



Unveiling Construction Excellence: Strategies, Challenges and Innovations

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Introduction

The construction industry, as a cornerstone of economic development, plays a pivotal role in shaping infrastructure and enhancing the quality of life globally. This thirteenth issue of the Journal of Construction Business and Management presents a collection of research articles by twelve authors from South Africa, Tanzania, the United Kingdom and Zambia. The articles examine the intricacies of procurement strategies, quality management, project management tools, corruption and innovative construction methods. These articles collectively highlight the pathway towards achieving excellence in the construction industry of developing countries, addressing both persistent challenges and emergent solutions.

Discussion of the papers

In the dynamic interplay of construction practices, quality management and strategic procurement are key determinants of successful project outcomes. Bweupe and Mwiya (2024) explores the critical aspect of quality management in Zambia's ready-mix concrete (RMC) industry. Their research highlights the need for stringent quality control measures and adherence to guidelines to ensure the integrity and durability of concrete structures. The authors identify deficiencies in batching, mixing practices, and the limited adoption of modern weighing systems as areas needing improvement. Their recommendation include establishing an industry association, enhancing standardized practices and introducing third-party quality audits. This study highlights the significance of consistent quality management practices in mitigating potential structural risks and enhancing construction outcomes.

The second paper by Tembo, Kahanji and Mwanaumo (2024) present an insightful examination of procurement strategies for managing construction tender prices in the context of Zambia's World Bank-funded Improved Rural Connectivity Projects (IRCP). The study identifies factors such as cash flow assurance, guaranteed payments and comprehensive design completeness as key to a successful procurement strategy. The authors advocate for enhanced procurement planning, preferential procurement for local contractors and the establishment of differential procurement laws. These strategies aim to optimize tender price management, ensuring value for money and the successful completion of public infrastructure projects.

Sospeter, Chang'ah and Rwelamila (2024) – the third paper investigates the factors influencing the choice of project management tools and techniques (CPMTT) in Tanzanian public infrastructure projects. Using a mixed-method approach, their study reveals that project managers often prioritize easily accessible tools over those that align with organizational objectives and resource commitments. The study identifies four key factors influencing CPMTT selection: organizational support, ease of access and usefulness, project objectives and the project environment. The findings suggest that tailored training and better alignment of tools with project phases can significantly improve project delivery outcomes.

Addressing the cankerworm of corruption is essential for fostering a fair and competitive construction environment that supports sustainable economic development. The fourth paper by Soni and Smallwood (2024) examines the pervasive issue of corruption within the South African construction industry. Through interviews with construction industry professionals, the study highlights how corruption undermines economic growth, project performance and the equitable distribution of resources. The authors emphasize the need for transparency, the protection of whistle-blowers and the implementation of robust anti-corruption measures.

Lastly, Oyebode and Daniel (2024) examine the potential of the Dry Construction Method (DCM) to bridge Nigeria's significant housing deficit. Their research indicates that DCM, despite its higher initial costs, offers substantial benefits in terms of speed and affordability. The study highlights the importance of government support, local production of materials and adequate training of artisans to facilitate the adoption of DCM in housing delivery. The paper demonstrates that DCM is a viable solution to Nigeria's housing challenges with a potential to contribute to the overall sustainability of the construction sector.

Conclusion

This issue of the *Journal of Construction Business and Management* provides a comprehensive exploration of the challenges and innovations in the construction industry. From quality management in ready-mix concrete production to the strategic procurement of public infrastructure projects, and from understanding the impact of project management tools to addressing systemic corruption and exploring innovative construction methods, these articles offer insights into the challenges and practical solutions. The depth and breadth of the topics covered reflect the complexity of the construction industry and the concerted efforts required to navigate its challenges.

We extend our gratitude to the authors for their invaluable contributions, the reviewers for their meticulous evaluation of the papers and the editorial board for their continued support. We hope this collection of research articles will spark debate, inspire further exploration and foster advancements that enhance the construction industry's capacity to contribute to economic growth and societal well-being. We welcome feedback and suggestions from readers on how we may further enhance the quality and impact of the journal.

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