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A Quantitative Analysis of Integrated Quality and Material Management Strategies in Construction

Arh. Hadi Ghorbani Aghbolaghi
Ph.D. student
Politehnica University of Bucharest, Romania

Abstract**—**The present study presents a quantitative examination of the relationships between Quality Management (Q-MEAN), Material Management (M-MEAN), and Project Outcomes (P-mean) in the construction industry in Kuwait. Despite the individual focus on quality and material management in literature, their interplay and collective impact on project outcomes remain underexplored. The research design involved a two-step process: data collection through a structured survey distributed to 141 industry professionals in Kuwait, followed by data analysis using correlation and multiple regression analyses. While the results revealed positive effects of both Quality Management and Material Management on Project Outcomes, no significant statistical relationships were found. These findings highlight the complexity of these variables and their impact on project outcomes and underscore the need for further research. This study contributes to the ongoing dialogue on best practices in the construction industry and calls for more nuanced understanding and exploration of these critical relationships in order to optimize management strategies for improved project outcomes.

Keywords**—**construction; quality; management; material; correlation

I. INTRODUCTION

In the intricate and dynamic sphere of the construction industry, the challenge faced by industry professionals is the effective management of both quality and materials (Dikmen et al., 2005). These two components, while independently crucial, do not function in isolation. They operate in tandem, their interplay having a significant bearing on project efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and the attainment of desired outcomes. This complex interaction between quality and materials management presents a substantial challenge to stakeholders who must navigate these interconnected arenas to deliver successful projects.

Over recent years, with the escalating complexity of construction projects and the ever-increasing expectations of clients, the necessity for integrated management strategies has come to the fore (Ochieng et al., 2013). Quality and materials management can no longer be viewed as separate entities (Alawag et al., 2020); their successful integration is fundamental to the optimal execution of construction projects. However, despite the acknowledged importance of these integrated dynamics, there remains a substantial gap in knowledge when it comes to a comprehensive, quantitative understanding of these relationships within the construction industry.

Addressing this knowledge gap, this paper aims to conduct an in-depth quantitative analysis of the relationships between quality and materials management strategies within the construction sector (Patel & Vyas, 2011). The analytical methods employed in this exploration include correlation and multiple regression analyses, powerful statistical techniques renowned for their ability to analyse multiple relationships concurrently. The inherent capabilities of these methods to elucidate complex systems and interactions make them ideal methodologies for this study, allowing a thorough exploration into the interconnected domains of quality and materials management.

The objective of this study is twofold. Firstly, it seeks to deepen the theoretical understanding of the complex relationships that intertwine quality and materials management strategies. Secondly, the study also has a practical dimension, with the aim of translating the findings into actionable insights for industry professionals. By bridging this gap between theory and practice, the study aspires to contribute meaningfully to the ongoing discourse in construction management, fostering a tangible link between academic exploration and industry application.

This research hypothesizes that a comprehensive quantitative analysis can illuminate the intricate relationships between quality and materials management. The goal is to equip industry stakeholders with the knowledge needed to optimize their processes, minimize wastage, and improve the delivery of construction projects. This research is driven by the desire to make not only an academic contribution but also to provide a practical tool for industry professionals. By enhancing the understanding of integrated strategies within the construction sector, this study aims to promote sustainable and efficient practices. The ultimate objective is to guide the industry towards a future marked by excellence and sustainability. Through the lens of quantitative analysis, including correlation and regression methods, we aspire to reveal the dynamic interplay between quality and material management, bringing clarity to these critical aspects of construction project management.

In essence, this paper embarks on an exploratory journey into the heart of construction management, seeking to

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understand, analyse, and elucidate the complex dynamics at play. The invitation is extended to readers – industry professionals, academics, and the wider public - to join in this journey, as the intricate world of integrated quality and materials management in construction is delved into.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Quality and material management are key facets of the construction industry, each possessing an extensive body of literature (Hossain et al., 2020). However, an integrated examination of these two areas remains somewhat sparse. This literature review critically evaluates existing research on quality and material management, highlighting key findings, and identifying research gaps that this study seeks to fill.

