Pursuing Value Creation in Construction by Research-A Study of Applied Research Methodologies

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Abstract
This paper presents the results of a study on research methodology applied within the field of Value and Value Creation in construction industry. The purpose of the paper is to give an overview of approaches that are used, and map which research philosophies and methods are most common within this field. The research is based on an extensive literature review. Relevant research contributions from 1980 to 2016 were studied. The publications have been categorized based on their data collection method (literature review, interviews, surveys etc.), and which philosophical approach (positivism, interpretivism, realism and idealism) that is applied. Research on value has been conducted in many different contexts such as marketing, psychology, manufacturing and construction. However, this research is limited to publications that are directly associated with buildings, construction projects and construction industry. The paper also presents the development of research methods on value and value creation. The results, besides providing a knowledge status, give an overview that can be helpful for fellow researchers to improve the research quality, and see if there is a need to look into the topic from alternative perspectives.

Keywords: Value management, Value Creation, Construction projects, Research methodology, Research philosophy

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1. Introduction

Value and Value Management have been discussed in management and marketing literature during the last decades especially since 1980s. A large number of researchers have attempted to conceptualize and define value \(^1\)-\(^9\). This has mainly been done in the context of marketing, production and manufacturing, as well as sociology and psychology.

There have been numerous research streams within value in construction where economic issues, sustainability and customer satisfaction have been in focus. Value creation, Value Engineering and Value Management are topics that have received increasing interest lately, and a substantial amount of research has been conducted within these fields. Some researchers have had their focus on defining and conceptualizing value, while others try to suggest processes to improve value management, and some have attempt to measure and optimize the processes. This paper aims to provide an overview of the available research related to value, value creation, and value management in construction projects with focus on research methodology by answering: i) What philosophical views has the research been based on? ii) What have the research approaches been? iii) How has the development of the research been over the years?

2. Data collection and limitation

The research is based on review of scientific articles. The articles are chosen among several thousand articles from databases Emerald, Science Direct, Scopus, Google Scholar, and ORIA (Norwegian search engine for university libraries and numerous publication databases).

In order to identify the articles, search words such as Value creation construction; Value measurement, buildings; Buildings, value, clients; Value, construction projects; Value Creation, buildings; Value management, construction projects; and Value measurement, buildings were used.

Relevant publications were chosen using the following criteria:

- Only published scientific articles in the databases mentioned above.
- All publications were in English language.
- Publications were limited to the period of 1980 to 2016.
- Focus on what creates value in construction projects and how it can be measured.
- Life cycle and sustainability focus was included.
- No focus on production and manufacturing (lean production).
- No focus on infrastructure projects unless the research was relevant for construction projects.
- No books since books can be a combination of research publication and contain several research approaches and philosophies.

The database search using the keywords resulted in several thousand hits. Fifty-five articles were selected by reviewing titles and abstracts. Five publications turned out to be irrelevant after reviewing the articles and three had unclear research methodology. Consequently, the final number of the articles that create the basis for this paper is 47. These articles have been categorized and analyzed using the framework presented in Figure 1.

3. Theoretical Background and Framework for Analysis

First part of this chapter presents a brief theoretical background on the concept of value and value creation. The main part of the chapter is a reflection of existing theories in research methodology including research philosophies, research approaches, and research design.

3.1. Value and Value Creation

Previous research revealed that the pursuit towards defining value is of ancient character \(^10\). The discussion and debate has been ongoing since Aristotle (4th century BC) who first distinguished between two meanings: “use-value”
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