A STUDY TO IDENTIFY THE KEY LABOUR CHALLENGES FACED WITHIN A COMMUNITY-BASED HOUSING PROJECT

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Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Commerce in Industrial Psychology at the University of the Western Cape

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PLAGARISM DECLARATION

Hereby I, Susanna Bremert-Louw, declare that *A Study to Identify the Key Labour Challenges Faced within a Community-Based Housing Project* is my own original work and that all sources have been accurately reported and acknowledged, and that this document has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university in order to obtain an academic qualification.

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of the study is to identify specific labour challenges experienced in the implementation of a community-based housing project. The focus of this study is on the management and employees' experience relating to labour challenges. Gaining insight from management and employees involved with community-based housing will assist future projects of this nature.

The interpretivism research paradigm guided this research study and a qualitative explorative descriptive study approach was incorporated. Data was collected with the use of semi-structured interviews from a purposive sample of seven participants within a community housing project. Data was analysed using ATLAS. ti version 22.

The research study findings indicated that the key labour challenges that were experienced at the community-based housing project were high labour turnover, absenteeism, wage disputes, lack of project management skills, political interference, lack of management skills, lack of trade skills and poor compliance of sub-contractors. The key differences between labour challenges faced in community-based housing project and community housing project were lack of employee training in community housing projects, lack of skilled labour in community housing and being forced to employ from the community. The strategies that are used to address the labour challenges in community housing are training, fairness in Expanded Public Works (EPWP) program, Clarity on Housing Project Implementation and improved conflict resolution.

The study concludes that the labour challenges that were being experienced in the community housing projects were mainly to do with political interference with regards to the employment of labour from the community. This was leading to the employment of construction workers with no trade skills. The study also concludes that low wages in community housing projects were also causing high labour turnover as construction workers were moving to commercial housing projects which pay higher wages. Conflict resolution was also a key labour challenge in community housing projects.

Keywords: Community-Based Housing Project, Labour Relations, Construction Industry, Western Cape

iv

Table of Contents

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADR Additional Dispute Resolution

ANC African National Congress

BCEA Basic Conditions of Employment Act

BIBC Building Industry Bargaining Council

BNG Breaking New Ground

CA Collective Agreement

CBH Community Based Housing

CCMA Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration

CETA Construction Education and Training Authority

CIDB Construction Industry Development Board

CLO Community Liaison Officer

COSATU Congress of South Africa Trade Union

EPWP Expanded Public Works Programme

ISCO International Standard Classification of Occupation

LRA Labour Relations Act

MBA Master Builders Association

NSDS National Skills Development Survey

NDP National Development Plan

QLFS Quarterly Labour Force Survey

RDP Reconstructive and Development Plan

SDA Skills Development Act

SMME Small Micro to Medium Enterprise

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Labour relations is a complex and dynamic discipline and it is all about interaction (Ferreira, 2006). Within the South African context, the labour relations field is seen as a tripartite relationship, between core players, namely employees, employers and the state. This relationship is complicated, due to human interaction, which is governed by rules and regulations, outlined in South Africa's main piece of legislature, The Labour Relations Act, 1995 and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act. These labour acts serve to protect workers and regulate the relationship between employers and employees.

Workers in the 1990s, increasingly turned to strike action as a bargaining tool (Bhorat, Kanbur & Mayet, 2012). Even though strikes are seen as a process of liaison between employers and employees, and point towards a democratic economy, it results in economic costs that can be extremely high, depending on the duration of the strike, the number of employees involved and the industries affected (Jacobs & Yu, 2013). Labour Legislation in South Africa, has become far more complex and extensive in its reach and when workers do strike today it is more intense and at greater time-cost to firms (Bhorat, Kanbur & Mayet, 2012).

One of the industries, affected by labour unrest is the construction industry. The construction industry, being labour intensive, is experiencing deteriorating labour productivity due to labour unrest (CIDB, 2015). The industry absorbs a high number - of semi-skilled and unskilled labour, where projects are based. The Construction Industry Development Board Report (2015) reported that around 70% of labour employed in the industry is semi-skilled and unskilled. When there is a high labour component within a construction project it is considered a high risk by contractors and investors and therefore it is crucial that the relationship between core players be harmonious and beneficial in ensuring not only timely the completion of projects, especially social housing projects, but also ensuring social and economic prosperity within the community where the project is based.

This study will focus specifically on a community-based housing construction project within Cape Town. A community-based housing project consists of key relationships and their interaction before, during and after a project of this nature. Horwitz, Jain and Mbabane (2005) mention that one of the key challenges in labour relations is the need to shift from a legacy of

1

adversarial relationships to workplace cooperation and employee participation. In order to ensure workplace cooperation and employee participation, a relationship of trust amongst employees, employers and trade unions is required. Within a community-based housing project, the relationship is more complex, and involves community and government participation.

1.2 BACKGROUND

This study will be undertaken within a community-based housing project situated in the Western Cape.

Context of Community-Based Housing

According to Sibiya, Aigbavboa, and Thwala (2015), informal settlements have through history been given different names. Common expressions used are slums, shantytowns and squatter settlements, but the most appropriate concept is 'informal settlement', which is the term mostly used in South Africa. "Slums" (although not a popular term in South Africa) are defined as "any area that meets the following six criteria":

- ✓ Lack of basic services,
- ✓ inadequate building structures,
- ✓ overcrowding,
- ✓ unhealthy and hazardous conditions,
- ✓ insecure tenure,
- ✓ poverty and exclusion.

The UN Habitat Program proposes that informal settlements are defined as:

- ✓ Residential areas where a group of housing units have been constructed on land to which the occupants have no legal claim, or which they occupy illegally;
- ✓ Unplanned settlements and areas where housing is not in compliance with current planning and building regulations.

According to the 2001 Census, 143 000 households in the Western Cape (12% of households) lived in an informal dwelling or shack not in a backyard in 2001, while 117000 (10% of households) lived in enumeration areas that are characterised as Informal Settlements. Just over 92000 lived in both.

2

As a solution to informal settlements, The African National Congress (ANC), in 1994, implemented a socio-economic policy framework, known as the Reconstructive and Development Programme (RDP) (The Reconstructive and Development Programme Preface, Nelson Mandela, 1994). A Key component of the (RDP) was the provision of <u>adequate housing</u> and the creation of <u>viable safe living</u> environments that would <u>contribute to economic growth and job creation</u>. The essence of the Reconstructive and Development Programme (RDP) is – "the creation of economic growth and job creation"; highlighting the importance of social housing.

According to the 2001 Census, 143,000 households in the Western Cape (12% of households) lived in an informal dwelling or shack not in a backyard in 2001 while 117,000 households (10% of households) lived in enumeration areas that are characterised as Informal Settlements. Just over 92,000 households lived in both. According to the 2001 Census, 143,000 households in the Western Cape (12% of households) lived in an informal dwelling or shack not in a backyard in 2001 while 117,000 households (10% of households) lived in enumeration areas that are characterised as Informal Settlements. Just over 92,000 households lived in both. Tonkin (2008) indicated that South Africa has been classified as the world's leading country in relation to the provision of houses and its inspiration to eliminate informal settlements. The author continued to state that South Africa has been identified on the international arena as a country leading by example in relation to initiatives it takes to provide low-cost housing.

Construction Industry: Western Cape

To date, this community-based housing project ("social housing") under study, underwent three unprotected strikes, retrenchments, site closures (due to the COVID Pandemic) and construction halts due to labour unrest. Labour Relations within community-based housing projects, specifically within the construction industry in the Western Cape are facing unique challenges.

Firstly, the Building Industry Bargaining Council (Cape of Good Hope) is only operational within the Western Cape. Wits Forced Migration Studies Research Report (July 2010), found that the main reason the Regional Bargaining Councils collapsed within the construction industry in South Africa was due to the reconfiguration of employment structures within the industry. According to Bezuidenhout, Godfrey and Theron (2004), the biggest transformation

within the industry is the gradual transition from formal to informal practices of employment and the emergence of outsourcing and broking of labour.

Secondly, community-based housing projects can make an application for exemption at the Building Industry Bargaining Council ("BIBC"), according to section 32 (3) Labour Relations Act, No 66 of 1995. Projects that have attained exemption, implement the Expanded Public Works Program ("EPWP"). The program subscribes to the "decent employment through inclusive economic growth." - outcome 4 of The Expanded Public Works Program ("EPWP"), Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, Republic of South Africa. There is a significant difference in employment terms of conditions, specifically between the Building Industry Bargaining Council Collective Agreement ("BIBC") and the Expanded Public Works Program ("EPWP"), the latter being less favourable in terms of employment and labour conditions, which will be discussed in Chapter 2 Literature Review.

Thirdly, a "labour-intensive approach" is used, within the construction of large-scale community-based housing projects. According to Bentall (1999), a "labour-intensive approach" is defined as an approach where labour is the dominant resource for carrying out works, and where the share of the total project cost spent on labour is high (typically 25 – 60%). Labour-intensive construction increases employment opportunities per unit of expenditure by comparison with conventional capital-intensive methods. By 'significant' is meant 300% to 600% increases in employment generated per unit of expenditure (McCutecheon, 2002).

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The specific research questions guiding the study are:

1. What are the labour challenges experienced within a community-based housing project?
2. Are there any differences in labour challenges faced in social and commercial housing projects?
3. Which strategies are used to address the labour challenges at community-based housing project?

1.4 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1.4.1 Research Aim

A vast array of studies has been conducted on the labour relationship (Kwakwala, 2010; Nel, Kirsten, Swanepoel, Erasmus & Poisat, 2012; Wood, 1998), however very few studies focus

on the labour challenges faced, specifically, within a community-based housing project, in the Western Cape. The aim is to identify current labour challenges experienced within the implementation of a community-based housing project, the difference in labour challenges experienced between – social housing and commercial housing projects and to identify strategies used within social housing projects to address current labour challenges experienced.

1.4.2 Research Objectives

The following research objectives are identified:

1. To identify which labour challenges are being experienced at the community-based housing;
2. To identify differences between labour challenges faced in social housing and commercial housing projects;
3. To identify strategies used to address the labour challenges at community-based housing project.

1.5 DELIMINATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

This study was limited to an organisation, involved with community-based, in the Western Cape. Although the findings may be applicable to other organisations, information will only be gathered within this context. The sample size is small and data saturation may not be able to be achieved. The research was conducted during the 3rd COVID19 Pandemic wave, which coincides with the research period, during which retrenchments and site closure were imposed due to no work availability, which may impact the correspondence and information received from the participants.

1.6 DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

Collective Agreement

In terms of the Labour Relations Act, 1995, of South Africa, a collective agreement is a written agreement concerning the terms and conditions of employment or any other matters of mutual interest that are concluded by one or more registered trade unions on the one hand and one or more employers and/or one or more registered employers' organisations on the other.

Community Liaison Officer

A community liaison officer (CLO), sometimes referred to as a local liaison officer, communicates and coordinates activities between an organisation and a community. Typically, this might be required where an organisation such as a property developer has a significant interaction with the general public.

Reference: www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Community_liaison_officer

Conflict Resolution

The Harvard Law School, define conflict resolution as a process by which two or more parties reach a peaceful resolution to a dispute.

Labour Intensive Approach

Refers to methods of construction involving a mix of machines and labour, where labour, utilising hand tools and light plant and equipment, is preferred to the use of heavy machines, where technically and economically feasible (Guidelines for the Implementation of Labour-Intensive Infrastructure. Projects under the Expanded Public Works Programme, 2nd Edition, 2005).

Labour Relationship

p/a (Industrial Relations & HR Terms)

a.   collective relations between the management of an organisation and its employees or employees' representatives;

b.   a set of such relations in a wider context, such as in an industry, or in a national economy https://www.thefreedictionary.com/labour+relations

1.7 ASSUMPTIONS

The collection of information will mainly be from members currently involved within a community-based housing project. Opinions and views will be collected from both employee, employer and community representatives. Information collected will be reliable because it will be obtained from the individuals who are responsible for the daily operations, individuals directly involved with the project as well as community representatives. Interviews will be conducted one on one with all members involved, who has experience within a community-based housing project, in the Construction Industry – Western Cape.

1.8 THE OVERVIEW OF THIS STUDY

Chapter One: Introduction and Background

This chapter intends to explain the motivation of this study. The aims of this research as well as the objectives are stated.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter reviews the academic roots, logical arguments regarding the labour relationship within this community - based housing project, construction industry.

Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology

This chapter will discuss the research methodology which consists of the research design, sampling and sampling design, data collection processes, data analysis and ethical considerations to address the research objectives.

Chapter Four: Findings and Analysis

This chapter indicates the expectations, as well as possible limitations of the proposed study. Employee and Employer representative feedback will be obtained and compared.

Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter concludes with a review on research problem, construct development and empirical findings. Implications of labour challenges, study limitations and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter emphasises and discusses the body literature studies on the definition of the tri-partite employee relationship and each stakeholder's role within the relationship. Thereafter a brief discussion follows regarding the construction environment (specifically within the Western Cape), within which the labour relationship interacts. Labour challenges will be discussed within the context of the social housing environment. Current conflict resolution processes will be identified to address labour related challenges experienced.

2.2 THE "TRI-PARTITE" RELATIONSHIP

According to Nel, Kirsten, Swanepoel, Erasmus and Piosat (2012);
Employment refers to:

> "A complex and dynamic open system of formal, informal, individual and collective relationships and interactions between a range of stakeholders, including the primary role players of employers, employees and the state, and their representatives and related institutions. These parties interact concerning aspects that relate to the people who work in the context of the employment relationship in organisations that function in a broader societal context, where the needs satisfaction of the society is a key concern. The employment relationship acknowledged to have built-in common ground as well as conflict dynamics. A central feature to this field of theory and practice is the notion of fairness in balancing, integrating and reconciling the partly common and partly divergent interest of the parties."

Three parties are involved in a labour relations system, and subsequently it has a tripartite nature (Bendix, 2001).

The role of each party in to the tri-partite relationship, according to Suffield, Templer, and Lawrence (2018):

➢ Primary Employment Relationship: relationship between the employee and employer;
➢ Secondary Employment Relationship: relationship between the state, the employer and the employee. This relationship is more indirect in nature.

Role of each party in the tri-partite relationship	**Role of the employee** Provides labour in exchange for wages. Becomes financially dependent on their employer which makes them more susceptible to explotation. The Employee will often join a **trade union** to partake in collective action in order to counter economic power of the employer.
	Role of the employer A person or state which providers another person with work and purchases labours. Employers often form or join **employers' organisation** to stand as a collective front which represents their members when dealing with organised labour.
	Role of the state A facilitative relationship exists in that the state provides a framework for conducting the employment relationship between the employer and employee by establishing the rules and regulations governing their interaction (regulartory framework). Laws, rules and regulations all have to be passed by parliament. **State Structure -** **a. Executive:** Political leadership responsible for formulating and executing labour policies and strategies. **b. Legislature:** Shapes the legislative framework that governs labour relationship. **c. Judiciary:** Responsible for the interpretatopn of the law, involved in labour court and constitutional court.