Quality management in construction is a well-trodden research path, with multiple studies underscoring its significance in achieving successful project outcomes (Pheng & Teo, 2004). Quality management is often conceptualized as an amalgamation of planning, assurance, and control activities aimed at ensuring the project's output meets the desired standards (Jabnoun, 2002). Research has shown that effective quality management leads to improved performance, increased customer satisfaction (Lenka et al., 2010), and fewer defects and reworks (Ghannadpour, 2018), which are crucial aspects in the construction industry. However, while these studies provide valuable insights, they often treat quality management as a standalone concept, overlooking its potential interactions with other aspects of construction project management.

Material management, conversely, is often cast in a more logistical light. It involves procurement, transportation, storage, and control of construction materials (Patel & Vyas, 2011). Despite its logistical bent, effective material management is no less critical to project success. Research indicates that efficient material management can lead to significant time and cost savings, waste reduction, and overall project performance enhancement (Mehr & Omran, 2013). Again, the literature, while insightful, tends to isolate material management from other aspects of construction project management.

While quality and material management are extensively examined in individual capacities within the construction literature, the intersection of these two domains is surprisingly underexplored. The two realms are often treated as disparate entities in the literature, despite their inherent interconnectivity in practice. The ramifications of this oversight are significant, considering that in the real-world context of construction projects, quality and material management are rarely, if ever, siloed. Instead, they dynamically interact, influencing and shaping each other, and thus, the overall project outcomes.

Koskela (2004) broaches this gap, proposing that the absence of an integrated approach can result in 'making do.' This concept refers to a form of waste that emerges when tasks proceed under suboptimal conditions or without the necessary resources (Koskela, 2004). It signifies a situation where due to poor synchronization between quality and material management, projects often proceed with whatever materials are available, potentially compromising the quality of the output. This lack of integration could lead to various issues, such as cost overruns, delays, increased waste, and lower customer satisfaction, which are detrimental to the construction industry known for its tight margins and high customer expectations.

Despite the intuitive appeal of Koskela's proposition, empirical evidence supporting it is scant. While the conceptual framework is compelling, the dearth of empirical studies testing Koskela's assertions poses a significant limitation. It leaves a gap in understanding the real-world implications of an integrated approach to quality and material management. Without empirical validation, it remains uncertain whether the integration of these domains would indeed mitigate 'making do' situations and improve project outcomes, or whether other factors might come into play.

Moreover, the limited research in this area fails to provide a clear picture of how exactly quality and material management interact. For instance, it remains unclear whether there is a reciprocal relationship between the two, or whether one aspect primarily influences the other. Understanding the nature and directionality of these relationships is crucial for developing effective management strategies in practice.

O'Brien, in a study represents one of the few attempts to acknowledge the interdependencies between quality and material management (O'Brien, 1999). His work focuses on the conceptual intersections between these aspects, providing a theoretical foundation for their integration. However, O'Brien's work lacks the empirical rigor to fully decipher the complex dynamics between quality and material management.

While the existing literature provides valuable insights into quality and material management individually, it falls short in providing a comprehensive, empirical understanding of their integrated dynamics. This study aims to bridge this gap by employing correlation and regression to quantitatively analyse the relationships between quality and material management strategies within the construction industry, thereby contributing to both academic and practical advancements in construction project management.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a quantitative research approach to explore the relationships between Quality Management (Q-MEAN), Material Management (M-MEAN), and Project Outcomes (P-mean) within the construction industry in Kuwait. The research design comprised of two stages: the first involved the collection of data through a survey, and the second involved the statistical analysis of this data using correlation and multiple regression analyses.

Data was collected using a structured survey designed to measure the constructs of Quality Management, Material Management, and Project Outcomes. The survey was distributed to various professionals within the construction industry in Kuwait, including architects, construction superintendents, and others. A total of 141 completed surveys were returned and used in the analysis.

The collected data was first prepared for analysis through a series of data cleaning and screening processes, to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the dataset. Descriptive statistics were then computed to provide an overview of the data.

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To explore the relationships between Quality Management, Material Management, and Project Outcomes, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated. This provided a measure of the strength and direction of the linear relationships between these variables.

Following the correlation analysis, a multiple regression analysis was conducted. The aim was to determine whether Quality Management and Material Management significantly predict Project Outcomes. In this analysis, Project Outcomes served as the dependent variable, while Quality Management and Material Management were the independent variables. The results of the correlation and regression analyses were then interpreted and reported, providing insights into the relationships between the variables under study. All analyses were performed using SPSS statistical software.

