Editorial

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Welcome to the November issue of *Management, Procurement and Law*. This issue contains one briefing article, two full-length papers and a discussion.

This issue brings together research concerning seldom investigated aspects of the effective management of procurement strategies, off-site construction, and professional services to ensure successful project outcomes.

The briefing article and the first paper address certain risks associated with the management and procurement of projects, which are not often explored in the literature, but the resolution of which is important for improving project outcomes. The last paper refreshingly provides a useful starting point for an examination of the issues concerning the complex relationship between fees, procurement and the quality of professional services which may be argued to have developed following the abolition of tariffs for professional fees in the construction industry.

The briefing article by Umeokafor *et al.* (2021) proposes a framework for integrating a health, safety and well-being strategy into projects using labour-only procurement systems (LoPS) to improve productivity and project outcomes. Such systems concern the contraction of construction contractors and professional service providers to provide labour and equipment, and the provision of project owners to provide materials and project management. However, there has been little research into the integration of health and safety strategies into such LoPS. There has particularly been a lack of research that addresses the links, roles and responsibility in terms of procurement and the incorporation of health and safety strategies. In practice, this remains a challenge. However, this study provides some guidance as to how to address this. It therefore should also assist stakeholders in their understanding of the cost of health, safety and well-being and the social benefits of such LoPS.

This study also proposes further research which involves the testing of 12 propositions. The study indicates that such research is likely to improve the effectiveness of LoPS through an incorporation of innovative health, safety and well-being approaches. The latter could be particularly useful for developing economies around the world.

Off-site construction is a growing trend and it is often considered to reduce the risks associated with traditional methods of construction. However, does it? The research by Zhang and Agapiou (2021) in their paper identifies the risks and examines their management in the increasingly popular off-site construction manufacturing process in China. Unlike other more generalised studies in this area, this research focuses on component production and transportation, and other associated issues. This research included the experience of 25 interviewees concerning their assessment of risks and their classification. The categories generated from these interviews and the article's conclusions should be of interest to any country involved in such a process. Amongst other valuable conclusions, the article convincingly supports the view that the risks in off-site manufacturing influence the whole life cycle of off-site construction, and that making the manufacturer aware of the risks involved in off-site construction can assist in the process of the reduction of those risks.

Related to addressing the risks associated with producing a successful project is ensuring the quality of professional outputs on projects. Another paper in this issue, by Laryea *et al.* (2021), examines through the use of the theory of professionalism whether a perceived decline in the quality of professional services is due to lower fee scales. The impetus for the commencement of this project was a ruling by the Competition Commission in 2016 in South Africa that prohibited professional councils from publishing a tariff of fees, as well as the perceived decline in the quality of professional services and a reduction in professional fees through market competition. This article reflects the development of the first stage of a new project led by two South African universities. It focuses on whether competitively tendered fees lead to a decline in the quality of professional services. In doing so, it may provide helpful guidance for professional consultants and clients in South Africa as well as elsewhere in the world.

Finally, we have a short discussion which involves comments by David Cunningham to the article by Dr Jenni Barret (2020) entitled Choose your future: a feminist perspective on Construction 4.0 as techno-utopia; and her considered response.

Thank you to the contributors for their interesting and useful contributions!

Please note that the journal publishes its most recent articles ahead of print on its Virtual Library homepage. This allows the community quicker access to fresh content.

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