Table 2.1: Source: Unit 2: Participants in South Africa's Labour Relation System - StuDocu – retrieved 12/11/2021.

The above summary, outlines the current role players' function within the tri-partite labour relationship. The main objective is to ensure a harmonious relationship exists which will benefit all parties involved. Harcourt and Wood (2003), defined Tripartism as a "somewhat ambitious manifestation of neo-corporatism, in that the partners are drawn together in setting macro-economic policy, aiming to encourage consensus, fairness and equity, and consequently overcome potentially ruinous class conflicts, and foster social and economic progress." They continued stating that Neo-Corporatism seeks to reconcile the interests of competing class

interest groupings in the society, implying compromise and deal making between capital and labour, with the state adding the resources and regulations necessary to make deals viable and durable, in order to provide the basis for sustainable growth.

2.3 TRI-PARTITE LABOUR RELATIONSHIP WITHIN THE COMMUNITY-BASED HOUSING PROJECT

It is evident from the above that not one stakeholder involved within the labour relationship can afford to have a parochial outlook, each stakeholder needs to work collaboratively to acknowledge and understand the complexities associated within the labour relationship. Before specific labour challenges experienced within a community-based housing are identified, a deeper understanding of each stakeholder's role is required.

The Employer

Employers are seen as the providers of work. Managers and Senior employees are the internal representatives and act in the best interest of the Employer. The managers are required to have leadership capabilities, to lead a diversified workforce.

Employers working within a community-based housing project are required to recruit a community liaison officer ("CLO"). A community liaison officer is appointed and plays an active role within the employee- and employer relationship.

According to the Construction Industry Development Board (2016):

"The CLO is appointed by the contractor to assist in the identification and selection of local enterprises and local labour, and is guided by the client's approved CLO policy on construction works. The Community Liaison Officer shall be a member of the targeted community, and shall be recommended by the Ward Councilors(s) and approved by the contractor."

The above is indicative that community leadership and political interferences will be experienced with the roll out of large community-based housing projects. Research report findings of the Construction Industry Development Board, 2015, found that labour problems are often created where the community liaison officer and councilors use their power to buy influence in the community, or where there are political differences in the community that spill over to the construction site.

The Employer Organisation (Master Builders Association "MBA")

Employer organisations play an important role in the employment relations within South African. Michael (1992) indicated that employer's organisations have been established since the first half of the 20th century, signalling the existence of vibrant private sector. Koçer and Hayter (2011) argue that in case of African situation, the African employers' organisations emerged later than the 20th century and was established in a response to the growing strengths of trade unions.

Employers' Organisations (EOs) are defined as "formal groups of employers set up to defend, represent or advise affiliated employers and to strengthen their position in society at large with respect to labour matters as distinct from economic matters. They may conclude collective agreements but this is not a formal rule and cannot be an element of their definition. Unlike trade unions, which are composed of individual persons, employers' organisations are composed of enterprises. Most legal definitions of a trade union apply to them (Oechslin, 1990).

The Master Builders Association of South Africa, was established as a National Representative Body in the Building and Construction industry in South Africa. It operates as Federation of Registered Employer Associations representing contractors and employers in the construction industry, and is regulated in terms of Section 107 of the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995. Master Builders Association represents its members on national bodies and lobbies, national government on legislative and other policy issues.

The Employee

PwC (2015) reported that the construction industry is cyclical in nature. This creates an employment environment, where employees are recruited on fixed term or project-based employment contracts. According to the CIDB Report (2018), the construction industry employs an abundance of low and unskilled labour. Temporary employment leads to an increased feeling of uncertainty amongst low-income earners, their future employment prospects and security, increasing conflict amongst employers and employees. Trade unions, therefore has an important role to play in protecting the employment rights of employees.

The Labour Relations Act No 66 of 1995, as amended in 2014, introduced a new regulation on fixed term employment. The amended act became effective on 1st January, 2015. Under the new statutory regulations, as a general rule, fixed term employment contracts with lower

earning employees are limited to a period of maximum (3) three years. Thereafter, the employee will be deemed to be an indefinite period employee of the employer ("permanent"), and be protected against unfair dismissal. However, within construction projects this rule is exempt, due to the nature of operations being fixed – meaning that there is a start and end date.

Trade Union

In South Africa, trade unions play an integral role in labour markets leading since the dawn of democracy in 1994 (Hirsh, 2004). The main function of trade unions in South Africa was to advocate democracy, through the improvement of the employees' living standards. Today however they have a broader role to play, within the South Africa's National Development Plan ("NDP"). Webster and Fairbrother (2008) argue that 'trade unions are social movements rooted in the realities of the interface between market and society, and the variants thereof.' This is based on the premise that trade unions recruit members from the society, and therefor unions start as a social movement with a social responsibility to communities as a whole.

Over and above protecting workers rights and improving economic status, trade unions roles should be to promote social change, ensure harmonious industrial relations and encourage human resource development.

2.4 BUILDING INDUSTRY BARGAINING COUNCIL (BIBC)

The Building Industry Bargaining Council ("BIBC") (Cape of Good Hope), governs the Construction Industry within the Western Cape. The "BIBC" (Cape of Good Hope), operates within the Cape Peninsula, Boland, Malmesbury and Overstrand area, its main function is to regulate and monitor the employment conditions within these areas. By law all building and building-related contractors (i.e., painters, plumbers etc), must pay their employees minimum rates as prescribed per labour category and certain minimum benefits. These employment conditions are gazetted in the Collective Agreement by the Minister of Labour and such becomes law (https://bibc.co.za, retrieved 03/12/2021). The Western Cape is the only province, in South Africa, which has a Collective Agreement, gazetted by the Minister of Labour.

In 2014, the Department of Labour conducted public hearings with the view to establish a sectorial determination to set wage and working conditions for construction workers within the Eastern Cape, however it was shelved. Provinces which are not governed by a collective

agreement, must adhere to the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (No 75 of 1997). According to the "BIBC", the provinces that have no collective agreement in place relies on "shop floor" bargaining at company level.

o **EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAM ("EPWP")**

The Expanded public works program was introduced as a strategy to provide poverty and income relief through temporary work for unemployed in South Africa (Nzimakwe, 2008). The Department of Public Works, launched the expanded public works program in 2003, and the conditions of employment are set out by the Labour Department. EPWP is aimed at providing temporary poverty relief. The programme does not make provision for permanent work, but rather aims at providing temporary work contracts to unemployed people who want to build skills, enter the formal job market and improve their future prospects (Article written by Nyoka 2020 – EPWP: temporary work, permanent casuals – New Frame published).

Although job is created, the nature of employment is temporary and skills development is key during this period. Altman and Hemson (2007), assessed EPWPs quantitatively and asserted:

"The EPWP is not far off its job creation target as originally framed. It has generated approximately 716,400 work opportunities in three years, as against a target if one million over five years. (p. 10)."

Even though jobs are created, the terms of employment are less favourable than the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, no 75 of 1997.

Aghimien, Oke, Aigbavboa and Thwala (2019) study concluded that the major challenges facing EPWP in the study area are low wages, lack of discipline among participants, limited duration of training, and delay in payment of stipends to participants.

The public works programme in South Africa should change as the policy environment changes from relief, emergency and "special" public works programme to a long-term structured employment-generation programme (Thwala, 2015). The author stated that the public works programme must aim to ensure that infrastructure is planned around local needs rather than vice-versa.

o   **LABOUR CHALLENGES WITHIN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY**

The implications of the South African Construction industry labour challenges are many and diverse (Agoba, 2018).

Skills Shortages

The Construction Education and Training Authority ("CETA") is established to provide skills development services to the construction industry. There main objective is to implement the National Skills Development Strategy ("NSDS III").

Table 2.1

The skills profile composition, within the construction industry as reported in 2017

Occupation Mayor Group	% of Total
Managers	9%
Professionals	8%
Technicians and Associate Professionals	11%
Clerical and Support Workers	6%
Service and Sales Workers	2%
Trade Workers	14%
Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers	13%
Elementary Occupations	37%

Source. Workplace Skills Plan, CETA (2017).

From the above, elementary workers represents the largest percentage of the workforce skills profile. According to the International Standard Classification of Occupational ("ISCO"), elementary occupations consist of simple and routine tasks which mainly require the use of hand-held tools and often some physical effort.

Windpapo (2016) highlighted the following factors that influences skills shortages within the construction industry.
   ✓   The construction industry poor image;

14

- ✓ The role of Government;
- ✓ Quality and Relevance of training received by artisans;
- ✓ The aging workforce;
- ✓ Cyclical nature of the demand for Construction services;
- ✓ Technology Advancements;
- ✓ Economics Conditions and
- ✓ The need for certification.

Skills shortages was discussed in the previous section. This study will elaborate on the impact of the construction industry poor image and the role of government as these are challenges experienced within the community-based housing project.

The Construction Industry Poor Image

Construction industry jobs are perceived as jobs that have a low social standing, due to the physical nature of the job, long working hours, remote work sites and nomadic lifestyles (CIDB, 2007).

According to Haas et al. (1999), the construction industry lacks appeal to young, potentially skilled workers who do not see it as a viable career path. Mukora (2008) shared the same sentiment, indicating that the industry is known to attract people who have practical skills and are hands-on. Within the 21st century, young people are more inclined to be driven by technology advanced careers and managerial positions. Mukora (2008) stated that today, the youth have no preference for hands-on labour and they would rather work with computers. As a result, the industry struggles to attract young people and has failed to replace labor that has left the industry and to satisfy the increased demand for skilled labour (Ademeso, et al., 2011).

The Role of Government

The Government in South Africa, plays a significant role, in training people within specific trades. The Sector Education and Training Authority, alongside Construction Education and Training Authority ("CETA"), was launched by the government to drive initiatives to train trades, required within the sector. The CETA was placed under administration in 2011, due to underperformance and non-compliance with the requirements of the Skills Development Act, 1998, which hampered the skills development progress, within the industry.

The Expanded Public Works Program, was introduced to create short term employment, especially amongst youth within the industry. According to Stats SA (2022), the Youth in South

Africa continue to be disadvantaged in the labour market with an unemployment rate higher than the national average.

According to the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) for the first quarter of 2022, the unemployment rate was 63,9% for those aged 15-24 and 42,1% for those aged 25-34 years, while the current official national rate stands at 34,5% (see below figure).
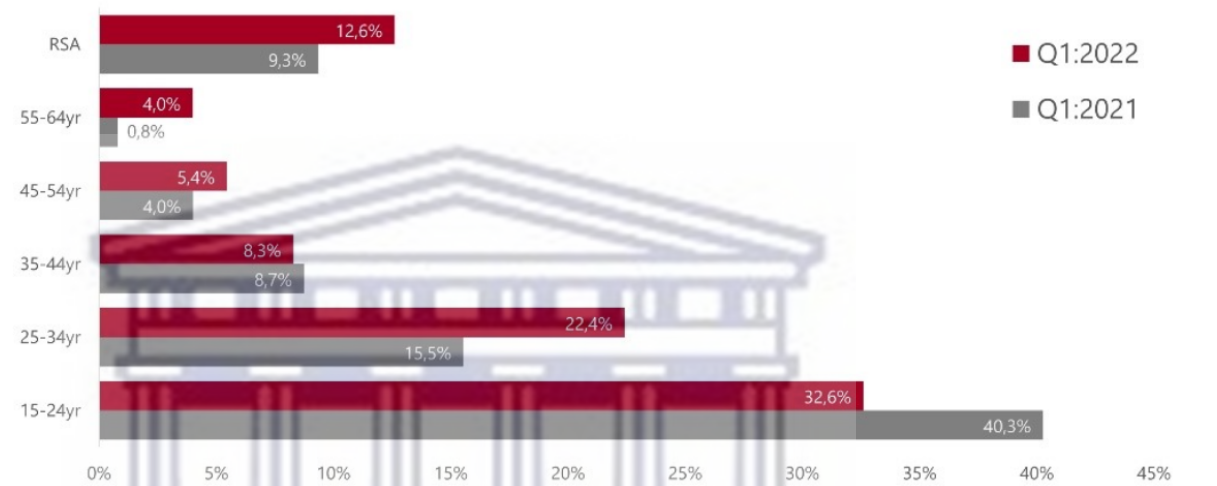
Figure 2.2 Source: QLFS Q 2021, Stats SA (2022).

The aim of the EPWP programme is to equip unemployed youth with skills and work experience required in the labour market. This program does address unemployment, on a short-term basis however fails to address the need to attract skilled labour (specifically trade skills) within the industry. The need to attract skilled labour within the industry and it contradicts current legislature.

The South African government, passed new legislature a "first ever national minimum wage", effectively from the 1st of January 2019. The national minimum wage rate was set at R 20,00 per hour. The employee involved under the EPWP program, were earning R 92,15 (less than R 15,00) per day. The Building Industry Bargaining Council, wage rates for unskilled labour, is set at R 26,83 per hour (exclusive of benefits – pension and holiday/bonus fund). Commercial Housing must register under the BIBC and pay accordingly whereas community-based housing obtains exemption and implements the EPWP program.

According to a study by Samson (2015) , within the social sector relating to EPWP payments, indicated that EPWP workers stipend according to the EPWP minimum wage stipend was

16

supposed to be R 70,59 per day in 2014. According to the author's findings, the EPWP of the Western Cape Government paid R 3000,00 per month, therefore workers in the Western Cape were better paid than workers in the other provinces.

This creates a challenge within the industry because the employees are paid, based on the type of project, even if they work on similar projects pay rates differ from province to province and the employees are merely recruited for short term purposes.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONSTRUCTION LABOUR CHALLENGES

Agbola, et al. (2018), identified that there are three dimensions to the implications of labour challenges experienced within the construction industry of South Africa. They are:

1) Social: these are the most physical evident and refers to – unemployment and/or underemployment within the construction sector, low pay and poor social image etc.

2) Political: certification and educational requirement policies and the successful delivery of housing.

3) Economic: employment problems, poor income and the inability to be gainfully employed.

Agbola, et al. (2018) continued to state that if these labour challenges are not timely and properly contained, they degenerate and escalate into high-magnitude, intractable problems that are capable of wreaking a full-scale industrial havoc that could wreck the entire industry.