IV. RESULTS

A. Demographics

The study was comprised of participants from the built environment in Kuwait. Out of the 141 participants, the mean age was 33 years, as indicated in Table 1, which demonstrated participation by relatively well experienced individuals. In addition, the age distribution is as illustrated in Figure 1.

TABLE I. MEAN AND MEDIAN AGE OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE SURVEY

Statistics
Age

N	***Valid***	141
	Missing	0
Mean		33.63
Median		33.00

.

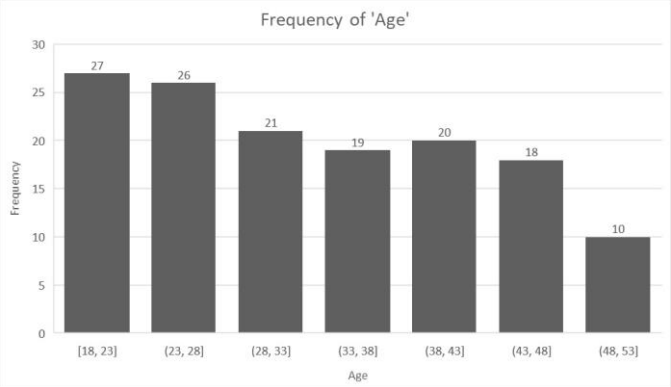

Fig. 1. Age distribution of participants in the survey

Among the participants were included project managers, superintendents, architects, construction managers, quality managers, materials manager, and site managers. Significantly, they are arguably professionals with requisite experience as far as construction materials and handling is concerned, including quality assurance in construction projects.

TABLE II. PROJECT ROLE DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE SURVEY

Role	Count of Role
Construction Superintendent	24
Project Manager	22
Architect	21
Construction Manager	21
Quality Manager	21
Materials Manager	17
Site Engineer	15
Grand Total	141

B. Correlation between Quality Management and Project Outcomes

TABLE III. PEARSON CORRELATION BETWEEN QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND PROJECT OUTCOMES

Correlations

		Q-MEAN	***P-mean***
Q-MEAN	***Pearson Correlation***	1	.111
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.191
	N	141	141
P-mean	***Pearson Correlation***	.111	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.191	
	N	141	141

The Pearson correlation analysis revealed a weak positive, albeit statistically non-significant, relationship between Quality Management (Q-MEAN) and Project Outcomes (P-mean) ($r = 0.111$, $p = 0.191$, $n = 141$). This suggests that while there is a tendency for higher quality management scores to associate with better project outcomes, the evidence from this sample does not strongly support this relationship. Further research with larger or different samples may be warranted to better understand the potential relationship between these variables.

TABLE IV. PEARSON CORRELATION BETWEEN MATERIAL MANAGEMENT AND PROJECT OUTCOMES

Correlations

		P-mean	***M-MEAN***
P-mean	***Pearson Correlation***	1	.041
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.626
	N	141	141
M-MEAN	***Pearson Correlation***	.041	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.626	
	N	141	141

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C. Regression Analysis

TABLE V. MULTIPLE REGRESSION MODEL WITH QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND MATERIAL MANAGEMENT AS PREDICTORS

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df 1	df 2	Sig. F Change	
1	.121[a]	.015	.000	.313217990125189	.015	1.026	2	138	.361	1.924

a. Predictors: (Constant), M-MEAN, Q-MEAN
b. Dependent Variable: P-mean

The multiple regression model with Quality Management (Q-MEAN) and Material Management (M-MEAN) as predictors explained 1.5% of the variance in Project Outcomes (P-mean), adjusted R Square = .000. However, this model was not statistically significant, F(2, 138) = 1.026, p = .361, suggesting that Quality Management and Material Management may not be significant predictors of Project Outcomes in this sample. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.924 indicated that there was no significant autocorrelation in the model.

TABLE VI. OVERALL REGRESSION MODEL WITH QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND MATERIAL MANAGEMENT AS PREDICTORS

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.201	2	.101	1.026	.361[b]
	Residual	13.539	138	.098		
	Total	13.740	140			

a. Dependent Variable: P-mean
b. Predictors: (Constant), M-MEAN, Q-MEAN

The overall regression model with Quality Management (Q-MEAN) and Material Management (M-MEAN) as predictors was not statistically significant in predicting Project Outcomes (P-mean), F (2, 138) = 1.026, p = .361. This suggests that the model, as specified, does not significantly predict Project Outcomes in this sample.

