

Construction Industry Today

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This project assesses career opportunities, typical career paths, educational levels, gender demographics, and salary range within today’s construction industry with information collected from surveyed industry professionals. This report focuses on specific information extracted from this survey, including gender, work location, starting and current salary, years of experience, education level, and overall happiness in their career choice. The survey and its results will serve to establish a broad outline of the current state of professionals in the workforce. This information will provide a baseline data for future studies to analyze trends over time as well as provide current students additional insight into the construction industry today.

Key Words: Workforce, Career, Construction Industry, Demographics

Introduction

Where is the work located? Should I get a degree? What should my starting salary look like? How much are my coworkers making? How many years of experience does everyone have? Am I going to be happy in my career? All of these question go through every undergraduate’s head. There are many article and papers that try to answer one of these questions, but there is no guide that presents a comprehensive overview on the state of the construction industry. The purpose of this study is to assesses career opportunities, typical career paths, educational levels, gender demographics, and salary range within today’s construction industry.

Methodology

A survey was distributed via email to Cal Poly’s construction industry professional members. The survey consisted of eleven questions. Among the eleven questions asked only six were then analyzed. There were 116 responses to the survey, eighty-four were male making up seventy- two percent and thirty-two were female comprising the other twenty-eight percent.

Survey Results

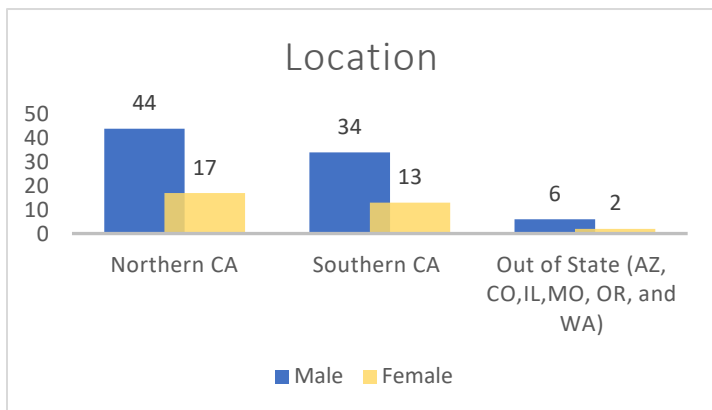


Figure 1A: Location of surveyed participants

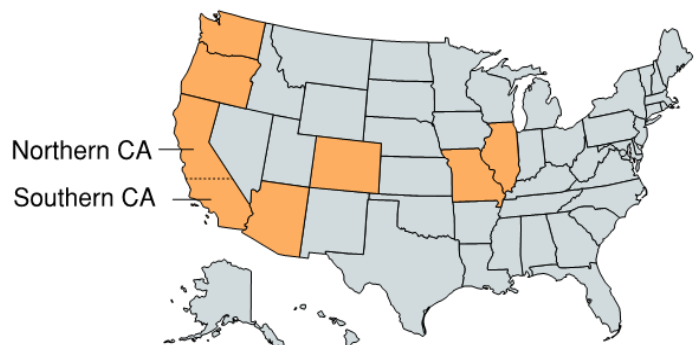


Figure 1B: Map of surveyed area

California had the most responses. It dominated the other states in this survey with ninety-four percent. In *Figure 1B* above, Northern California held the majority with fifty-three percent and Southern California in close second with fourth-one percent. Interestingly enough, there were survey participants from the Mid-West region that were unpredicted, in states such as Illinois and Missouri.

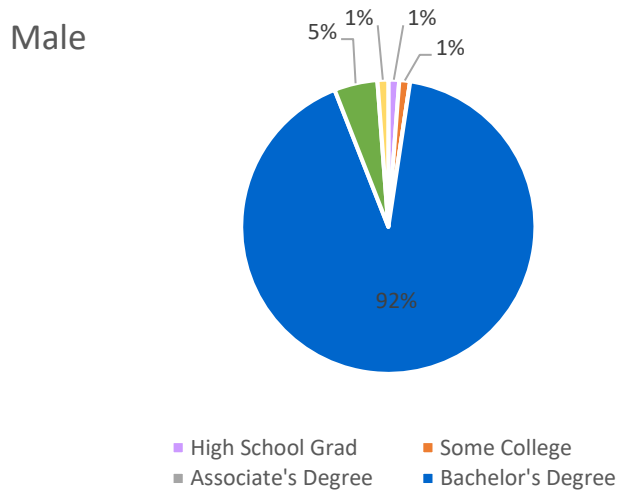


Figure 2: Male education levels

As shown in *Figure 2*, the vast majority of men who participated in this survey obtained a bachelor's degree, sweeping over the sample with ninety-two percent. The second largest percentage of males received a master's degree. Only one percent of males did not attend college. This could be due to a restricted sample. This survey was distributed from Cal Poly's industry contact list. There are few tradesmen and foremen on this contact list than project managers, vice presidents, and office staff which are more likely to have attend college.