The next section, will focus on how labour disputes and conflict resolution processes are implemented to resolve labour challenges experienced within an organisation is South Africa. These processes are of utmost importance in order to ensure a harmonious relationship between the employer and employee.

2.8 CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESSES

2.8.1. Definition of Conflict

Coser (1967, cited in Moore, 1996) has defined conflict broadly as a –

"Struggle between two or more people over values, competition for status, power or scarce resources (p.16)."

Wertheim, Love, Peck and Littlefield (1998) view conflict as occurring when there are real or perceived differences in interests (i.e., wants, needs, fears, concerns) that cannot be simultaneously satisfied. Tillet (1991) believes conflict manifests when the needs and values of two or more parties are incompatible.

According to Sims (2002), wherever there is human factor as a social input, arguments and conflicts among individuals are inevitable as a consequence of individual differences especially in today's environment of intense globalisation and competition. Conflict is a phenomenon that could emerge in every part of organisational life, and it may bring heavy loads and costs both for organisation and individuals if it is not managed well (Tjosvold, 1991).

2.8.2. Definition of Conflict Resolution

There are many interpretations of conflict resolution. For this research proposal, conflict resolution will be defined in context of the labour relationship and at the interpersonal level.

Boulle (1996), described conflict resolution processes as many and varied and that it can be seen on a continuum ranging from collaborative, participatory, informal, non-binding processes (such as mediation, conciliation, third party negotiations) to adversarial, fact orientated, legally binding and imposed decisions that arise from institutions such as courts and tribunals.

2.8.3. Conflict Resolution Process: South African Labour Relations Context

Conflict within the workplace, can be resolved internally or externally. The problem that arises is that employers and employees are not familiar with the steps and their rights and duties, outlined within the Labour Relations Act, 1995, on resolving them. The below diagram, visually represents the current conflict resolution process, within the South African context.
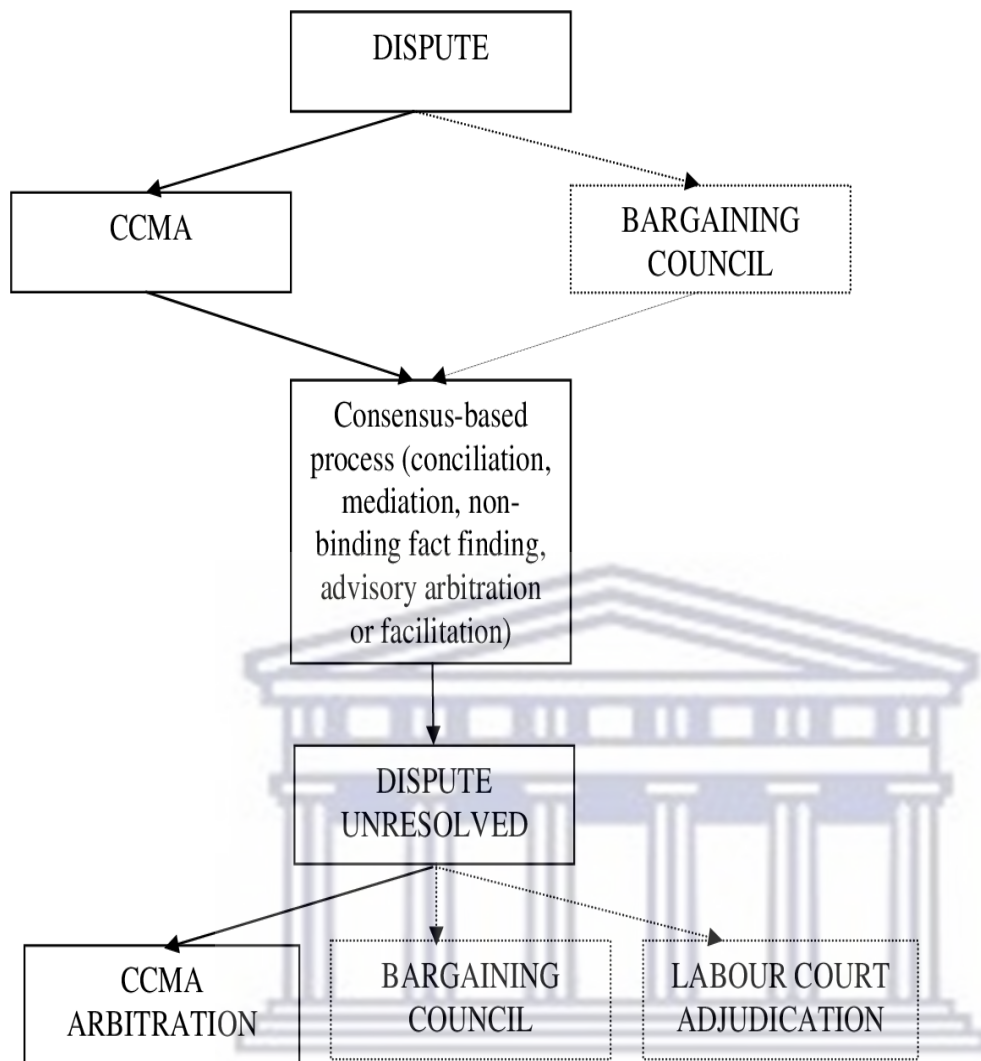
Figure 2.4: Schematic representation of the process of dispute resolution at the CCMA, published by Kwakwala (2010)

2.8.4. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

According to Simokat (2014), ADR comprises of different mechanisms through which disputes are resolved without litigation. In South Africa the ADR has extensively been used in the field of labour law (Glazewski, 2014). An important feature of all the ADR mechanisms is that they are all voluntary (Grogan, 2014). These emphasize the control of the parties over their own agreement from facilitation where the whole decision-making process is created by the parties, to arbitration where a decision still requires the parties' consent for implementation and that the choice of the third party to assist must be agreed upon by all parties (Simokat, 2014).

The mechanisms incorporated within the ADR are conciliation, negotiation, medication and arbitration, and will be discussed below. The purpose of these mechanisms is to provide parties with an opportunity to resolve and settle disputes, outside litigation and has decreased cost implications for the employer.

2.8.4.1. Conciliation

Definition - Conciliation is a process where a conciliator or panelist meets with the parties in a dispute and seeks resolution of the dispute by mutual agreement (Pretorius, 1993). Bosch (2004) states that conciliation is a voluntary process, where the parties involved are free to agree and attempt to resolve their dispute by conciliation.

Within the Western Cape Construction Industry, the Building Industry Bargaining Council (BIBC), acts as the conciliator. The employer pays a monthly levy fee per employee, that contributes to the costs involved within dispute resolution processes.

2.8.4.2. Negotiation

Definition - Negotiation is a process whereby parties attempt to personally reach a settlement without the use of an independent third party (Ramsden, 2009).

Within the BIBC scope, negotiation takes the form of Collective Bargaining, and is focused on negotiating employment relations, which relates to rights to strike and the exercise of power. On the other hand, they also negotiate the conditions of employment, which include wage determinations, working hours etc. Parties involved in the negotiation phase include registered employers' organisations and trade unions at the BIBC. According to the BIBC Constitution of the Cape of Good Hope, a trade union requires paid up membership of at least five hundred (500) employees who have been registered by the Council and are employees active within the industry in the area of jurisdiction, in order to be a representative of the Collective Bargaining. The same is applicable to employers' organisation, in order to form part of Collective Bargaining, they must represent employers who collectively employ at least five hundred (500) employees who have been registered by the Council and are employees active within the industry in the area of jurisdiction.

2.8.4.3. Mediation

Definition – Mediation generally involves acknowledgement of the credibility, knowledge and reliability of a mediator, as well as his or her trustworthiness (Nel, Kirsten, Swanepoel, Erasmus & Poisat, 2012). Mediation, refers to the intervention of a third party, also referred to as a "third party resolution process".

The role of trade unions in the mediating processes has increased and unions continue to exercise substantial political influence in various platforms which involves the government (state) and employers Wood (1998). The trade unions, employers' association and the state, are the prominent participants in employment relations.

2.8.4.4. Arbitration

Definition – Ramsden (2010) defines arbitration as a mechanism whereby the parties of a dispute enter into a formal agreement that an independent and impartial third party, the arbitrator, chosen directly by the parties, will hear both sides of the dispute and make an award, which the parties undertake to accept as final and binding. Arbitration is seen as the next step following mediation and is only employed if mediation fails (Nel, Kirsten, Swanepoel, Erasmus & Poisat, 2012).

Arbitration in South Africa is governed by the Arbitration Act, of 1965. In terms of section 1 of the Arbitration Act, parties must agree in writing to arbitrate for the Act to be applicable.
An article published by, on the 14 May 2018, *"Arbitration Fees Add Insult to Injury"*, discussed that the South African labour law strongly protects employees. The forums provided by the Labour Relations Act (LRA) to carry out labour dispute resolution include:
- ✓ The Centres for Dispute Resolution attached to the numerous bargaining councils established in South Africa;
- ✓ The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA);
- ✓ The Labour Court;
- ✓ The Labour Appeal Court.
- ✓ It is evident throughout the article that employers become aware that, should things go wrong with dismissal, they may have to pay the following:
- ✓ A settlement amount in order to avoid having to go to court or arbitration;
- ✓ Legal fees to be represented at arbitration or court;
- ✓ The legal fees of the employee;

✓ Retrospective back pay to employees who the courts or arbitrators have reinstated;

✓ Compensation to employees who they have been found to have dismissed unfairly.

Increasingly, employers are becoming aware of the high costs involved. Hence, settling disputes before arbitration has become a common practice within the South African Labour Relations context. The Department of Labour South Africa (2017) released the below statistics, relating to how conflict/disputes are resolved within the workplace -
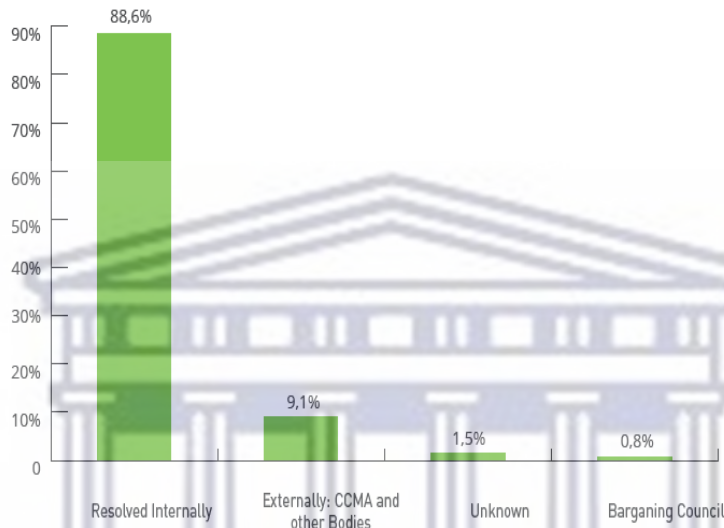
Figure 2.5: Department of Labour, Strike Statistics database, 2017

Majority of the workplace (89%) disputes are resolved internally, through employees and employer's engagement. This was followed by disputes resolved through the intervention of external bodies such as the CCMA (9,1%). Only a few workplace disputes (0,8%) were resolved through the bargaining councils in 2017.

The system of dispute resolution in South Africa has evolved from the shortcomings and problems experienced with the old system of labour relations and dispute resolution before the advent of democracy in 1994 (Grogan, 1999). External conflict resolution processes are timeously and costly and as seen above, internal conflict resolution processes are favoured. According to Mischke (1997), there is a pressing need for procedures and institutions to effectively deal with disputes in a cheap and expeditious manner.

Conflict within the workplace can cause havoc, when no structures are in place internally, and external conflict resolution processes are not adhered to. Another area, which requires attention is how employees and employers, understand the processes involved in resolving disputes/ conflicts, within a diversified environment (community-based housing).

22

2.9   CONCLUSION

This chapter aimed to discuss the tri-partite relationship and the tri-partite relationship within a community-based housing project. The Building Industry Bargaining Council and Expanded Public Works Program was discussed which is applicable to the community-based housing project under study. The labour challenges within the construction industry and the implications thereof on South Africa construction industry.

The chapter continued to highlight the conflict resolution process and definitions – conflict, conflict resolution, conflict resolution process and the alternative dispute resolutions processes (conciliation, negotiation, mediation and arbitration).

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0   INTRODUCTION

This study to identify the key labour challenges faced within a community-based housing project, adopted a qualitative methodology to gather data required to answer the key research questions. In-depth interviews were used to qualitative data that was used in the current study. This chapter provides the research philosophy, research approach, research design, population and sample of the study, data collection, data collection instrument, trustworthiness of data and ethics considerations.

3.1   RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

The interpretivism research philosophy is utilised in qualitative research studies because the researchers would want to interpret what they get in the real world, that is from the key informants on key labour challenges faced within a community-based housing project (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The interpretivism research philosophy was adopted to interpret the key labour challenges faced within a community-based housing project. The interpretivism philosophy was used to guide the qualitative research study. According to Bryman and Bell (2016), interpretivists collect qualitative data in the real world and interpret the data to construct theories from the collected data using the inductive approach. The interpretivism philosophy and the qualitative research approach adopted in the proposed study, enabled the understanding of the reality or phenomena through making sense of multiple meanings, realities, interpretations, and language, used by the research participants, while knowledge building process is achieved through the narratives, perceptions and interpretations of the research participants.

3.2   RESEARCH APPROACH

The qualitative research approach refers to non-statistical inquiry techniques and processes that are used to gather a social phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This research study on key labour challenges faced within community housing projects. In research, there are basically three types of research methods, that is the qualitative, quantitative and the mixed research method, which is a combination of both the quantitative and the qualitative method

(Bryman & Bell, 2016). In qualitative research studies, researchers use non-numerical data to answer a particular research question or solve a particular research question (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Gill (2020) harness that, data used in qualitative research is collected, mainly using observations, focus group discussions and interviews, which are mainly open ended and the data analysis is presented in the form of statements and words. Qualitative research was used in the current research, because the researcher intends to interact with the labour key informants on the challenges they faced within the community housing project. The other justification for qualitative research method is that, the researcher wants to understand the labour key informants' experiences, perceptions and feelings about labour challenges, thereby collecting rich-deep thick data, that address the research problem. Qualitative research also allowed the researcher to make an exploration of the key labour challenges faced within a community project in a natural setting. The study adopted the qualitative research approach to get an insight into the key labour challenges faced within a community housing project.

