, which results in them not being satisfied with their jobs. The aim of this research is to assess the job satisfaction of black females in quantity surveying and examine if discrimination affects it. Data was collected through online interviews with Black females that are Quantity Surveyors. The results were analysed using thematic analysis to assess similarities in responses. Issues of harassment discrimination were significantly recognised through deep interviews with participants. The issue of job satisfaction of black female quantity surveyors is less explored in literature. The findings of this research can be used by bodies of knowledge and industry professional to improve measures on issues of inequality and alleviate any problems.

Keywords: black female, culture, job satisfaction, quantity surveyor

INTRODUCTION

Olanrewaju and Anahve (2015) refers to quantity surveyors as people who offer guidance on a project's tactical planning. Having a quantity surveyor in a project can help with attaining proper budgets, cost estimates as well as value of projects. It would be difficult to cost a project if there is no person designated to focus on that part of the project specifically.

Females are mainly perceived as home makers and suitable for simple jobs, whilst males are meant to do odd jobs in the construction industry. In the recent years, research has shown that females serve an important role in the construction industry. Despite there being an influx of female construction employees and employers, women still constitute a small percentage in the industry, (Paul et al. 2020). Gender and race issues at work still reveal some intriguing discrepancies.

The lack of job satisfaction has seen females leaving the industry in the past to seek better opportunities where they are valued more. As much as there is information related to race and job satisfaction, limited research has been done to explore how culture affects the job satisfaction of black female quantity surveyors. This then gives the basis to do further research on the problem and in turn find solutions on how to fix it. The construction industry needs women to balance the gender inequalities it is currently experiencing, (Okeke, Nnadi & Okereke 2019).

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“Harassment and discrimination still exist in the quantity surveying profession in the South African construction industry. Female professionals are harassed and discriminated against more than their male counterparts, and that ethnic discrimination still exists, is cause for concern”, (Bowen et al. 2008). This can lead to employee dissatisfaction and can have a negative impact on employee health and productivity, which damages business in the long term. This also results in females exiting the industry which decreases the number of women willing to be employed in the construction industry (Sangwena 2015). Therefore, the objective of this study is to assess the job satisfaction of black females in quantity surveying and examine if discrimination affects it.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Measuring Job Satisfaction

Bowen and Cattell (2008) define job satisfaction as concept that includes positive and negative feelings of how employees perceive their jobs. Job satisfaction and wellbeing of employees is important to the construction industry. Despite there being research that focuses on job satisfaction of other stakeholders in the construction industry, limited research is available on how job satisfaction is perceived by professional quantity surveyors. Measuring job satisfaction can be difficult as it is based more on feelings of individual and can vary significantly. This could be a complicated factor and needs to be approached carefully.

While taking note of all those variables, a qualitative interview can be done to get accurate information. A study done by Bowen (2005) included factors such as respondents’ perceptions of their salary level, job security, recognition, promotion, personal satisfaction regarding work completed, feedback from superiors regarding performance, task variety, innovativeness, team participation and social interaction at works. These factors are then analysed qualitatively, and interpretation of the results can be used to measure job satisfaction.

Plans to improve job satisfaction in black females in South Africa are being implemented. Black women that have been interviewed before in South Africa suggested that there is need for organizations to clearly empower women in the industry. There is also need for one to work hard to overcome barriers and earn respect in the industry. English and Hay (2015) suggest that Political legislation is insufficient to bring about change; controlled equal opportunity efforts that focus on women are needed, especially supports for women like mentorship programs and role models.

However, English and Hay (2015) went on to mention some initiatives that target women empowerment in the construction industry. Some of the programmes that were implemented to empower black women and in turn improving job satisfaction are;

NHBRC women empowerment program

This was a programme initiated that aimed to develop leadership skills and boost business skills in women (NHBRC, 2015). As mentioned before, improving these skills could improve job satisfaction. The programme ran in 2015.

Broad based black economic empowerment

A programme initiated by the government to ensure inclusion of blacks in the economy after Apartheid. These include internal regulations implemented by specific corporations and public entities to guarantee the advancement of black women (ASAQS, 2021).

Culture and Job satisfaction

Culture barriers faced by black women and the effects of such barriers on the construction industry.

A study done in the UK by Amaratunga et al. (2006) has shown that women in the construction industry often face barriers. These barriers are considered important in the industry. As it is clear, the quantity surveying profession is based in the construction industry. Some of the barriers identified include culture, industry knowledge, and work environment. These could be attributed to the industry being male dominated and masculine. There are several gender-based obstacles that women must overcome in terms of opportunities and restrictions.

Gender norms that emphasize unpaid domestic work and childcare as exclusively female jobs have a strong relationship to women's employment (English and Hay, 2015). The construction industry culture is gender stereotyped. The industry is considered suitable for males only. Therefore, the involvement of women is believed to be a threat to culture and men often view it as extra competition. It is of utmost importance that black female Quantity Surveyors can balance their lives and careers without problems. It is a norm in the African society that women are home caregivers, and they are responsible for all household tasks including taking care of children.

