

Delay Studies in Construction: Synthesis, Critical Evaluation, and the Way Forward

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Abstract : Over decades, there have been many studies of delay in construction, and this type of study continues to be popular in construction management research. A synthesis and critical evaluation of delay studies in developing countries reveals that poor project management is cited as one of the main causes of delay. However, despite such consensus, most of the previous studies fall short in providing clear recommendations demonstrating how project management practice could be improved. Moreover, the majority of recommendations are general and not devoted to solving the difficulties associated with particular delay causes. This paper aims to demonstrate that the root cause of this state of affairs is that typical research into delay tends to be descriptive and explanatory, making it inadequate for solving persistent managerial problems in construction. It is contended that many problems in construction could be mitigated via alternative research approaches, i.e. action and constructive research. Such prescriptive research methods can assist in the development and implementation of innovative tools tackling managerial problems of construction, including that of delay. In so doing, those methods will better connect research and practice, and thus strengthen the relevance of academic construction management.

Keywords : construction delay, action research, constructive research, industrial engineering

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