3.3   RESEARCH DESIGN

The qualitative research design varies in terms of method used to gather data. For example; participant observations, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions. The current study adopted a case study design because it allowed the researcher to explore the key labour challenges faced within a community housing project. Using the case study helped the researcher to ensure that issues were not explored through one lens, but through a variety of lenses which allowed for multiple facets of the research problem to be explored. The case study was based on constructivism paradigm built upon the premise of a social construction of reality (Stake & Kerr, 1995). The approach was the close collaboration between the researcher and the participants, while enabling participants to tell their stories (Baxter & Jack, 2008).Through these stories the participants were able to describe their views of reality and this enabled the researcher to better understand the participants' actions. The researcher wanted to gain a richly detailed understanding about the key labour challenges.

3.4   SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Purposive sampling was adopted for selecting participants for the study. Carter and Little (2017) posit that qualitative research samples purposively. Purposive sampling represents a group of different non-probability sampling techniques. It is also known a selective or subjective sampling. Its main goal is to focus on particular characteristics of a population that

are of interest, which will best enable the researcher to answer questions (Carter & Little, 2017). The researcher engaged or rather selected the HR manager, Skills facilitator, Supervisor, Trade union because they are the relevant people that deal with hiring, training and supervising of construction workers.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Data collection for this study was done through in-depth interviews. Interviews constitute the gold standard for qualitative research (Oltmann, 2016). An interview is a conversation with a purpose (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). The conducted in-depth interviews with purposively selected participants. The purpose was to gain an understanding of participants' perspectives key labour challenges within a community housing project. In principle, an interview is a conversation in which there are two parties (interviewer and interviewee) deliberating on a topic of interest.

Interviews have a cycle consisting of the following four sequential steps:

- ✓ •**Planning phase**: Formulating relevant questions, designing motivating questions, and establishing a communicative atmosphere. ***Doing phase***: Delivering the question, listening to the interviewee, observing the interviewee's non-verbal behavior, evaluating the response, probing these, and recording the information. ***Analysis phase***: Transcribing the interview, making interview records, analysing one's own interviewer behaviour, ***Reflecting phase***: Identifying information gaps, preparing for the next interview,

Interview data may be collected telephonically, face-to-face, and through electronic mail. The researcher used semi-structured face-to-face interviews. Semi-structured interviews focus on predetermined questions, but the order can be modified based upon the interviewer's perception of what seems most appropriate. Question wording can be changed and explanations given; inappropriate questions for a particular interviewee can be omitted, or additional ones included. The researcher interviewed seven labour key informants.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

3.6.1 Interview schedule

Van Teijlingen (2014) stated that a qualitative research interview seeks to cover both the factual and meaning level, though it is usually more difficult to interview on a meaning level.

The aim of qualitative research interview is to describe the meanings of central themes in the life world of the subjects. The main task in interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say. To guide the interview process, the researcher generated an interview schedule after conducting a thorough literature search on the topic to identify gaps. The interview schedule consists of the key or guiding questions which are written down prior to the actual interview (see Appendix: Interview Schedule). It serves as a memory aid and helps to standardize questions across participants.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Qualitative data were collected using the interview method. This data collection method is essentially a process that uses personal contact and interaction between an interviewer and interviewee. The qualitative interviews were conducted on a face-to- face mode, and the process only started after ethical clearance was granted by the relevant office. The researcher would start the process by obtaining informed consent from the participants and this entailed explaining the rights of the participants such as voluntary participation, anonymity and confidentiality, and the right to withdraw from participation without facing any negative consequences etc. Permission to use a digital audio-recorder was routinely sought from each participant. Audio-recording helped the researcher to accurately capture data that were later transcribed. The data were collected in English, hence there was no need for translation during the process of transcribing. The researcher remained neutral in all the questions asked, and had conducted secondary research to ensure the full understanding of the topic. Questions were pre-tested on two key labour informants to avoid bias, especially given that the researcher was, and is still working for a community housing project. The researcher also requested assistance from multiple people to code and verify the data with more data sources, which gave the researcher confidence that the results were legitimate. Member checks were conducted to enhance trustworthiness of the study.

3.8 Qualitative data analysis

Qualitative data analysis refers to non-numeric information such as interview transcripts, notes, video and audio recordings, images and text documents (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It can be divided into five categories known as; content analysis, narrative analysis; discourse analysis, framework analysis, and grounded theory. In the current study, the researcher used the coding process in ATLAS. Ti version 22. To ensure credibility, the researcher was transparent in the coding process. The researcher followed the three ATLAS. ti stages used

to maintain transparency, namely (i) pre-coding stage which helps by familiarising the researcher with the data, (ii) coding stage that helps the researcher to easily see the relationship between nodes and sometimes figure out underlying ideas and meaning among them, (iii) post coding stage helped the researcher to generate themes to address the research questions and present the findings.

3.9   TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

Trustworthiness is a demonstration that the evidence for the results reported is sound and when the argument made based on the results is strong. Its equivalence in quantitative studies is validity and reliability. Shenton (2004) suggested four criteria to ensure valid interpretation of data is credible, dependable, confirmable and transferable.

Credibility: Anney (2014) defined credibility as the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings. It establishes whether the research findings represent plausible information drawn from the participants' original views. The researcher established rigour of the enquiry by adopting one of the credibility strategies known as triangulation. Triangulation helped the researcher to reduce bias and cross-examine the integrity of participants' responses. Triangulation has three strategies, but the case by case triangulation since it involves using more than case study.

Dependability: Dependability refers to the stability of findings over time. It involves participants evaluating the findings and the interpretations and recommendations of the study to make sure they are supported by the data received from the participants of the study. Dependability was established using triangulation technique explained in credibility above and conducting member checks.

Confirmability: Confirmability is the degree to which the results of questions could be confirmed or corroborated by other researchers. Confirmability is concerned with establishing that data and interpretations of the findings are not figments of the researcher's imagination, but are clearly derived from data. In this study the researcher used both audit trails and reflexivity as techniques to establish confirmability of the study findings. An audit trail is known to be a technique that establish confirmability findings of the study to be useful when writing up the results. The researcher detailed the process of data collection, data analysis and the

interpretation of data (Shenton, 2004). Reflexivity is useful in qualitative research. The researcher looked at the background and position at work to see how these will influence the research process by selecting the current topic, choosing the methodology, analysing the data, interpreting the results and presenting the conclusions. The researcher kept and maintained a reflexive journal to reflect on what happened in the research process regarding the values and interests of the current study (Shenton, 2004).

Transferability: Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts with other participants. It is the interpretive equivalent of generalisability. The researcher facilitated transferability by purposeful sampling. This means that the researcher provided detailed descriptions of the enquiry and participants were selected purposefully, since the researcher works in the community housing project is a familiar environment. It then facilitated transferability of the questions. Purposive sampling helped the researcher to focus on participants who were knowledgeable of the issues under investigation.

3.10   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research ethics addresses the questions that are ethically relevant to the study. Issues caused by the intervention of researchers can be expected to impact on the people with or about whom they research. It is concerned, in addition, with the steps taken to protect those who participate in the research, if it is necessary (Flick, 2011). Maree (2016) stated that "it is imperative to obtain clearance from ethics committee when human (or animals) subjects are involved in any kind of research of an empirical nature." The implication is that whenever researchers are developing questionnaires and interview schedules with a view to implementation thereof, ethical clearance will have to be sought.

The researcher received ethical clearance from the UWC Research and ethics committee. In addition, the ethical clearance proposal that has been administered by UWC highlighted that the research data will be kept in the universities premises for a period of five years. All forms of ethical approval were disclosed to the participants and they were free to participate or withdraw from the study.

3.10.1 Informed consent and voluntary participation

The researcher obtained consent from the participants and assured them that whatever information elicited would remain confidential and their names will not be revealed to anyone else. The researcher obtained verbal informed consent before conducting the in-depth interviews. In addition the researcher ascertained that the volunteers were available and willing to participate in follow-up interviews at a later stage, and most of them assured the researcher that they were available (Maree, 2016).

3.10.2 Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity

Tourani, Misra, Mick and Panwar (2018) mentioned that both the researcher and the participant must have a clear understanding regarding the confidentiality of the results and findings of the study. All participants' information and responses shared during the study were kept private and the results were presented in an anonymous manner in order to protect the identities of the participants. All the recordings and audio-recordings will be destroyed five years after the study has been completed, in accordance with university policy.

3.10.3 Management of information

Management of information can be defined as a control use of resources and information provided by participants in an anonymous and confidential manner. The researcher assured that audio tapes, notes and transcripts would be locked away and will be accessed only by the researcher. The researcher will destroy all the tapes and transcripts on completion of the research to honour the promise made to the participants that no one would be aware of their identity.

3.10.4 Protection from harm

The researcher ensured that participants are not exposed to any undue physical or psychological harm (Leedy & Ormrod, 2017). During the study, the researcher strived to be honest, respectful and sympathetic towards all participants and if by any chance the participants require debriefing after an interview, the researcher was willing to provide it.

Summary

The chapter presented the research methods adopted in the study, described the study setting, the research approach adopted and the other research components. It also presented the research design, sampling strategy, pilot study, data collection and procedures, and ethical considerations. The above techniques and explanations outlined in this relevant chapter, serve as a proper guideline for the result and analysis of the data. The next chapter presents the analysis and presentation of data.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1   CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter presents the results obtained from the semi-structured interviews with key informants at Greenville Garden Cities Housing Project. The data collected and analysed sought to answer the research aim and test the conceptual framework key labour challenges faced within a community-based housing project. The purpose of this chapter is to outline the processes and procedures undertaken in the data analysis phase. Two critical aspects described in this chapter are (1) Case descriptions and (2) Cross case analysis. Cross case analysis conducted using Atlas. ti version 22 and thematic analysis focus on answering the two main research questions of the study.

4.2   INTRODUCTION

The researcher aimed to investigate several areas for exploration for the study which is inclusive of the following:

- *Which labour challenges are being experienced at Greenville Garden Cities Housing Project?*
- *Are there any differences between labour challenges faced in social housing and commercial housing projects?*
- *What strategies are used to address the labour challenges at Greenville Garden Cities Housing Project?*

The exploratory nature of the aims of this study solicited the use of inductive analysis procedures, which according to Patton (1990), includes the determination of patterns, themes and categories as they emerge from the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis. For the purpose of this study, interview transcripts and field notes represented the primary data from which thematic analyses - examining, labelling and organising evidence in themes – to test the formulated propositions (Yin, 2003). In executing the data analysis for this dissertation, a three-process approach was followed. As shown in Figure 5.1, this involved (1) description of cases, (2) cross-case analysis, and (3) thematic analysis,
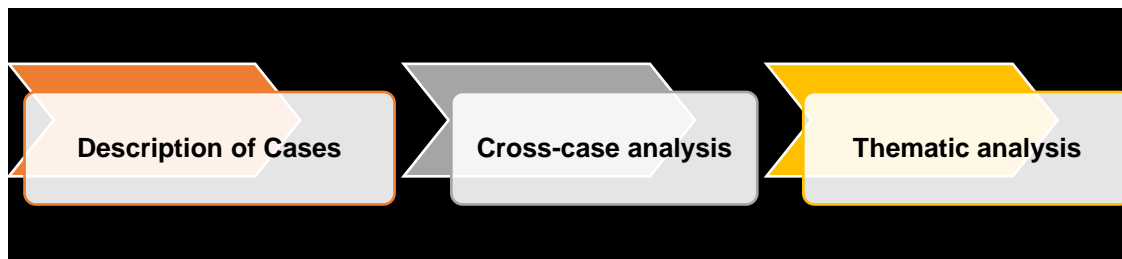
Figure 4.1: Data analysis Process
Source: Developed for this research

4.3   CASE DESCRIPTION

The following section comprises the presentation, discussion and analysis of collected information from the participants. Throughout this chapter and the dissertation, pseudonyms (indicated by asterisks *) are used to mask the identities of the respondents.

4.3.1   Awonke*

Awonke* is an Executive Director at the Greenville Garden Cities Housing Project, which is a community housing project. Awonke* is male, 56 years and has been an Executive Director at the Housing project for ten years. Awonke is responsible for approving labour policy changes, and also overseeing the labour recruitment, selection, training, performance management policy formulation and implementation. Awonke* was purposively selected to participate in the study to detail the strategic perspective of labour challenges at Greenville Housing project. Awonke* ins a holder of a Masters in Project Management.

4.3.2   Gorden*

Gorden*, male aged 43 years is a senior manager at Greenville Housing project. Gorden* has been working for Greenville Housing project for five years as a Senior manager. Gorden joined Greenville Housing project, after working for a commercial housing project based in Durban as a manager- Administration and construction for four years. Gorden* is a holder of a Bachelor's Degree in Built Environment majoring in Project Management.

http://etd.uwc.ac.za/

4.3.3 Siphokazi*

Siphokazi*, aged 34 years, female is the Human Resources Management manager at Greenville Housing project. Siphokazi* is a holder of a Bachelor's Degree in Public Administration, and has been working at Greenville Housing project as a Human Resources manager for five years. Siphokazi* was an intern at a commercial housing project for two years after finishing her Bachelors' degree.

4.3.4 Babalwa*

Babalwa*, a female aged 41 years is the Skills facilitator at Greenville Housing project. Babalwa* is a holder of a Construction management Diploma. Babalwa* joined Greenville Housing project as a site supervisor-Zone A, a position that he holds for three years. Babalwa* has worked for Greenville Housing project for eight years, thus she has been working in the current position for five years now. Babalwa*'s role at Greenville Housing project is to design training management plans for the construction workers, as well as overseeing the implementation of the training management plan at Greenville Housing project.

4.3.5 Lisa*

Lisa*, female, aged 39 years is the construction supervisor for Greenville Housing project. Lisa* holds an Advanced Diploma in Construction management. Lisa* joined Greenville Housing project as a builder ten years ago, and rose through the ranks, to become a construction Supervisor, a position he holds for the past four years. His roles in labour management, include aiding recruitment, selection of construction employees, supervision, performance management, replacements and training.

4.3.6 Chante Louw*

Chante Low*, male, aged 37 years is a construction employee and the Chairman of the Greenville Housing project employees trade union. Chante Louw* has been working for Greenville Housing project for more than 12 years. Chante Louw* was the Trade Union committee member for three years, before being elected the Chairman of the Trade Union, the position he now holds for two years. Chante Louw* represent employees on their grievances and issues to do with changes in working conditions.

4.3.7   Avela*

Avela*, a female aged 40 years is a plumber at Greenville Housing project.

Table 4.1

Demographic Data of participants. **Source***: Research data, 2022*

Participant	Age	Gender	Education	Position
Awonke*	56 years	Male	Masters	Executive Director
Gorden*	43 years	Male	Degree	Senior Manager
Siphokazi*	34 years	Female	Degree	HR manager
Babalwa*	41 years	Female	Diploma	Skills Facilitator
Lisa*	39 years	Female	Advanced Diploma	Supervisor
Chante Louw*	37 years	Male	Not Mentioned	Trade Union
Avela*	40 years	Female	Not Mentioned	Employee

35

4.4 CROSS CASE ANALYSIS

Cross case analysis presented in this section answers the research questions that were put forward for the study. This section thus presents the results based on the participants' responses on interview questions that intended to answer the three research questions of the study.