Work-life balance can be a prediction of one's health at a workplace. Female quantity surveyors are reported to hardly have time to relax with their families, (Panojan, Perera and Abeydeera, 2017). Unsatisfactory work environment contributes to fatigue, low motivation, and poor behaviours. This hinders employees from getting proper opportunities and results in stress which can be difficult to manage.

Workplace stress experienced by quantity surveyors.

According to Sharma (2013), lack of job security, less compensation, conflicts, and office politics are the key factors contributing to work stress. It is equally important for an employee to fit well in company culture and how the company operates to minimise work stress. This can be assumed to be difficult for black females as the construction industry is considered male dominated. It is therefore difficult for them to relate and be part of these organisational cultures. Bowen, Cattell, and Edwards (2013) consider the construction industry to be one of the top industries with the risk of work stress.

Harassment and discrimination experienced by Quantity Surveyors

Sexual and racial discrimination and harassment are thought to be prevalent in the construction industry. A study done by Ruder and Deddens (1998) shows that in a sample population, 51% of women reported to have experienced sexual harassment and discrimination. This shows that these issues have been here for a very long time, and they are still there now. There is need for a huge intervention to minimise these issues of discrimination and harassment.

A large part of racial discrimination faced in the South African construction industry can be attributed to the apartheid regime that ruled the country for a while. The legacy of apartheid in South Africa offers a distinctive background for looking at workplace stress among construction professionals. This work's contribution is in its analysis of the work stress endured by female quantity surveyors in a developing nation which is marked by social unrest and economic distress (Bowen, et. Al., 2013). As of 2013, various legislations were put up by the government to make previously disadvantaged groups be included in the economy. These groups include amongst others black females.

Stress and fatigue coping mechanisms among South African construction professionals.

Physical coping mechanisms: Construction females experiencing stress tend to focus on lighter physical activities such as walking and jogging to minimise the effects of stress.

Intellectually: Goal setting, focus on smaller manageable tasks and pre-planning of work. The use of leisure through travel helped professionals escape daily routines which meant gaining personal sense of control back.

Lifestyle coping mechanisms: These lifestyle coping mechanisms involves one changing their lifestyle for them to be able to cope with stress. The go to lifestyle coping mechanism amongst construction professional is through food addiction, increasing caffeine intake and avoiding conflict.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To fulfil the main objectives of this research and to answer to the aim and research question, empirical data is required. Inductive research strategy was found suitable for the study as it allows for generalisation of patterns amongst a demographic. The data collection method for this study was semi-structured interviews. These interviews were conducted online with black female quantity surveyors. Participants were asked questions on how they perceive their roles as quantity surveyors and the external factors that affect it. Semi-structured interviews were considered because a study done by Windapo et al. (2020) utilised the same data collection method and it allowed participants to show attitude and emotion towards the question being asked. This provided data for this study that was accurate and could be properly analysed. This research method also allowed for an interaction between the researcher and the participant which meant gathering of information that wouldn't have been captured if a survey was used, (Panojan, Perera and Abeydeera 2017). The aim of the interview was discussed with the participants and confidentiality and anonymity was observed.

The population of this study consisted of black quantity surveyors who are females and working for professional companies. A sample size of 10 participants was used as the research was focused on the experience of the participants and would provide the depth of the issue. The sample aimed at quantity surveyors who are working in South Africa and have quantity surveying experience of minimum 6 months to understand the issue of job satisfaction in early career professionals and experienced professionals. The research used purposive sampling to select a sample of participants. Jaga et al. (2018) mentions use of purposive sampling as it caters for variation of the professionals across the industry. A purposive sampling is a non-

probability sampling to select population. This sampling method is used based on the characteristics of a population and objectives of the study.

DATA ANALYSIS

Thematic analysis was considered to analyse qualitative data to assess the extent of job satisfaction of black females in the quantity surveying industry and to identify the most effective ways of improving it. Thematic analysis was chosen as it is the most suitable tool used to understand studies that focus on experiences and perspectives of research participants Jaga et al. (2018). Firstly, the interviews were transcribed to understandable data, which were followed by going through the data and writing main points. The data was then organised into themes which fall under the objectives. The themes were reviewed and refined to weigh if they showed a pattern.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this research, the aim was to assess the job satisfaction of black female quantity surveyors and to assess if culture and gender affects it. A thorough examination on the factors influencing their experiences in the industry was carried out. The research highlighted the connection of gender, culture, and race as crucial determinants of job satisfaction. Intensive literature review was conducted on the job satisfaction of black female quantity surveyors. To answer the main question and aim, interviews were also carried out with black female quantity surveyors.

