Learning by Doing: A Hands-on Value Management Workshop for Postgraduate Students

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Abstract

Value management (VM) is a powerful management technique to attain best value for money in construction projects. This paper shares the implementation of a hybrid teaching approach adopted for a VM subject for postgraduate students and demonstrate how it helps them to understand the subject better. VM subject aims to empower future construction professionals with knowledge on VM. Observation was carried out during the implementation of the workshop and a survey was conducted upon completion of the workshop. The data was then analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Ver. 20.0) software to examine how the students perceive the approach adopted. Based on the students’ performance during the workshop and examination, including their feedback, it is shown that the hybrid-mode teaching approach was practical and effective within the characteristics of construction industry in Hong Kong.

Keywords

Teaching and Learning, Value Management, Workshop.

Introduction

Value management (VM) was first introduced to Hong Kong (HK) in 1988. Since then, the awareness and applications have increased, but not emerged due to several reasons. Shen (1997) reported that time constraint is the main problem in HK scenario. It is hard to gather all key stakeholders for a 40-hour workshop, rental rate to host the workshop is high, and professional fees for the facilitators are higher as well. Hence, Fong and Shen (2000) strongly urged that VM needs to suit the local practices. In consequence, clients in HK tend to demand shorter and more focused VM studies, despite more complex projects undertaken nowadays.

In 1998, the HK government issued the technical circular of mandatory VM applications for government projects exceeding HK $200 million. To cater the demand by the industry, the Department of Building and Real Estate (BRE) introduced the VM subject at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The subject aims to meet the needs of future construction professional who wish to use VM methodology to obtain best value for money by broadening and deepening their knowledge of VM within the construction context.

This paper aims to share the implementations of hybrid teaching approach for a VM subject that combined both lecture and hands-on workshop to a group of postgraduate students. The findings try to proof that the adopted approach was effective and practical for teaching and learning of VM subject. The observation method and questionnaire survey was adopted to examine the performance of the teaching approach adopted.

Design of VM Subject

Seventy-four (74) students enrolled in a VM subject in academic year 2011/2012. They were among students undergoing the postgraduate scheme run by four different departments within the Faculty of Construction and Environment. As such, the students’ backgrounds varied and formed a good pool of multidisciplinary participants for the workshop.