4.4.1 Labour challenges experienced at Greenville Garden Cities Housing Project

The participants of the research were interviewed on the labour challenges that were being experienced at Greenville Housing project. The key labour challenges that were highlighted by the participants at Greenville Housing project were high labour turnover; high absenteeism; wage disputes; lack of management skills, poor supervision on site; high level of unskilled and semi-skilled labour; poor communication lines and gender discrimination. The codes, or subthemes that emerged from the main theme or 'core category' are shown in Figure 4.2 below:
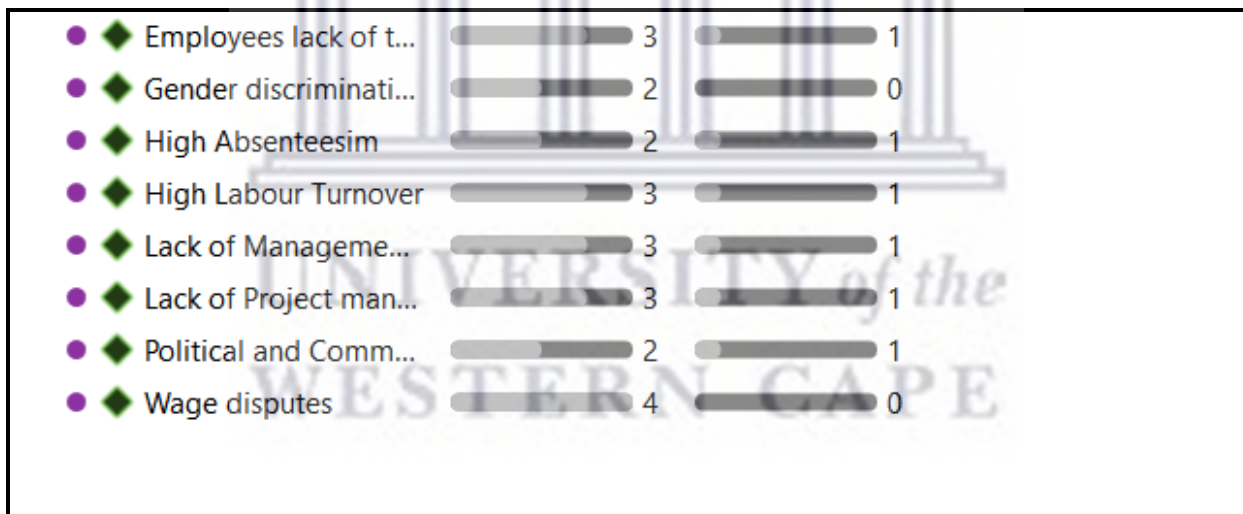

Figure 4.2: List of Codes-labour challenges. **Source**: ATLAS. ti

1) ***High Labour Turnover:*** High labour turnover was mentioned as one of the key labour challenges that is being experienced at Greenville Housing project. Employee turnover is the rotation of workers around the labour market; between firms, jobs and occupations; and between the states of employment and unemployment (Al-Suraihi et al., 2021; Ongori, 2022). The interviewed participants' high labour turnover was apparent at Greenville Housing project as shown by high level of statistics of employees, especially contract low level employees who are on EPWP. This was evidenced by the following excepts:

there are people who do not come to work due to the fact that that they are drunk or intoxicated yah so it's not construction site problem only. Retailers are facing it and other departments as well are also facing it. And also, high labour turnover whereby people leave work due to certain things which they do not agree to **(Participant 7; Quote 2);**

The year on year labour turnover statistics show that we are losing an average of 45% of our employees each year over the past five years. I have called meetings with senior managers, human resources manager and supervisors, and they indicate that, majority of them just leave after getting paid, without any exit interview, thereby making it difficult for us as an organisation to know the actual reasons why they are leaving **(Participant 1; Quote 5)***;*

Things are becoming expensive everyday here in South Africa as you are seeing. The price of fuel, the price of bread, all the basic commodities is increasing every day. Imagine in 2020, we used to buy a 2-litre bottle of cooking oil for R34, now its ranging between R80 to R100. That is an almost 200% increase in price, but salaries increased by not more than 15% from that 2020. Who will cover up for the gap between price increases and salaries' increase. People are leaving to where they are offered money that at least cushion them better on the current price increases. **(Participant 6; Quote 3)**.

2) ***High Absenteeism:*** The interviewed participants also highlighted that high absenteeism was also a key labour challenge at Greenville Housing project. Studies by Belete, (2018); Ilmi et al. (2021) also showed that high absenteeism was also a challenge in organisations. The interviewed participants stated that employee absenteeism was particularly high on Mondays, day after long holidays and on pay days. Participant 3 and 5 gave the following comments:

> *Absenteeism is also a key labour challenge at this organisation, and this usually led to delay in completing the projects that will be at hand. Most Mondays, Mondays after long weekend and we know that some employees will absent themselves from work. I think the problem is the culture of over drinking of alcohol of most low-level employees. Even those who report to work, their performance will be low, and you can see that they are visibly drunk.* ***(Participant 3; Quote 2) and;***

> *Uuuuh the conflict that is in the social housing project i can say it's the negligence of the employees, or I can say it's the intoxication which employees have on site when, more especially when they got paid they have monies they don't go to work and then that creates a lot of absenteeism on the site so that's the main problem* ***(Participant 3; Quote 4);***

> *And then the other one is the high rate of absenteeism more specially on the month end* ***(Participant 1; Quote 8);***

> *Pay days are a problem, as most employees absent themselves from work on their pay days. Some even go for three days and they will report for work say after two to three days. As a supervisor, this is a hard situation for me, as I also have targets that are set by my managers, for me to finish construction projects at a particular time, now imaging an employee, key employee like a builder absenting himself from work for three days.* ***(Participant 5; Quote 6)***

3) ***Wage disputes:*** Collective bargaining in the context of the South African Labour law is in the provisions of the Labour Relations Act of 1995. The Labour Relations Act of 1995 gives labour, the provisions of collective bargaining, and suggest that collective bargaining is a means of settling disputes between the employer and the employees. A collective agreement is a n outcome or an output for the collective bargaining process. According to the Labour Relations Act, Section 213, a collective agreement is an agreement, usually in written form, that have the conditions of employment or any matters of mutual interest that would have been concluded between a registered trade union (s) and the employer or employers. The

interviewed participants highlighted that the other key labour relations challenges at Greenville Housing project were employers of understanding the collective agreement and the trade unions' lack of understanding the collective agreement. This was evidenced by the following comments from the participants:

It seems as if employees at this organisation, do not understand the notion of what a collective agreement is. As soon as we come from the collective bargaining process, they seem to ask for changes again in the working conditions, in terms of salaries, but we say look here, we have a collective agreement, which is legally binding which we still need to fulfil, so wage disputes are always an issue at this place **(Participant 2; Quote 18)**

The trade union was however asked on the issue of wage disputes as a key labour challenge and Participant 6 alluded the following comments:

We have had many collective bargaining processes with our management, but they never at one time bend to our demands, it is us, the employees who have to take what they offer to us. Sometimes when doing negotiations, about wages and salaries, they do not want to listen to our wages demands, to be honest, I sometimes see arrogance right in their eyes, and a strong feeling that the management feel that they are doing employees a favour **(Participant 6; Quote 19)** *and;*

Mostly disputes are about the wages, mostly it's the wages and then it is the increases you know. And also, the fact that we are using the EPWP process some people want to stay on for a long time and when they are not able to stay on that becomes an issue. **(Participant 6; Quote 21)**

This was also supported by the Human Resources manager when she articulated the following:

I have worked as an intern in a commercial housing project before as I mentioned earlier. They seem to be paying workers more than we do here in social housing projects. Wage disputes are a key labour challenge in this organisation. I have presented to top management on the salary models that can save us from wage disputes, but uhm, they are yet to be approved and implemented. It seems top management do not take the wages and salaries issue seriously. The focus more on finishing projects, which however depend on employee motivation **(Participant 3; Quote 16)**

4) Management lack of project management skills: Project management skills are key to be possessed by management in construction companies. This is because construction organisations. Lack of good project management skills however can because misunderstandings between management or employers and employees. In addition, construction projects require good project planning, properly defined project scope and scheduling, good project procurement practices, good project risk management strategies. The interviewed participants highlighted that management lack of project management skills was also a labour challenge at Greenville Housing project. This was evidenced by the following excepts.

I agree that lack of proper management skills is also a source of labour challenges in the organisation. It must however be noted that, some of the project planning process, definition of the project scope, project procurement is done based on the requirements of the government, which fund the community housing projects. As management, we see that sometimes, the project deadlines are unrealistic, but our hands are tied **(Participant 1; Quote 26)**;

There is need for the organisation to have a person who is a qualified project manager. In this way, project management skills can be trained to low level employees. There is generally lack of project management skills, from the top management, right to low level employees. From the training side, I feel there is need for a key project management personnel who can help to train project management skills in the organisation **(Participant 4; Quote 9)**;

Uuuh skills development. And I don't mean just your hard skills, like also soft skills like people management and uuuh the knowledge about the project. I think that's why we get so many protests uuuh political interference the political parties talk to the workers on site and it causes a lot of riots **(Participant 7; Quote 5)**;

Employee involvement and participation in the project planning, project scope description and scheduling are very critical to successful project execution. The project plans and schedules as well as timelines are imposed to us by the project managers. As employees, when we put our grievances to say, these project deadlines are not realistic, judging from our experiences in the construction industry, they do not listen to us. When we as employees do not meet deadlines, they put the blame on us, but as employees, we remind them that, we told you, your project timelines were not realistic. (Participant 6; Quote 23).

5) Political and community interference: Political and community interference was also mentioned as s a source of labour challenges at Greenville community Housing project. The interviewed participants were for the view that the labour challenges were mainly emanating from the fact that, the organisation was supposed to employ most of their employees from the community, the government responsibility of funding the housing project; the government responsibility for project planning and scheduling and this was evidenced by the following comments:

And also, political interference and not understanding uuuh the labour relations act and also the basic conditions of employment act. So they don't understand the collective agreement at all and it becomes an issue because they took whatever meant to be an internal process they took it outside and then get community to get involved. So that is our main issues for the past five years. **(Participant 2; Quote 12);**

I think mostly it's uuh yes since it's a community project we need to advertise for the community unemployed members to apply first, but it's becoming an issue in terms of the sub-contracting where we only have to employ within the community while there are other surrounding areas who are also have like the traits and qualities for the jobs. So it's an issue so I think for the EPWP I think they should change their laws to involve other areas as well or to give **(Participant 3; Quote 17);**

I think there is a higher expectation from communities that there should be employment for them instead of looking at skilled employment. So, your progress in a project like that is slower, a little bit slower **(Participant 1; Quote 19);**

Pressure from government, in terms of we need to provide housing fast because they have got goals to achieve but it's not in line with what the community wants. So, there is constant conflict and that leads us to not implementing the project as fast as we want and the way we want **(Participant 7; Quote 8);**

The other critical labour challenge we are facing is with regard to, who to employ in this housing project. There is a lot of political interference and community interference. The community, for example want us to employ local people, but in many cases, the local people in the community might not be having trade skills, like, for example builder, plasterer, plumber, electrician among others. **(Participant 3; Quote 22) and;**

The people who hold political offices want to politicise these community housing projects. Unlike private or commercial housing projects, the political figures want to gain mileage politically by ensuring that, the people we employ come from the local community.

Employment or recruitment of employees is however done to fill in the skills gap in an organisation. Most of the community people do not have required trade skills, and some of them have a bad attitude toward work, for example, one is paid say on Friday and he or she report for duty on Tuesday, absenting himself without official leave (AWOL) Saturday and Monday. This brings a lot of problems in meeting scheduled project deliverables. **(Participant 2; Quote 21)**

6) **Lack of Management skills**: Lack of management skills was also cited as one of the labour challenges that is being faced at Greenville community Housing project. The challenge of lack of lack of management skills at the housing project was reported. It was emanating from poor supervision of employees on site, poor communication lines, poor project management skills, poor conflict management and supervisors not listening to their subordinates' grievances. This was evidenced by the following excerpts:

Poor communication lines or not having an open communication system at this housing project is causing a lot of conflicts between the employers and the employees. The middle level managers for example, if presented by employee's issues, usually do not take them up to top management or to the employer. They have a feeling that if they cascade the issues up to top management, they would have failed as supervisors. Lack of clear line of communications thus present deep labour challenges here. **(Participant 6; Quote 27**);

There could be more can be done to improve the relationship in terms of clarity, management style and communication and all those kinds of things **(Participant 6; Quote 28);**

I think for me the site foremen or supervisors need to do some few soft skill courses and have the knowledge of people skills. A bit of training on management as well would help to improve their communication with the employees on site. So for now I think it's only one way the employees will follow through if the supervisors are properly trained on their communication skills in terms of what to expect on the ground. Communication and training is required **(Participant 6; Quote 29);**

Project management skills is very important in community housing projects. This is because in their nature community housing projects are projects. Lack of project management skills on the part of supervisors is a key labour challenge at this housing project. The top management understand the project deliverables that are required in a particular project, but the supervisors seem not to conversant of what exactly need to be

*achieved on a broader scale and the time lines for those deliverables. In this regard, the information is not availed well to the employees who do the work **(Participant 4; Quote 17) and;***

*From a human resource management perspective, I feel there is need for training of supervisors, with regards to their general human resource management skills, as well as the supervisor conflict management skills. Some of the low-level employee conflicts, which I solve as a human resources manager, do not warrant to be solved at management level but rather at a lower level, that is at supervisor- employee level. **(Participant 3; Quote 26).***

7)   Employees lack of trade skills: Participant 1; 4 and 5 highlighted that there was a challenge of trade skills amongst employees at the community housing project. Trade skills in community housing projects include plumbing, building, electrical work, plastering among others. The participants were for the view that lack of trade skills was emanating mainly from employees with trade skills moving to commercial housing projects; Greenville community Housing project being mandated to employee form the community and general lack of skills in the South African labour market. This was shown by the following comments:

*There is generally lack of trade skills like for example plumbing, electrical and builders in the South African labour market. Despite efforts to train more people in these areas in vocational training centres and in technical universities, these people are not enough, as there is a lot of construction developments, happening both in the community construction side and the commercial construction projects side **(Participant 1; Quote 12);***

*Not only to focus in the community. Because that uuh for us to focus inside the community it does delay the projects in most cases because you don't find the skills within the community now you sit there with people who don't have skills because of the project requirements. **(Participant 1; Quote 20);***

*We have tried as a community housing project to train and retrain our employees on particular trade skills. We have also tried to employ those people with trade skills, but the problem is that, they do not stay, because of poor remuneration. Most of them move to commercial construction projects where they are well rewarded. **(Participant 4; Quote 20) and;***

As a supervisor and also speaking on behalf of my fellow supervisors, we all have specific trade skills. Foe example, I am a builder, but we lack trade skills on the low-level employees. We do not have assistants, thus making us to do most of the technical work.

