

## **EDITORIAL**

This volume (volume 2, issue 1, 2012) of the Journal of Architecture, Planning and Construction Management (JAPCM) consists of six research articles covering various facets of the built environment field.

The paper on “Tangible and Intangible Values of River towards Sustainable Urban Landscape Development” provides a framework incorporating ecological knowledge on river and sustainable planning. It is well understood that river and its immediate surroundings play a significant role in enhancing and beautifying the urban landscapes. The author of this paper reviews the role of river as an urban greenways corridor, green patches, urban heritage conservation to promote sustainable urban landscape development and management. The Islamic perspectives towards sustainable river development emphasizing the important roles played by human to sustain ecological and natural resources of the urban areas are also highlighted in this paper. Uncontrolled and unsustainable urban development would have adverse impact on the preservation of river as a natural resource through increased flow of surface runoff reaching the river. This paper also identifies areas that need protection and enhancement to maintain ecological function of river in the urban areas.

The authors of the paper on “Adoption of Building Performance Evaluation and Value Management Tools in Building Facilities Management” provide understanding of the concepts and relationship between building performance evaluation and value management to building facilities management through literature review. It identifies building performance evaluation and value management as important tools aimed at improving the performance of buildings in facilities management. This paper suggests that the maximum effectiveness of building facilities management decisions can be realized if performance evaluation data are integrated into the value management studies. The paper further argued that the use of building performance evaluation and value management tools by building/facilities managers would facilitate a proper understanding of user requirements in the

procurement of new buildings. The authors are of the view that the full potential of performance evaluation and value management lie in their proper integration into the wider organizational learning cycle. The author recommends that building performance evaluation and value management as useful tools are needed by institutions/organizations to navigate to future competitive success in the built asset/facilities management.

Lou, E.C.W., Goulding, J.S., Alshawi, M., Khosrowshahi, F., and Underwood, J. in their paper on “Leveraging IT-Based Competitive Advantage: UK Industry Perspective” gauge and assess the overall awareness and understanding of UK construction industry’s leading Chief Executives and IT Directions on the organization state of “readiness” in order to have the capability required to effectively absorb IT enabled innovation into its work practices through a high-level survey. They covered three main areas in this survey: strategic benefits of IT; critical elements that lead to the realization of these benefits, and the drivers behind these investment decisions. Within the three broad headings, each question had five options describing the evolution of maturity levels using maturity concepts. The criteria for each level were distilled to make it “palatable” and “relevant” to Chief Executives and IT Directors which was augmented through three scenarios: 1995 Thinking – How did the respondents see the answer to the question in 1995 (based on their experience); 2007 Practice – How did the respondents see the answer to the question under their current practice; 2007 Thinking – How the respondents wished to see the best answer to the question (which might be considered as indicative of future trends). The results from this paper clearly demonstrates a high level of awareness regarding the strategic benefits of IT to achieve innovation and competitive advantage, there is, however, a lack of unanimity and agreement between CEOs and IT Directors on how best to achieve these benefits in their organizations. Furthermore, there is a clear misalignment between “what the industry thinks is necessary” and “what has actually been practiced”. This intransigence highlights the clear deviation from “what needs to be done” to achieve IT-based innovation and competitive advantage, to one that is somewhat *laissez faire*, and relatively risk-free. The main inhibitors of IT investment, as

indicated in this paper, seem to be the lack of “know-how” or mechanisms that can guide managers to successfully absorb new technologies into their work practices towards achieving competitive advantage. This paper also highlights that industry appears to clearly understand the strategic benefits that can be realized through IT, which, with some degree of confidence, is in line with “best practice” in other industries, however, the mechanism to realize these benefits and maximize the likelihood of success of IT investment is not yet fully understood.

The paper on “Areas of Productivity Improvement in the Nigerian Construction Industry” by Oluwaseun S., Dosumu and Koleola T. Odusami discusses the areas where productivity improvements are required in the Nigerian construction industry. A questionnaire on “overall productivity improvement areas”, “factors influencing productivity improvement in the construction industry” and ‘actions thought necessary to improve productivity’ was designed and distributed among construction contractors and design professionals located within the Lagos Island axis of Lagos state in Nigeria. The results of this paper show that productivity improvement is mostly required in the Nigerian construction industry in four categories which are communication, management, computer utilization and labour. The paper pointed out that communication is an area for productivity improvement in the Nigerian construction industry because communication via telephone is relatively expensive, communication via internet is unpopular in the construction industry, relatively expensive and not understood by some construction contractors and designers and dominance of role and superiority rivalry in the construction industry. On the other hand, labor as a productivity improvement area because skilled labours are not many and educational/professional certificates are not so required to work in most sites in the Nigerian construction industry. The findings from this paper also show that most Nigerian contractors and designers are not willing to contribute funds to support programmes aimed at improving construction productivity, however, they are willing to serve as members of groups that would identify productivity problems and attend construction productivity conferences and meetings. Finally, this paper highlights engagement of people in technical education to become

skilled artisans and involvement of contractors and designers in the Nigerian construction industry in the use of information technology by creating information technology department in their organizations as part of the recommendations to overcome the identified issues for the productivity improvement in the Nigerian construction industry.

Mohd Affendi Mohd Shafri and Farahidah Mohamed in their paper on “Integration of Local and Islamic Architecture in Traditional Minangkabau Mosques” examines examples of Islamicization in mosque architecture through a fieldtrip to ancient Minangkabau mosques in Sumatera Island, Indonesia. A cluster of traditional Minangkabau mosques which were considered in this paper includes Limo Kaum Mosque, Rao-rao Mosque and Surau Nagari Lubuk Bauk Mosque. The authors highlight in this paper that the Minangkabau mosques have retained old designs, thought to be of Hindu-Buddhist origin, such as the *stupa* (mound-like structure), *gunungan* (mountain-like feature) and *makara* (mythical sea-creature) in their designs giving new Islamic interpretation. Moreover, non-religious designs with strong local affinity such as floral and vegetal motifs using local flower and plant as inspiration were utilized to increase the aesthetic values of the mosques. Other examples like the radiant sun motifs, peculiar only to Malay mosque, carrying symbolic Islamic meaning and *gonjong* roof (buffalo horn-shaped roof) incorporating both cultural identity and functional purposes are the other major findings highlighted in this paper. Additionally, new components, symbols and design such as crescent and na'al (sandal) motifs from other Islamic civilization were also introduced in Minangkabau mosques.

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