TABLE VII. REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	3.656	.593		6.161	.000	2.483	4.829
Q-MEAN	.127	.094	.114	1.346	.180	-.059	.312
M-MEAN	.051	.088	.049	.576	.566	-.124	.225

a. Dependent Variable: P-mean

The regression coefficients suggested that both Quality Management (Q-MEAN; B = .127, p = .180) and Material Management (M-MEAN; B = .051, p = .566) had positive, but non-significant effects on Project Outcomes (P-mean). For every unit increase in Quality Management, Project Outcomes increased by .127 units, and for every unit increase in Material Management, Project Outcomes increased by .051 units, holding all other variables constant. However, these effects were not statistically significant, indicating that we cannot conclude that Quality Management and Material Management significantly predict Project Outcomes in the population based on this sample.

V. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study offer a novel perspective on the interplay of Quality Management (Q-MEAN) and Material Management (M-MEAN) in relation to Project Outcomes (P-mean) within the construction industry in Kuwait. However, these results should be considered with some caution due to their non-significant statistical nature.

The results of the regression analysis suggested a positive but non-significant relationship between both Quality Management and Material Management on Project Outcomes. This indicates that while higher scores in Quality Management and Material Management might be associated with better project outcomes (Shaqour, 2022), the evidence from this sample does not strongly support this relationship. This is somewhat unexpected given the often-presumed importance of quality and material management in ensuring successful project outcomes in the construction industry.

Specifically, for every unit increase in Quality Management, Project Outcomes increased by .127 units, and for every unit increase in Material Management, Project Outcomes increased by .051 units, holding all other variables constant. Despite these positive trends, the lack of statistical significance suggests that other factors, perhaps unmeasured in this study, may be influencing Project Outcomes.

These results contrast with Koskela's assertion that an integrated approach to Quality and Material Management can prevent waste and optimize resources in construction projects (Koskela, 2004). One possible explanation for this discrepancy could be cultural or regional differences in construction practices between Kuwait and the contexts of previous studies. Alternatively, the sample may not have been large or diverse enough to detect a significant relationship. Thus, while the data suggest potential trends worth exploring in future research, no definitive conclusions can be drawn at this time.

Given these results, it would be worthwhile for future research to explore other factors that might influence project outcomes in the Kuwait construction industry. Potential factors could include project management practices, worker skill levels, and the impact of local regulations and economic conditions. Further, a larger and more diverse sample size may yield more definitive insights into the relationships studied.

The study provides an initial exploration into the relationship between Quality and Material Management and Project Outcomes within the context of the Kuwait construction industry. While the results do not provide significant statistical support for a strong relationship between these factors, the trends observed suggest that further research

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in this area could be valuable. Ultimately, a more nuanced understanding of these relationships could help industry professionals in Kuwait and beyond to optimize their management strategies for improved project outcomes.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this study aimed to shed light on the interplay between Quality Management (Q-MEAN) and Material Management (M-MEAN) in relation to Project Outcomes (P-mean) within the construction industry in Kuwait. The findings of this research offer a useful starting point for the understanding of these relationships, although they revealed no significant statistical relationships between these f actors.

The lack of significant findings does not diminish the importance of quality and material management within the construction industry. Rather, it highlights the complexity of these factors and their impact on project outcomes. It also underscores the need for further research to delve deeper into these relationships and possibly uncover other contributing factors that were not accounted for in this study.

Future research should consider a broader range of factors that could impact project outcomes in the construction industry, such as project management practices, worker skill levels, regulatory and economic conditions, among others. Furthermore, exploring these relationships in different cultural or regional contexts could also yield valuable insights.

While the findings of this study are not conclusive, they provide an important foundation for future inquiries into the role of quality and material management in the construction industry. The positive trends observed for the impact of these factors on project outcomes suggest potential avenues for future research and for the development of more effective management strategies in the construction industry.

In the grand scheme of things, this study contributes to the ongoing dialogue on best practices in the construction industry. It serves as a reminder that the pursuit of efficient and effective strategies for quality and material management is a complex and multifaceted challenge that requires continuous research and development efforts.

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