43

This labour challenge of lack of employee trade skills do emanate from the fact that most of our employees are from the community (Participant 5; Quote 13).

8) ***Gender discrimination:*** Labour challenges relating to gender discrimination were also mentioned as one of the key labour challenges at Greenville community Housing project. The participants noted that the HR managers were not keen to recruit more women employees as they still viewed construction work as men's job. Second, the supervisors were also not willing to work with women in construction, as they complained that they delayed progress in doing the construction work as scheduled. This was shown by the following comments:

Many women are being trained various construction works at vocational colleges, that range from brick laying, building, plumbing, plastering, flooring, tiling but the HR personnel here at Greenville community Housing project, are not keen to recruit many women in construction work. We have tried as a Union to reduce this gender discrimination, but it seems it is a 'silent' policy of this organisation not to give equal employment opportunity to women construction workers. (Participant 6; Quote 31) and;

Talk about gender discrimination my foot, I want to be frank with you, construction work is and will remain a men's job. Imagine a woman spending the whole day in construction work. Yes, as place holders, or just in the name that we have such number of workers, working on these tasks, women derail progress of scheduled tasks. Call me gender insensitive, but I have been a Supervisor in construction work for years, and I know what, I am talking about. (Participant 5; Quote 9).

9) ***Poor compliance of sub-contractors:*** Participant 1 and 2 claimed that another labour challenge at Greenville community Housing project was that of poor compliance of sub-contractors. Poor compliance of sub-contractors was said to be in the form of delivering sub-standard work and delay in delivering the scheduled work. This was evidenced by the following excerpts:

We usually sub-contract our plumbing and electrical related work to other companies that specialise in those fields or related work. The problem however is that of quality control. Most of these companies that we sub-contract seem to use people who are not skilled in the fields, the people they just pick at the road sides, that lie to them that they can do the job. In this way, they deliver sub-standard work, which is costly to the company. (Participant 1; Quote 11) and;

44

The construction projects that we do here have scheduled time in which they have to be finished. If we are to sub-contract or outsource say tubing and wiring of say 100 houses and they have to be finished in 20 days, that work have to be finished in 20 days, because construction projects have fixed delivery dates. The sub-contracted companies however seem to know that, they delay delivery of completing tasks and that delay the overall construction task completion. **(Participant 2; Quote 23).**

The summary of results on Labour challenges experienced at Greenville Garden Cities Housing Project as shown in the cross-case analysis conducted from the responses given by participants in the interviews conducted for the study are shown in Figure 5.2 below:
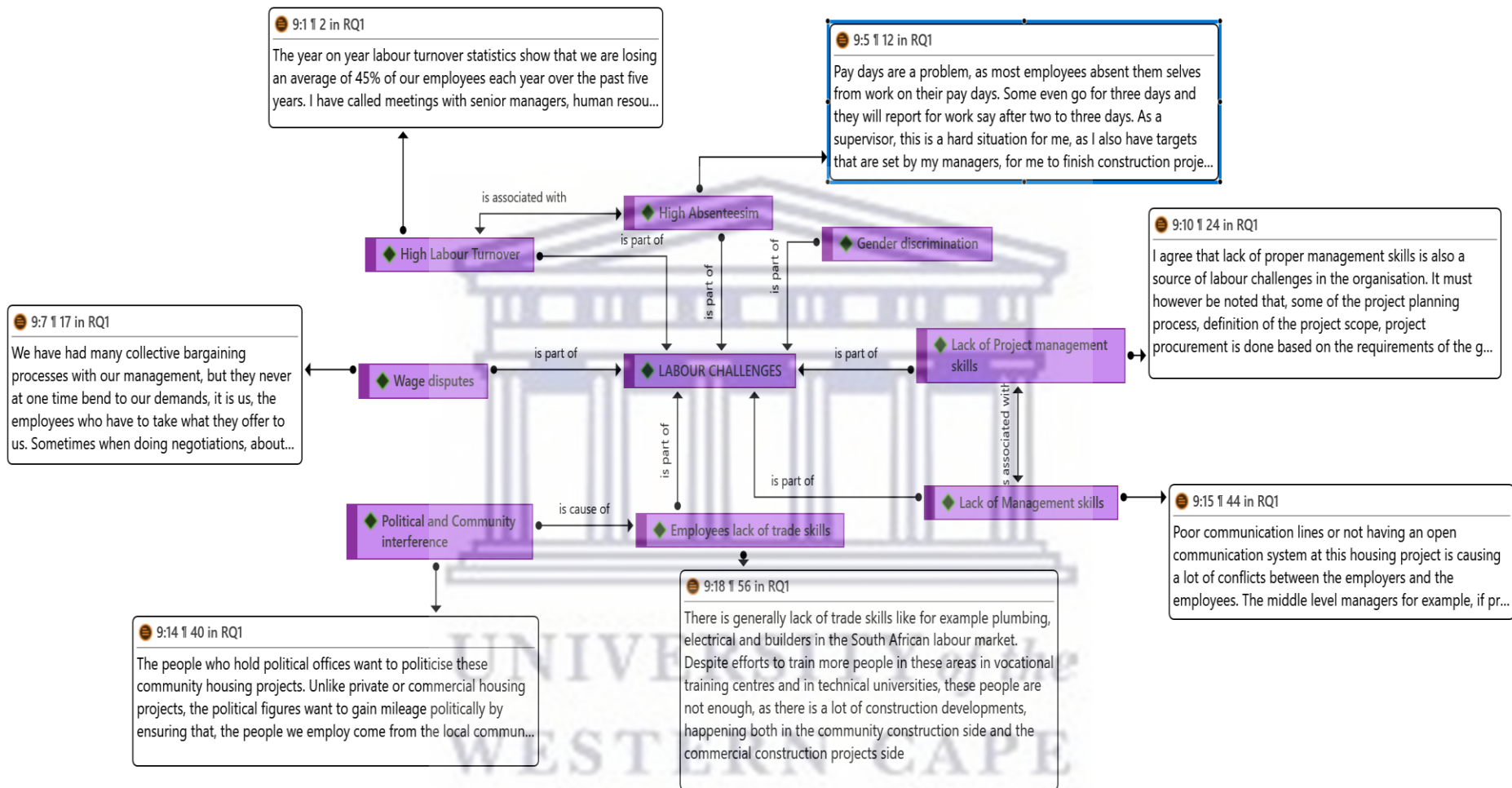
Figure 4.3: Labour challenges experienced at Greenville Garden Cities Housing Project. **Source**: Research Data, 2022

4.4.2 Differences between labour challenges faced in social housing and commercial housing projects

The second research question of the study was to examine the differences between labour challenges that are faced in social housing projects and commercial housing projects. The 'codes' or subthemes that emerged from main theme or core category, Social and Commercial Housing projects differences in labour challenges are shown in Figure 4.4 below:
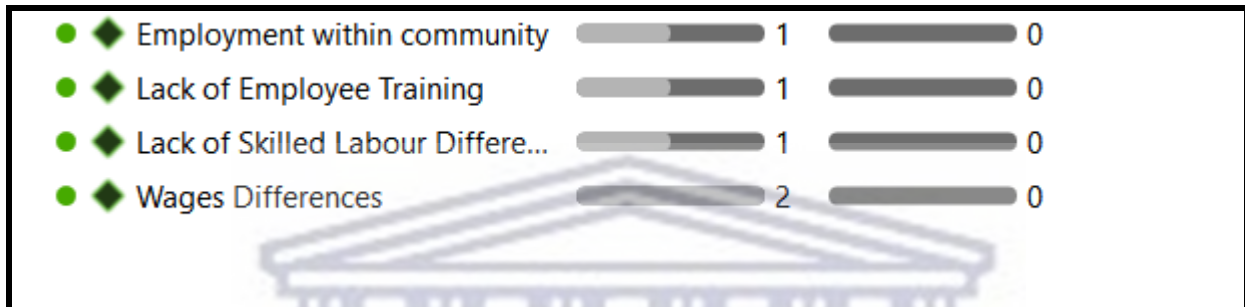
Figure 4.4: Codes- Differences between labour challenges faced in social housing and commercial housing projects. **Source**: ATLAS.ti

As shown in Figure 4.4, the seven interviewed participants were asked on the key differences between labour challenges faced in social housing projects and commercial projects and the results were as detailed below:

1) Employment within Community vs Liberty to employ from anywhere: The participants highlighted that the social housing schemes were supposed to employ from the community, whilst commercial housing projects can employ from anywhere. The differences in labour challenges, from this perspective emanated from the fact that social housing projects were supposed to employ only from the community, whilst commercial housing projects could employ from anywhere, thus they had a greater pool of skills. This was mentioned in the following comment:

> *With social houses remember it's an EPWP project so we have to follow the EPWP guidelines which means we have to employ only within the community. But with the commercial housing and other projects you can employ anyone with skills or who meets the requirements, the employment requirements. So, in there we've got collective agreement so they do follow the collective agreement and we don't have any issues on those other sites (Participant 7; Quote 18).*

47

2) Lack of Employee training in Community Housing projects: The other difference in labour challenges that emerged from the interviews, was that, the community housing projects were not investing in training of employees, as compared to commercial housing projects. The participant pointed out that this was mainly due to limited time and funding for community housing projects: This was evidenced by the following excerpt:

I think it is because the community housing developers feel like the process of training takes up a bit of time. So, the completion of projects is delayed and it is also financially expensive. Because projects have got timelines so if you are going to invest in training definitely you must be prepared to have those delays. And most of the projects which are community based are… you know, they have to be completed within a time frame and you don't want to lose the funding because of the time frame. So, you rather work with the people that are already ready and prepared. So, training becomes you know something that's not a priority. **(Participant 4; Quote 22).**

3) Lack of Skilled labour in Community housing projects: Third, lack of skilled labour in community housing projects was mentioned as one of the labour challenges differences between community housing projects and commercial housing projects. The participant highlighted that community housing projects were not able to attract skilled labour as they were supposed to employ only from the community, and also had limited funding, thus low wages for employees. Participant 6 gave the following comment:

Very different. It's very different because the social housing or whatever state funded projects are mostly in previously disadvantaged areas and that's where the difficulty is to get the qualified people. Whereas the commercial ones are in the affluent areas and you know the developers have got more options to choose from the contractors and construction companies whereas this side with social housing we have got limited pool of service providers **(Participant 6; Quote 33)**.

4) ***Wages:*** Lastly, the participants highlighted that there were wages differences that existed between community housing projects and commercial housing projects. The participants indicated that this was mainly due the fact that the commercial housing projects were well funded as compared to social housing projects. This was evidenced by the following excerpts:

> *The issue of wages is very different in the two housing modes, commercial housing projects have more salaries and wages than community housing projects due to better funding **(Participant 1; Quote 15) and;***

> *Under the EPWP which is a social housing project, employees they don't have benefits as compared to the BIBC which is commercial housing project **(Participant 7; Quote 21).***

The summary of research results with regards to differences between labour challenges faced in social housing and commercial housing projects are shown in Figure 4.5 below:
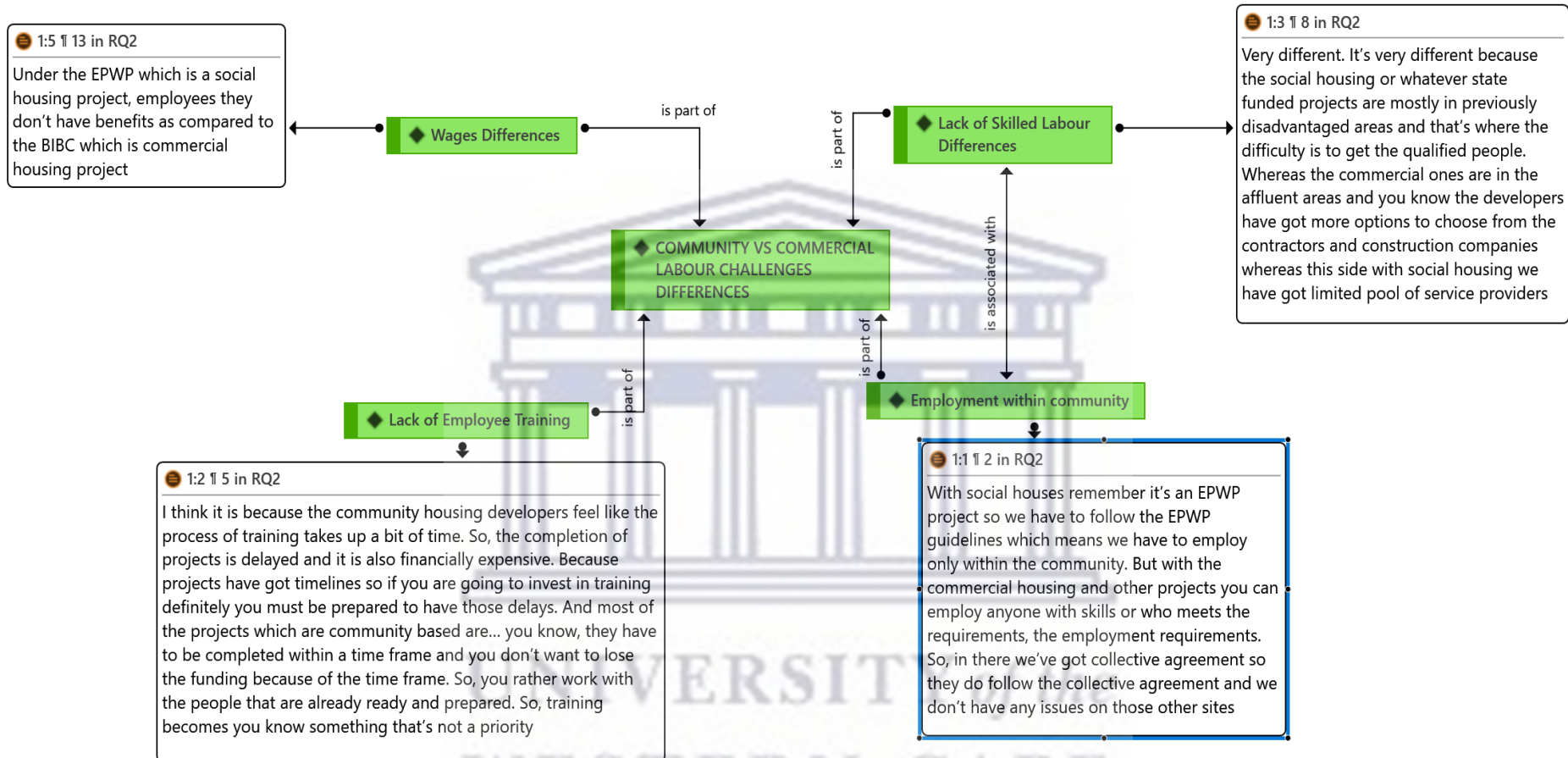
Figure 4.5: Differences between labour challenges faced in social housing and commercial housing projects. **Source**: Research data, 2022