The figure below depicts female respondents' educational level. It is interesting to note that all female participants graduated from high school/ obtained a GED and pursued a higher level of education. Similarly, to their male peers the majority of women received their bachelor's degree. Nineteen percent did, however, obtain a master's degree compared to the males which was five percent. Over all, these two graphs show that of all surveyed participants eighty-seven percent held bachelor's degree.

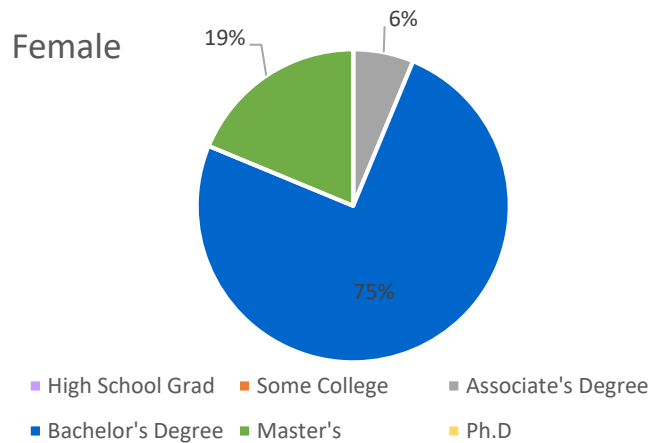


Figure 3: Female education levels

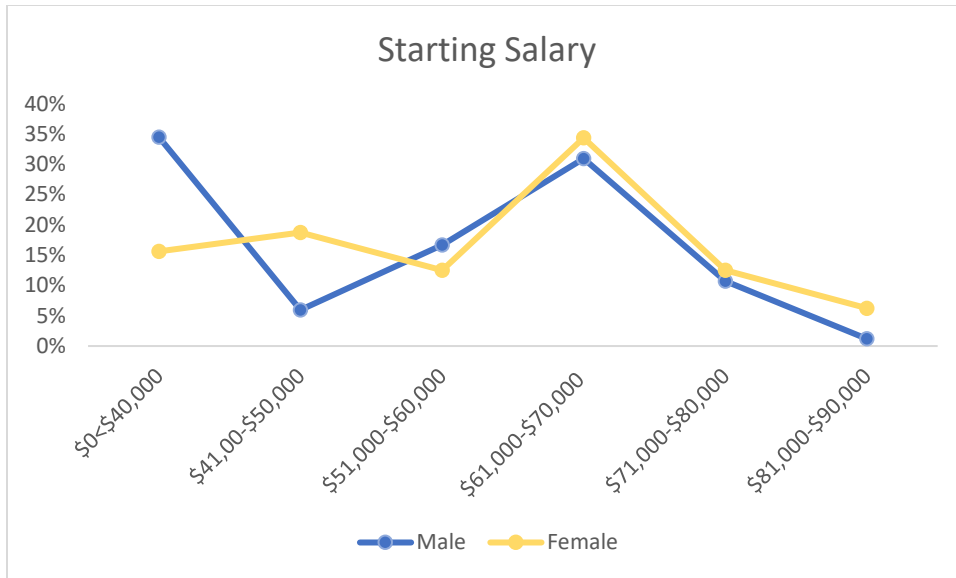


Figure 4: Starting salary for surveyed participants

In Figure 4 there is a large percentage of males with starting salaries that are less than or equal to \$40,000. Due to fifty-four percent of male respondents having over twenty-one years of experience in construction industry (Figure 6). This means they started working in the 70's, 80's, and 90's. The cost of living was much lower and the value of the U.S dollar has since changed.

As for the spike around \$61,000-\$70,000, this is the result of twenty percent of the respondents joining the workforce in the past two years (Figure 6). Both men and women are seen making similar starting salaries in today's industry.

