**perception to reality: a study on the perceptions of architects and civil engineers before and after they stepped into their careers and professions**

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# **Abstract**

This study intends to inform students who are enrolled in STEM courses or those who have not yet decided to pursue STEM about the realities of possible careers or professions in this field. The goal of this study is to dispel any preexisting misconceptions about what professionals, in particular architects and civil engineers, encounter while performing their duties while aiming to determine the perceptions of professionals before they stepped into their current chosen careers; and, identify their experiences when they actually began working in those particular careers. Using semi-structured interviews, the researchers found out the perceptions and experiences of 5 Civil Engineers and 5 Architects regarding their professions. The findings revealed that the key informants had varying perceptions of the professions before stepping into their current careers. The study also highlighted the factors that led to participants pursuing Civil Engineering and Architecture, with many citing personal interests and familial influence. The study further indicated that both professions are math-intensive, although the structural design is a focus for Civil Engineers and aesthetic design for Architects. Salary expectations were found to be a common concern among participants, with some receiving salaries larger than expected, while others were disappointed with lower-than-expected salaries. The study also identified gaps in the application of theoretical knowledge to real-world scenarios and discrepancies between the expectations and realities of the professions. Finally, the study demonstrated that perceptions of the Civil Engineering and Architecture professions were subject to change if it was supplemented by further research, education, and experience.

**Keywords:** *perceptions, architects, civil engineers, careers, professions*