50

4.4.3 Strategies used to address the labour challenges at Greenville Garden Cities Housing Project

Having presented research results on the labour challenges that are being faced at Greenville community Housing project and labour challenges differences between social housing and commercial housing projects, which was addressing Research Question 1 and Research Question 2, this section provides, the analysis and interpretation of results on the themes that emerged on the interview questions that were meant to address the strategies that can be used to address labour challenges in community housing projects. The 'codes' or sub themes that emerged under the theme or 'core category', 'strategies used to address labour challenges' are shown in Figure 4.6 below:

● ◆ Clarity on Housing Project Implementation	2	0
● ◆ Fairness in Expanded Public Works (EPWP) program	1	0
● ◆ Inspections	1	0
● ◆ Mutual Agreement / Listening to Employees	2	0
● ◆ Provide Better Health and Safety Conditions	2	0
● ◆ Training	4	0
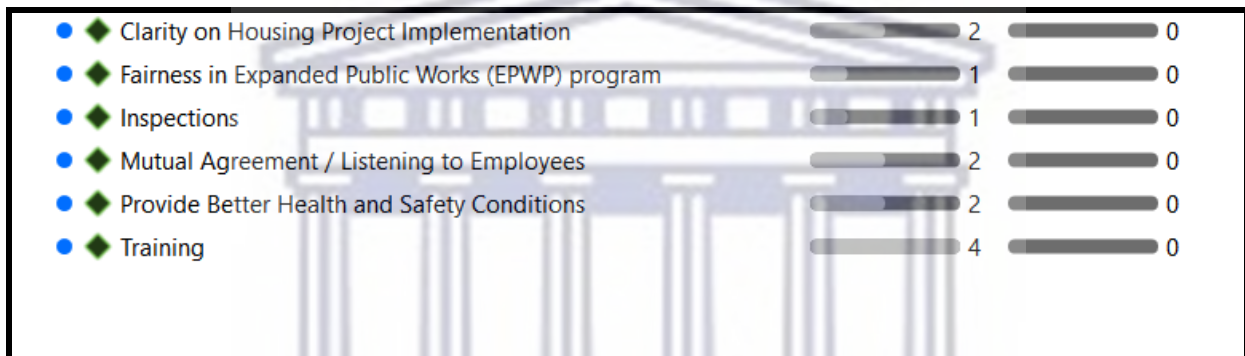
Figure 4.6: List of Codes- Strategies used to address the labour challenges

1) Training: The participants believed that training was key in addressing the labour challenges that are faced at Greenville Gardens Cities community Housing project and or community housing projects. The responses show that training was supposed to be done on the community leaders to understand EPWP, employees to understand collective agreement, upskill employees and communication skills. This was evidenced by the following excepts:

*Uuuh I think the community leaders I think they need to be trained on the EPWP roles and also, they need to be trained on the basic conditions of employment. And also, within our employees we need to identify team leaders who will be in between the management and the employees **(Participant 3; Quote 27);***

*The employee, uhm they need to know more regarding the collective agreement and labour relations act. So, I think there is still massive trainings that needs to be done when it comes to the employees. And also, with the employees I think they just think that what applies to another sector applies to the other sector as well. So, they don't understand the differences in all of these sectors. So, this is an issue **(Participant 4; Quote; 25);***

*The only way to improve the current labour employee relationship, sorry employer and employee relationship is to maybe upskill the employees so they can feel like they are involved in all this project thing so at least they can have some skills even if their project ends they can go and ask for jobs somewhere with experience and trades or something **(Participant 6; Quote 35) and;***

*I think that one of the first things would be just to build like a relationship with the community and to offer skills to the community that will get them to move forward. Like communication skills. Like literacy skills. You know because to them the take away should be its not perfect that I'm getting a job for 2 weeks or 3 weeks or 6 months it's that I'm skilled enough to go out of the community and seek employment outside these walls. So, they shouldn't be confined to the community. So, a lot of education needs to be done **(Participant 7; Quote 23).***

2) Fairness in Expanded Public Works (EPWP) program: Participant 6, mentioned that the BIBC collective agreement, that applied mostly to commercial housing projects was fair as it favours the employees more than the employer. The participant however suggested that there was need for fairness in applying the EPWP, in order to address some of the labour challenges faced at Greenville Gardens Cities community Housing project. Participant 6 gave the following comment:

So, when you read the collective agreement you will see that the BIBC collective agreement works against the employer more so it does favour the employees. So, I think it is fair. Expanded Public Works Program is not fair. I do not think so because they are within the construction project or industry as well so I think the same uh they should at least apply the same uuuh the same rules with the BIBC. Because I mean like those employees are only earning like a wage, even though we are paying them over the EPWP rate but still I think the EPWP rule is not fair to the employees (Participant 6; Quote 37).

3) Clarity on Housing Project Implementation: The participants were asked on what they think the government need to do in order to improve employer-employee relationship in community housing projects. The participants highlighted that there was need, through communication, to improve clarity on the implementation, work schedules and timelines of community housing projects. This was mentioned in the following comment:

The government as the funder and the employer and the employee… ok I think it goes back to the other one where I think between the employer and the employee, which is the developer and the employee there needs to be some communication and understanding by the supervisors of what is expected from them. And the government must also, you know before projects start they need to you know sensitize the people, the developer in terms of what their expectations are. And then you know I think things will be clear from the beginning, but if that, those roles are not clarified from the beginning that is where we end facing challenges. But for now, I think clarifying will help with the implementation (Participant 1; Quote 15).

The employer, I think our employers are doing very well. The employer is doing very well because they get industry updates from the Master Builders Association. Even those known registered employers they also get updates and training and workshops. And they also get assistance when it comes to labour issues and workshops for even the employer…employee representatives. So I think for the employer we are doing good (Participant 4; Quote 31).

4) Inspections: Inspections by the government on how the labour regulations are being implemented in community housing projects was also suggested by Participant 7, as one of the strategies that can be used to address labour challenges in community housing projects. This was shown by the comment given by Participant 7, with regards to inspections:

If the government can do some inspections, I can say maybe three times a year just to make sure that the employer does follow the basic labour legislation act of South Africa. Because I feel like if the government is not involved so employees are feeling like they are neglected by the labour legislation of South Africa. So at least if they can conduct some more inspections on site and companies as well **(Participant 7; Quote 22).**

5) Provide Better Health and Safety Conditions: Provision of better health and safety conditions was also mentioned by Participant 4 and Participant 6 as one of the strategies that can address labour challenges in community housing projects. This was evidenced by the following comments:

The government I think could just give grants or loans or just fund the businesses so that the employers could give the employees better health and safety conditions, better packages and purposes of salaries and wages. And just uhm anything that could benefit the employees and the employer too **(Participant 4; Quote 32) and;**

With the employees? Same type of concept uuuh mmm you know with the tool box talks and health and safety talks, environmental talks… why don't you have like labour relations toolbox talk? This is a new act that was implemented, this is how it's going to affect you uhm or the benefits this is how it's going to benefit you umm just open communication. And that's the same for the employee to the employer **(Participant 6; Quote; 41).**

6) Mutual Agreement / Listening to Employees: Mutual agreements or listening to employees was also mentioned as one of the strategies that can address labour challenges at Greenville Gardens Cities community Housing project. Participant 7 gave the following comment, with regards to how the organisation can improve employer to employee relationships:

It can improve to a certain extent that they must talk to their employees whereby they will listen to their grievances whereby they would agree to overtime or something whereby it's

not forced or something like that. So, it must be a mutual thing, whatever they are doing it must be mutual I know it's difficult to deal with employees but they must try by all means to work with them **(Participant 7; Quote 23).**

I find meetings never work so definitely no meetings. It's going to have to do practically more workshop based, why are you here, what do we expect from you what are the expectations, explaining what each other's expectations are on site. And having representatives visiting site not just for the opportunity but actually to engage with workers and understanding needs. And also, the government to understand the need for a developer order…yeah **(Participant 6; Quote 46).**

The summary of the results on the strategies used to address the labour challenges at Greenville Garden Cities Housing Project or community housing projects is shown in Figure 4.7 below:

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1:5 ¶ 12 in RQ3

So, when you read the collective agreement you will see that the BIBC collective agreement works against the employer more so it does favour the employees. So, I think it is fair. Expanded Public Works Program is not fair. I do not think so because they are withi...

1:6 ¶ 24 in RQ3

The government as the funder and the employer and the employee... ok I think it goes back to the other one where I think between the employer and the employee, which is the developer and the employee there needs to be some communication and understanding by the supervisors of what is expected from them. And the government must also, you kno...

1:1 ¶ 3 in RQ3

Uuuh I think the community leaders I think they need to be trained on the EPWP roles and also, they need to be trained on the basic conditions of employment. And also,...

Fairness in Expanded Public Works (EPWP) program

Clarity on Housing Project Implementation

Training

is associated with

is part of

STRATEGIES TO ADRESS LABOUR CHALLENGES

is part of

Mutual Agreement / Listening to Employees

is part of

is part of

is part of

is part of

1:12 ¶ 42 in RQ3

I find meetings never work so definitely no meetings. It's going to have to do practically more workshop based, why are you here, what do we expect from you what are the expectations, explaining what each other's expectations are on site. And having representatives visiting site not jus...

Inspections

Provide Better Health and Safety Conditions

1:9 ¶ 34 in RQ3

The government I think could just give grants or loans or just fund the businesses so that the employers could give the employees better health and safety conditions, better packages and purposes of salaries and wages. And just uhm a...

Figure 4.7: Strategies to address labour Challenges in Community Housing Projects. **Source**: ATLAS.ti

4.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents the interpretation and results of research findings on the labour challenges experienced at Greenville community Housing project. The notable labour challenges were wage disputes, high labour turnover, absenteeism, gender discrimination, lack of management skills, community and political interferences among others. The next chapter provides, the summary and discussion of findings, conclusions based on the findings and discussions, implications to theory, recommendations and area for further research.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

5.1 Introduction

The objectives of this study were to identify key labour challenges faced within a community-based housing project. To identify the main differences between social housing and commercial housing and the strategies used to address the labour challenges experienced within this community-based housing project, was identified. This study has illustrated difficulties experienced within a community-based housing project, relating specifically to labour challenges.

Further research within this field is highly recommended, as this will enrich our country, building communities, working together to address one of our countries' issues (or numerous) namely high unemployment, poor education system, poor social and economic circumstances whilst at the same time ensuring the social housing backlog is addressed by minimising the risk of work stoppages within the social housing sector.

5.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.2.1 Labour Challenges within the community-based housing project

Wage dispute was one of the key labour relations challenges at Greenville Housing project The study concurred with Aghimien, Oke, Aigbavboa and Thwala (2019) who concluded that the major challenges facing EPWP in the study area are low wages, lack of discipline among participants, limited duration of training, and delay in payment of stipends to participants.

The results of the study indicated that lack of project management skills in community housing projects. The challenges were mainly with regards to project planning, properly defined project scope and scheduling, good project procurement practices, good project risk management strategies. The results concurred with Maiga (2017) who asserts that most of the people in community housing projects did not possess any project management qualifications. Knapp (2021) stipulates that there was also evidence of lacking of training, the Project Manager and contractors were not receiving relevant training to aid them in their job roles.

In addition, the research results indicated lack of management skills in community housing projects emanating from poor supervision of employees on site, poor communication lines, poor project management skills, poor conflict management and supervisors not listening to their subordinates' grievances. In line with that, Lester (2020) highlighted that lack of resources posed as a major contributor to poor management, which has resulted in poor auditing and reporting Kerzner (2018) states that there was no efficient system of monitoring and evaluation in most community housing projects. Maiga (2017) argued that top management intervention in resolving existing management challenges was minimal, it was stated that no strategies have been implemented as a resolution to all identified challenges. In addition, Ika (2019) states that the study revealed that internal administrative delays caused non-compliance in several management practices.

The results also indicated that there was lack of employee trade skills in community housing projects. The trade skills that were lacking in community housing projects were plumbing, building, electrical work, plastering among others. The participants were for the view that the lack of trade skills was emanating mainly from employees with trade skills moving to commercial housing projects. The study results were in line with Lester (2020) who highlighted that the main challenges hampering the implementation of EPWP are poverty, unemployment, lack of monitoring, poor implementation, limited training, and funding.

A culture of drinking was also identified as the main cause for high labour turnover and absenteeism. No reference was made to an Employee Assistance Program ("EAP"), as a possible strategy to combat high labour turnover and absenteeism. Exit interviews are not conducted within this project understudy, which would have shed light on the high labour turnover and absenteeism rate.

Kenny (2014) avers that many organisations introduce an EAP for specific reasons suitable to them, especially in response to a high rate of sick leave and absenteeism, and to promote a sense of social responsibility. An EAP helps to reduce absenteeism, creates a peaceful workplace, and enhances employee skills in meeting the challenges they face both in their personal and professional lives (Dipela, 2016). Kenny (2014), stated that in spite of the benefits of an EAP, the potential of these programmes and employee assistance practitioners is under-utilised by many organisations in South Africa compared to other organisations in the global market.

At the inception date of a community-based housing project, there are political and community interferences. The organisation involved with community-based housing must satisfy the needs of both government and community, in that they need to a) successfully implement a social housing project, b) job creation, c) skills upliftment e) satisfying the needs of the business development forums, by recruiting business from within the community. Everyone has their own interest at heart (Ika, 2019).

Goldman (2003), stated that lack of continuity of employment presents a major difficulty for training in construction. Not only are construction projects cyclical, community-based project registered under the ("EPWP") programmes, offer short term employment. Another issued faced, relating to trade skills is that South Africa's maths and science results are extremely poor but required for admission to many of the programmes linked to certified trades, such as electrical and plumbing (Wedekind, 2015).

