

Editorial

This issue is graced by papers from around the world, touching on a wide-range of issues from architecture to recreational parks, indoor climate to health and safety. Scholar, policy-makers and practitioners of developing countries should find these articles enlightening.

In Palestine, Enshassi, Ayash and Mohamed found that the degree contractors apply energy management to their projects range from very low to average, even though energy is intermittent and in short supply. Among the reasons why this is so are extra cost involved and the omission of energy management provision in the contract conditions and specifications. Umeokafor and Windapo found that the belief in supernatural and religion underpin all aspects of construction activities in Nigeria including health and safety (H&S). For example praying to prevent construction accidents is commonly practised. This is because Nigerians are highly religious. That being the case, the two scholars suggest that H&S performance can be improved through the teachings of religious leaders.

Capacity building of contractors has long been a concern of national and international development organisations. In Ghana, Offei, Kissi and Nani found that the factors that impeded development are delay in financial payments for work done, limited access to finance, non-payment of interest on delayed payments and lack of fair competition. They recommend that any policy aimed at building capacity of small and medium contractors must address these impeding factors. Chan from Australia conducted a bibliometric analysis of building and construction research authored by scholars affiliated to Malaysian universities from 2000 to 2015. He found that increase in publication counts does not commensurate with increase in citation counts. His advice is that Malaysian research grantors should scrutinise the quantity and quality of research outputs to gauge the return of their investments.

From Malaysia, Zakariya, Ibrahim and Abdul Wahab produced a conceptual framework on landscape character assessment for the rural landscape corridor. Their argument is that although economic growth is crucial for the development of any country, similar priority should be accorded to protect natural and cultural resources. In many developing countries, going vertical provides the solution for social housing. Rodriguez and her colleagues found that the combination of low temperature and high humidity contributes to thermal discomfort of social housing dwellers in Colombia, and by extension, low level of satisfaction. They verified the adequacy of models used for their analysis.

Khosravi and his colleagues suggest the adoption of the more flexible and adaptable open building principle in Iran, though certain construction and design constraints need to be addressed. They admit that further studies are required, looking into legal challenges and ownership aspects. For the sake of residents' health and well-being, Mansor and her colleagues recommend that the following issues surrounding recreational parks be looked into by City Hall in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: unhealthy recreational activities such as vandalism, inadequate car parking space and other facilities, narrow walkways and other design shortcomings and poor maintenance that lead to dirty and even smelly areas. This is because such parks are not luxury but rather an intrinsic part of city living.

The final paper by Amini, Mahdavinejad and Bemanian examined the possibility of implementing interactive architecture in Tehran, Iran. From industry feedback, technological, financial and cultural constraints prevail. Tehran for example do not have access to the latest technology. Cost of traditional architecture for the moment is significantly lower. Interactive architecture lacks harmony with the cultural values of the majority.

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