The effect of culture on black female quantity surveyors', employers', and workers' job satisfaction.

Females tend to experience sexual harassment and discrimination. This study has shown through literature review that females have experienced harassment and discrimination in the quantity surveying profession. Bowen et al. (2019) proves that black females experience more of these than their male counterparts or race in the industry. This has in turn affected how black females view their jobs and affects the perception and satisfaction. From the interviews, it is evident that black females have experienced negative treatment as quantity surveyors.

“The negative things I have experienced #1, I don't think females voice is heard on site #2, males take advantage of females, yes. Like, yeah, when you get on site it's more males than females and they make sexual advancement.” P5

More often, harassment comes in the form of sexual advances as it is reported there are more males on site than women. Some participants have reported being discriminated because of their skin colour. The discrimination was in the form of mistreatment or being excluded from understanding certain aspects of a project. Very few women have reported not having any negative experiences as their work environments supported the uplifting of black women in the workplace.

The potential conflicts that black women quantity surveyors face while striving to manage their careers.

It is important to note that some women received mentorship and training indirectly through being given huge projects which forced them to get out of their comfort zone. This is considered

indirect training as one must learn the different aspects of a project through experience and direct involvement. A study done by English and Hay, (2015) has shown that it is important for black females to receive mentorship in the industry. As a gender that is considered incompetent, it would only be appropriate for there to be an equal opportunity for them to learn. Various programs have been designed which caters to mentor quantity surveyors who are straight from university and just finished graduating. From the data collected through interviews, some black females have reported not receiving any mentorship in their companies or when their careers commenced. On the other hand, some participants have proved that the mentorship they received was necessary for their growth and career objectives.

“I have had formal training with a senior quantity surveyor in my company. So, they would just share any form of information that I needed to know to do my job well or efficiently. Basically, kind of contract being used at my site, explaining to me further and further regarding that and then the BOQ telling me about the client and so on. So, to familiarize myself or to help me on board into or rather onto the project. So that helps me now to understand what's happening”. P3

Initiatives on how black females can respond to discrimination they face on the job in quantity surveying.

In a bid to resolve all the issues that black females are facing in the quantity surveying it is important for there to be set initiatives that can assist them in navigating the industry. These initiatives can be derived from the positive experiences these women have had in the industry. Strategies that can be implemented to resolve these issues are equally important. At the end, the perception of their jobs is what is important for this study. The initiatives identified support the identified programmes that are already there to support black women as per the NHBRC (2015) and ASAQs (2021) undertakings.

The strategies and initiatives to support black females in the quantity surveying forum can be:

- To create women forums that seeks to motivate black females on how to be bold and for them to have their voice in the workplace without feeling intimidated.
- To have professional bodies that regulates the uptake of black female quantity surveyors through provision of mentorship programmes and career guidance.
- Individuals need to constantly upgrade themselves so their knowledge can remain relevant in the industry.
- To do campaigns to educate other races and genders on the equality and on the capabilities of black females in the industry.
- To encourage companies to expose their black female quantity surveyors to more work so they can improve their skills and prove themselves.

From the analysis of objectives and interviews conducted, one could say that black female quantity surveyors are satisfied with their jobs. Although some showed positive emotions on the QS profession, it is critical to note that there are still issues that need to be addressed in the industry. The address of these issues can promote the number of women willing to venture into the construction industry which is very important for the economy of the country. The analysis

of job satisfaction among Black female quantity surveyors in South Africa has illuminated the complex nature of their professional experiences within the construction industry. Findings have highlighted the significance of gender and race as overlapping factors that influence not only job satisfaction but also career trajectories and workplace dynamics. While these individuals exhibit resilience, determination, and a commitment to their profession, they often navigate gender related challenges, including unequal access to leadership roles, disparities in remuneration, and the need to address gender-based bias and discrimination.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research has identified the significant influence of gender and race, as well as their connection, in influencing the experiences of Black female quantity surveyors. These findings highlighted gaps in opportunities, the regular occurrence of bias and discrimination within the industry. Nonetheless, black female quantity surveyors were satisfied with their jobs. The research has successfully achieved the aim by providing a clear examination on the job satisfaction of black female quantity surveyors.

Furthermore, this study's contributions go beyond just addressing the happiness of Black female quantity surveyors with their jobs. It acts as an inspiration for change by providing insightful information that can guide debates about gender equity, racial inclusion, and job happiness in the construction industry and other related fields.

Additionally, there is need to undertake studies to track changes and trends in the experiences and job satisfaction of Black female quantity surveyors over time. Such studies can capture the impact of evolving workplace policies, societal attitudes, and industry initiatives on the professional journeys of this demographic, contributing to a more dynamic and informative body of knowledge. Moreover, investigation of work life balance and how it relates to the job satisfaction of black female quantity surveyors could be explored.

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