Poor Compliance of Sub-Contractors was also mentioned as one of the key labour challenges in community housing projects. According to Godfrey and Theron (2000), the South African Building Industry has always relied on the use of sub-contractors. Within community-based housing projects, subcontractors from within the community are appointed. Very few sub-contractors possess the skills and equipment required to complete a building program on their own. There is pressure on the Building Industry Bargaining Council, in the Western Cape, in that sub-contractors maintain that they cannot afford the high labour cost, introduced by the main agreement. Therefore, sub-contractors remain non-compliant with the agreement, which increases the appointed of unskilled/semi-skilled labour at a lower employment cost.

5.2.2. Differences between labour challenges faced in social housing and commercial housing projects

The main differences that emerged from the study with regards to differences in labour challenges faced in community housing projects indicated that, as compared to commercial housing projects, the key differences were in training, political interference, wages and lack of Employee training in Community Housing projects. In line with that, Ika (2019) highlights that unlike the commercial housing projects which have most construction workers that are skilled, more than 80% of the construction workers are unskilled and aging. Contractors in most community housing projects face challenges of sourcing skilled workforce (Lester, 2020). Table 5.1 show the main differences between social housing and commercial housing.

Table 5.1

The main differences between social and commercial housing

	Community Based Housing	Commercial Housing
Funded	Government	Private
Stakeholders involved in the employment relationship	Employer Government Community (*Project Steering Committee) Employees from within the community Employees outside of the community Employer Organisation Trade Union	Employer Employee Employer Organisation Trade Union
Employment Legislation	Expanded Public Work Programme ("EPWP*) Basic Conditions of Employment (*BCEA)	Collective Agreement Building Industry Bargaining Council (*BIBC)

Employment Terms	Max 12 months	Indefinite/Project Based
Skills Development	Limited	Unlimited

Table 5.1 Main Differences

Source: Developed for this study

5.2.3 Strategies used to address the labour challenges at community-based housing project

Training was recommended as a strategy to address labour challenges in community housing projects. The research findings showed that training was supposed to be done on the community leaders to understand EPWP, employees to understand collective agreement, upskill employees and communication skills. The research concurred with Ika (2019) who states that with a view to fixing skilled labour shortages, pragmatic modifications in construction education programmes, training and recruitment are necessary. Ika (2019) further states that some measure of informality should be encouraged for certain scarce skills to be easily acquired, especially through apprenticeship. This is important because it can be made a reliable framework for evaluating the on-the-job expertise acquired by workers informally (Ika, 2019). Lester (2020), however, argued that for highly technical trades in which details and accuracy are crucial, for example, plumbing, wiring and fitting, the basic educational system should rather be strengthened to ensure standard, quality and safety. Maiga (2017) supported the notion by saying the government should establish subsidised technical and vocational schools where tradesmen are trained. Secondary education should also be improved with a view to increasing the likelihood that capable individuals will attend further education and training colleges. In this regard training and resolutions on political interference in housing projects is key in addressing labour challenges faced in community housing projects. The strategies detailed in the findings to address the labour challenges that are clarity on housing project implementation, fairness in EPWP program, inspections, mutual agreement as well as training and development are incorporated hereunder as a proposed guideline for community-based housing, by the researcher.

5.3   RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

5.3.1   Proposed Guideline for Implementation

The below guideline is drafted, based on current labour challenges experienced within a community-based housing project and to assist employer and employees, alongside their representatives, and key stakeholders with a practical guideline to be implemented at various stages of a project roll-out. It must be noted that issues faced at each stage may come forth in earlier or later stages, and is merely a working proposal that can be adjusted to suite a particular social housing project.

PHASE I: START-UP PHASE
a. Information Sharing

PHASE I: START-UP PHASE

a. Information Sharing

Before the project is inaugurated, it is the responsibility of the Employer and their partnership/s (with specific reference to the key role players in the tri-partite relationship), in ensuring that the follow information is consulted, discussed and shared.

- Research must be conducted that includes: the communities' demographics, identification of the current community structures (who are the leaders within the community), current skills profile of the community, the community's composition (race, age, sex, and beneficiaries). Information must also be received from previous employers involved with social housing projects. The information retrieved, must be openly available to all parties involved. A job-seekers database, must also be compiled and shared.

- The employer must share information pertaining to the project – the projects short -, medium- and long-term objectives. This will form part of the Project Manager's role.

- The roles and responsibilities of the employer, the project steering committee, the community liaison officer, bargaining council and government, must be understood by all.

c. Discussion and Decision Making

- Collectively, decide what the leadership requirements will be for management.
- Discuss the workforce plan – how many employees and type of skills will be required, what skills will be outsourced via utilisation of "sub-contractors", with information received from the community research survey – can required skills demand be met with the supply?

- Decide on a remuneration strategy – BIBC, EPWP program implementation?
- Discuss shortage of skills and requirements and together work on alternative/solutions:
  - Visit all High Schools which is situated, nearby the social housing project – to gain valuable information and insight of social struggles experienced by learners daily;
  - Gain information about the current drop-out/exit rate within the secondary educational institutions, within the community. Together work on initiatives to ensure learners complete NQF Level 4 (Grade 12) – motivational and support structures to be implemented, focusing on increasing high school completion;
  - Identify Universities that will pro-actively partake in addressing skills shortages: internships, work placements for students to gain experience within the construction industry and research participation etc.;
  - Together decide whether a trade school will be required and how to source funding thereof;
  - Conduct an audit on the quality of basic education systems, within the community.
- Design mechanisms and initiatives to attract "passionate youth" from within the community;
- Identify Mentors (on-site) to assist with practical work experiences, which will also function as a support system for employees, coming out of harsh socio-economic circumstances;
- Appointment of a Community Liaison Officer is of paramount importance, all parties must agree on the Community Liaison Officers job role and requirements. This will enhance the trust relationship between the employer, employee and community members, and increase transparency with policies and practices relating to recruitment of both employees' and local "sub-contractors";
- Invite the trade unions, registered with Collective Bargaining Council, to recruit members from site. They play an important role relating to the collective bargaining and participate in determining employment conditions and wage rates, relating to the collective agreement;
- Discuss, Draft and Implement recruitment and selection policies;
- Develop a conflict management resolution policy, thus to be communicated to all;
- Identify and source local sub-contractors to be utilized and assist them in compliance. Work on assisting small enterprises and the creation of entrepreneurial opportunities.

PHASE II: IN PROGRESS PHASE

At this stage, information must be obtained from Phase I. Information regarding current leadership, productivity and quality of housing delivery, cost reduction initiatives must also discuss and challenges experienced identified. The following must be considered and open for discussion: • Discuss and evaluate "appointed managerial staff" (leadership sets the pace within a social housing project, therefor extremely important);   • Implement Performance Management systems, focused on increasing productivity and quality outputs;   • Evaluate sub-contractor performance;   • Implement Enterprise Development Programs that will assist local "sub-contractors" to become sustainable;   • Design Programs that focus on enhancing social and community responsibility. This will also address issues relating to self-entitlement.
PHASE III: PROJECT COMPLETION PHASE
• Focus on social and economic enhancement strategies, within the community;   • Be open to share information – challenges and success with fellow companies involved within social housing projects;   • Follow up and remain involved, even if the project comes to an end.

5.4 STUDY LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study is free to be interpreted and further research is highly recommended, especially within the community-based housing project in the Western Cape which faces unique challenges. This study attempted to reflect on the opinions of employees and employee representatives, however, certain limitations exist within the study which necessitate a further investigation in the study.

Firstly, due to time constraints this study applied a qualitative research approach, data was only collected from seven participants involved within a community-based housing project. Increasing the six participants and comparing between other social housing projects, from various provinces could broaden the representation in this study.

Secondly, opinions were limited to only employees and employee representatives involved with this study. Including opinions of other stakeholders, like Building Industry Bargaining Council, the Department of Human Settlements for example will increase the research validity.

Lastly, implementing a formal structure within an informal community may pose to be a barrier in setting up an ideal environment. Therefore, any further research that may be undertaken regarding this study would have to address these limitations.

In light of this, all stakeholders involved within this community-based housing project are still hard at work in making this a reality.

5.5 CONCLUSION

The research study findings indicated that the key labour challenges that were experienced at the community-based housing project were high labour turnover, absenteeism, wage disputes, lack of project management skills, political interference, lack of management skills, lack of trade skills and poor compliance of sub-contractors. The key differences between labour challenges faced in community-based housing project and community housing project were lack of employee training in community housing projects, lack of skilled labour in community housing and being forced to employ from the community. The strategies that are used to address the labour challenges in community housing are training, fairness in Expanded Public Works (EPWP) program, Clarity on Housing Project Implementation and improved conflict resolution.

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GARDEN CITIES

NON-PROFIT COMPANY (RF)

REG. NO. 1928/000607/08

50 LOUIS THIBAULT DRIVE

EDGEMEAD 7441

TELEPHONE 021-558 7181

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ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO BE ADDRESSED TO:

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
P O BOX 166
EDGEMEAD 7407

E-MAIL: info@gcinc.co.za

University of the Western Cape

Robert Sobukwe Rd

Bellville

Cape Town

7535

Attention: Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology, Faculty of Economic and Management Science (EMS) at the University of the Western Cape.

RE: Permission to Conduct Academic Research

1. The Garden Cities Group of Companies would like to grant permission to Mrs S Bremert-Louw (Student no. 3764424) to conduct an Academic Research, within Greenville Garden Cities Housing Project.

2. Kindly note that upon completion, the Company would like to obtain a copy of this research proposal and the outcomes thereof.

We hope you find this in order.

Mr JW Matthews

Group Chief Executive Officer

INFORMED CONSENT

Title of Research Project: *A Study to Identify Key Labour Challenges Faced within a Community Based Social Housing Project.*

1. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

I, Susanna Bremert-Louw am a Masters student at the University of the Western Cape under the supervision of Prof B Mahembe at the Faculty of Economic and Management Science.

I am engaged in a research study entitled: *A Study to Identify Key Labour Challenges Faced within a Community Based Social Housing Project.*

The objectives of this study are to identify *key labour related challenges experienced within a social housing project*. The aim of this research is to gain insight from the employee and employer and together work on a system of communication, trust and cooperation to address challenges experienced within a social housing project. Through all our efforts a guideline which will identify possible solution to problems that may arise relating specifically to the employee and employer relationship. Creating awareness of labour challenges experienced, will be key for successful rollout of future social housing projects, within the Construction Industry in South Africa.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because of your involvement, knowledge and experience within social housing projects within the construction industry in the Western Cape.

2. PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate in this research study, the following will occur:

➢ You will be required to complete an interview via zoom or should you not have access to internet, telephonically; alternatively, or one-on-one discussion can be arranged (maximum time allocated: 30 Minutes).

Data collection methods that will be used: written forms, audio recording and field notes. The only person/s who will have access to this information is: the researcher and the Supervisor appointed.

3. RISKS

Note that should you feel uncomfortable, embarrassed and/or inconvenienced you have the right to withdraw at any time. Should you as the participant be experience any of the above, before, during or after the research participation, the researcher will avail herself for personal/private discussions and will assist through counselling, advise or referral to appropriate professional.

4. CONFIDENTIALITY

The records from this study will be kept as confidential as possible. No individual identities will be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study. All interview questionnaires, transcripts, summaries, audio recordings will be password protected and stored separately from any names or other direct identification of participants, on the researcher's computer. Research information will be kept in locked files at all times. Only research personnel will have access to the files. After the study is completed, the data will be retained for three years before it will be destroyed and/or deleted.

NOTE

All informed consent forms must have an explanation of the procedures by which participant confidentiality will be protected and/or the extent that information will be disclosed and to whom.

---

5. BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

There will be no direct benefit to you from participating in this research study.

6. VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Your decision whether or not to participate in this study is voluntary. If you choose to participate in this study, you can withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without prejudice.

7. QUESTIONS

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Mrs S Bremert Louw (076 031 0796) or email susanna@gcinc.co.za or susannabremert@gmail.com.

CONSENT YOU ARE MAKING A DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY. YOUR SIGNATURE BELOW INDICATES THAT YOU

75

HAVE DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY AFTER READING ALL OF THE INFORMATION ABOVE AND YOU UNDERSTAND THE INFORMATION IN THIS FORM, HAVE HAD ANY QUESTIONS ANSWERED AND HAVE RECEIVED A COPY OF THIS FORM FOR YOU TO KEEP.

Signature _____   Date _____

Research Participant

Signature _____   Date _____

Interviewer

INTERVIEW QUESTIONAIRE

SECTION A – PERSONAL INFORMATION

Please √ tick the appropriate box.

1. **Gender**

Male		Female	

2. **Age**

	0 - 35 years
	36 - 50 years
	51 – 60 years
	Above 65 years

3. **Race**

	Black
	White
	Coloured
	Indian
	Other

4. **How many years work experience do you have in the construction industry?**

	1-5 years
	6-10 years
	11-20 years
	Above 20 years

5. How many years work experience do you have working with social housing projects?

	1-5 years
	6-10 years
	11-20 years
	Above 20 years

6. What is your highest level of education?

	No formal education
	Grade 0 – 7
	Grade 8 – 11
	Grade 12
	Certificate
	National Diploma or Degree
	Honours or Masters

SECTION B –LABOUR CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

1. **What are the key challenges experienced, within a social housing construction project? Please mark the most appropriate answer with an X.**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
High Labour Turnover					
High Absenteeism					
Wage Disputes					
Employees Lack of Understanding the Collective Agreement					
Employers lack of Management Skills					
Employers lack of Project Management Skills					
Employees lack of Trade Skills					
High Level of Unskilled and Semi-Skilled Workers					
Lack of Communication between the employer and employee					
Gender Discrimination					
Racial Discrimination					
Poor Compliance of Sub-Contractors					
Limited Access to Project Information					
Poor Compliance of Sub-Contractors					
Political Interferences					
Community Interferences					
Poor Government Involvement					

2. **The above themes were retrieved from various online research topics, which may not reflect the current labour challenges experienced within this community-based social housing project. In your opinion, are there any other challenges experienced, which is not mentioned above, please elaborate.**

3. **Which Labour Challenges have you experienced with Community Based Social Housing Projects?**

4. **In your opinion, do you think labour challenges differ between Community Based Social Housing Projects and Non-Community Based Social Housing Projects?** *(Indicate with X, the appropriate answer)*

YES	
NO	

If you indicated YES, please elaborate *(the answer can be based on your current experience, your experience in the past or your opinion if you have not experienced it):*

5. **Do you have any recommendations or opinions, that will address Labour Challenges experienced, within a Community Based Social Housing Project?**

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION, ITS GREATLY APPRECIATED!!!

All information will remain confidential, and you will be issued with the final research proposal.

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