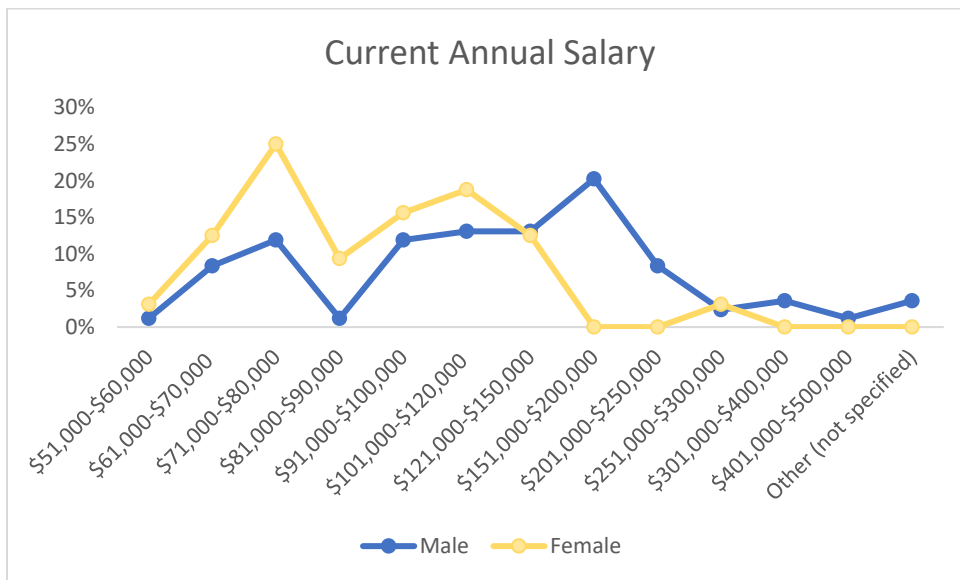


Figure 5: Current annual salary of surveyed participants

In the figure above current annual salaries are shown. There is a higher percentage of females making around \$71,000-\$80,000. More women have been entering the workforce in the past 2 years than previous years. Current starting salaries have been between \$60,000-\$80,000, depending on location and job title. We can see the trend with men as well but with a smaller percentage since the majority of male participants have over twenty-one years of

experience. There is a spike for women around \$101,000-\$120,000 quickly followed by a steep decline of women making over \$151,000. There was only one women who made over \$151,000 compared to male who had thirty-nine percent making above this amount. Once again this could be from majority of participants were male and had over twenty-one years of experience leading them to having higher salaries.

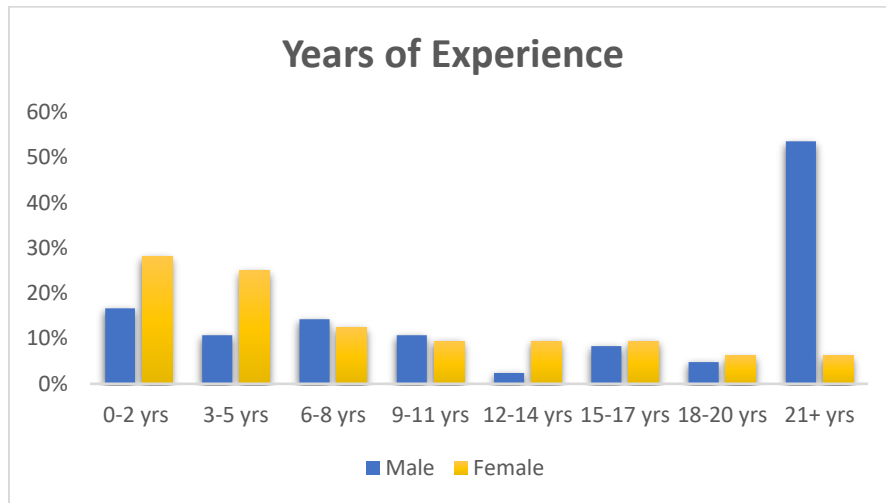


Figure 6: Years of experience of surveyed participants

One of the most interesting data sets collected was the years of industry experience. It clearly shows how the construction industry is slowly changing over the decades. Twenty or so years ago there was a large gender gap in construction field. Figure 6 above illustrates how in recent years the gender gap has increasingly becoming smaller. Of the male participants fifty-four percent had over twenty-one years of industry experience. Whereas, females with the same years of experience were only six percent. Seventeen percent of males and twenty-eight percent of female participants joined the construction workforce since 2015. This resulted in twenty percent of the respondents having two years of experience.

Figure 6 shows a steady increase of women entering this field. From eight to five years there was a thirteen percent increase, and from five to two years, a three percent increase. If the trend continues as it has been, there is a high probability that we will see this percentage increase in the following years.

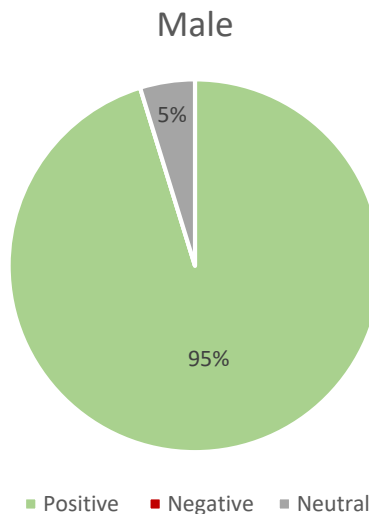


Figure 7: Male overall happiness in career

It is no secret that men still dominate the construction industry today. The surprise came from how happy all males were in their career choice. This correlates to fifty-four percent having over twenty-one years of industry experience. If they were unsatisfied with their career they would have left early on in their job. Only five percent held neutral feelings about their job. There were zero men who had negative feelings towards their career path.

