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EDITORIAL

Editorial: Passing the Baton

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Let me begin by announcing that this will be my last issue as editor-in-chief, since I am about to commence a year-long sabbatical devoted to reacquainting myself with traditional wooden boatbuilding, something that I taught in a former life. I am delighted to say that my deputy, Dr Alex Opoku, has kindly agreed to step into this role, so you can be assured that the Journal's commitment to quality will continue seamlessly.

As we rush towards the conclusion of 2024 is my pleasure to present a wide-reaching collection of research articles addressing the complexities of managing the construction process. These papers variously address critical industry challenges, present innovative methodologies, and reveal emerging trends, reflecting the journal's commitment to advancing construction management as both a scholarly and professionally relevant domain. These contributions research the pursuit of efficiency, sustainability, and inclusivity, though each presents a unique perspective on these overarching themes.

Innovation and Efficiency

Efficiency in project delivery emerges as a significant theme, with several papers proposing novel frameworks and tools. Lindhard's exploration of budget applications among Danish contractors underscores the role of hierarchical structures in optimising cost management. Complementing this focus on managerial efficiency, Lahdenperä introduces a design-build approach with a development phase, showcasing how collaborative principles in the early project stages can achieve greater value for money in infrastructure projects.

Similarly, the integration of Lean principles is a recurring focus. Power et al. demonstrate how combining Takt and Last Planner® systems in residential construction can streamline

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schedules and foster collaboration, while Fuentes-del-Burgo et al. highlight the migration of Kanban from manufacturing to construction, identifying its adaptability and potential for enhancing project coordination and supply chain management.

Sustainability and Technological Advancements

The pursuit of sustainability through innovative practices is well-articulated. Akindeinde et al. examine the benefits of Modular Integrated Construction (MiC) in Nigeria, revealing its capacity to improve environmental, economic, and social performance metrics. A complementary perspective is provided by Adebowale and Agumba, who systematically review health and safety challenges in African construction, highlighting the necessity of cohesive regulatory frameworks to mitigate human and financial losses.

The role of technology in advancing construction processes is another critical aspect. Kanban's evolution towards E-Kanban and its integration with Building Information Management (BIM) systems, as noted by Fuentes-del-Burgo et al., underscores the industry's gradual shift towards digitalisation. This theme is echoed in Osuizugbo et al.'s bibliometric analysis of Early Contractor Involvement (ECI), which identifies collaborative and relational contracting theories as foundational to innovation and communication within the industry.

Diversity, Inclusivity, and Strategic Alignment

Addressing the human dimension, Rotimi et al. confront the persistent challenges faced by women in New Zealand's construction industry, calling for targeted initiatives to address sexism and job condition-related barriers. Diversity and inclusion are presented not only as ethical imperatives but also as untapped opportunities for talent enrichment.

From a strategic perspective, Asante et al. highlight the underdevelopment of market intelligence within Ghanaian construction companies, advocating for a structured approach to leverage market insights. Rasheed et al. extend this theme by examining risk allocation criteria in New Zealand's Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), providing actionable insights into equitable risk distribution.

Final words

The papers contribute to the field by bridging research gaps, particularly in underexplored academic research areas and geographical regions in developing and middle-income nations, offering actionable insights for practitioners and policymakers: I believe they exemplify the journal's value as a respected platform for scholarly discourse. I also feel they provide justification for this journal's ongoing commitment to Diamond Standard open access publication—free to authors/free to readers—as the most equitable path to broader public and academic engagement.

Arguably, this is the most difficult publication path to maintain, since it relies entirely upon the commitment of volunteers at all stages of the publication process to do their work diligently and speedily, for very little reward, and increasingly as a hobby/labour of love/commitment to advancement of the profession through research. After all, what is a profession without its own developing body of knowledge, revealed and ratified through quality peer-reviewed research?

As I leave this publication, I urge you all to consider what more you might be able to contribute to the Journal, so that it thrives for a further 20 years!

Stay safe, be well.