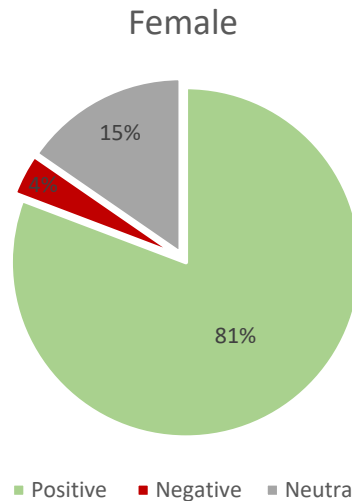


Figure 8: Female overall happiness in career

Just like their peers, the majority of women had positive response towards their career happiness. Fifteen percent felt neutral in their position. While four percent were unhappy in their career. This is particularly intriguing since there were zero male responses that showed any kind of negative feeling.

Conclusion and Future Research

The participants surveyed were predominately from California, educated through a university, with varying salaries and years of experiences, and overall happy in their career in construction. As a whole, there are still more men in the industry than women but through the charts it is clear that gap is shrinking. Starting salaries for both men and women are depicted as steadily equal. While current salaries are harder to gage due to position and years of experience. While there were a few negative feelings from females towards their career the vast majority from both male and female participants were overwhelming positive.

This study has provided a baseline of information for future research. Future research can continue analyzing the results from this survey question that were not included in this paper. Additionally, a potential project could send out the same survey every few years to see how the construction industry is changing and what new trends arise. Another project that could come from this research, could be sending out a student wide survey and see what the student's perception of the industry is like compared to the actuality. There are numerous ways how this information can contribute to future research.

Appendix A

Hello all, my name is Brooke DePorto and I am a senior Construction Management student at Cal Poly.

For my senior project, I am conducting a survey to assess career opportunities, typical career paths, educational levels, gender demographics, and salary ranges within today's construction industry. I'm asking for your help in providing this information by completing this quick, 10-minute, anonymous survey.

For my senior project, the results of this survey will be compiled and summarized. This information will provide baseline data for future studies to analyze trends over time, as well as provide current students additional insight into the opportunities within our industry.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey. I greatly appreciate your support and the support of Cal Poly's Construction Management Program.

The survey is anonymous and should take roughly 10 minutes to complete.

1. Gender

- a. Male
- b. Female
- c. Decline to answer

2. Work location

- a. Northern California
- b. Southern California
- c. Outside of California
 - i. Specify where

3. Education level

- a. Some high school
- b. High school graduate
- c. Some college
- d. Associates Degree
- e. Bachelor's Degree
- f. Master's Degree
- g. Ph.D
- h. Trades School

4. What position did you start off working?

- a. Admin
- b. Apprentice
- c. Assistant Project Manager
- d. Building Inspector
- e. Civil Engineer
- f. Estimator
- g. Human Relations
- h. Laborer
- i. Foreman
- j. Project Manager
- k. Safety Manager
- l. Scheduler
- m. Surveyor
- n. Other

i. Specify

5. What was your starting salary?

- a. \$0 < \$40,000
- b. \$41,000-\$50,000
- c. \$51,000-\$60,000
- d. \$61,000-\$70,000
- e. \$71,000-\$80,000
- f. \$81,000-\$90,000
- g. \$91,000-\$100,000
- h. Other

i. Specify

6. What position do you currently hold?

- a. Admin
- b. Apprentice
- c. Assistant Project Manager
- d. Building Inspector
- e. Civil Engineer
- f. Estimator
- g. Human Relations
- h. Laborer
- i. Foreman
- j. Project Manager
- k. Safety Manager
- l. Scheduler
- m. Surveyor
- n. Other

7. What is your current salary?

- a. \$0 < \$40,000
- b. \$41,000-\$50,000
- c. \$51,000-\$60,000
- d. \$61,000-\$70,000
- e. \$71,000-\$80,000
- f. \$81,000-\$90,000
- g. \$91,000-\$100,000
- h. Other

i. Specify

8. How many years have you been in the industry? (fill in the blank)

9. How did you get into the construction industry? (check all that apply)

- a. Family member
- b. Friend
- c. High school program
- d. College program
- e. Stumbled upon it
- f. Other
 - i. Specify

10. Are you happy with your career choice?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Neutral

11. How is your work life balance? (Scale)

- 1 - all work and no play
- 3 - neutral
- 5 - well balanced