EVALUATING THE QUALITY OF PROJECT SUPERVISION ENGINEERS - A CASE STUDY IN CHINA

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Abstract
The comprehensive implementation of a construction supervision system since 1988 in China is the development of applying a project management system to the Chinese construction industry. As the majority of the construction projects in the Chinese construction industry are publicly-funded works, the development of a construction supervision system is to introduce a third party, i.e., a project supervision agency, to supervise the construction performance on behalf of public interests. To a certain extent, the project supervision agency is similar to a project management consultant in Western construction practices. As a new management system, the project supervision system has brought the Chinese construction industry obvious progress in overcoming the traditional problems such as extended construction time, uncontrolled cost and unsecured quality. The practice of the system over the last ten years shows that the supervision performance closely relates to the quality of the project supervision engineer, in particular, the project general supervision engineer who assumes the key role in the project supervision agency. There is a trend that an increasing number of project owners spend a significant amount of effort in finding good quality project general supervision engineers. This paper identifies the basic elements that a project general supervision engineer must have in the environment of Chinese construction in order to perform his duties properly. By applying the fuzzy analysis principle, this paper presents a quantitative model for evaluating the quality of a project general supervision engineer. It provides an alternative approach for project clients when general supervision engineers are to be selected. The paper also examines the project management environment in China, which provides valuable information for the overseas construction professionals who are engaged in public construction works in China or are going to operate a business in the Chinese construction market.

Keywords
Construction supervision, Public construction project, China, General supervision engineer, Supervision engineer’s quality, Fuzzy analysis model

INTRODUCTION
In July 1988, the Ministry of Construction of China issued the official regulation “Guidance on the Implementation of Construction Supervision System” (MOC 1988). This document signalled the start for the Chinese government to adopt a construction supervision management system in the Chinese construction industry. It is a development in introducing management systems adopted by the Western construction practices. Prior to this development, the competitive tendering practice was introduced to the industry. Through the practicce of competitive tendering since the beginning of the 1980s, the Chinese construction industry has gained the knowledge and experience about the tendering method, project management procurement method and contracting system (Shen and Song 1998). The successful project management practice adopted for the World Bank projects in China further demonstrates the good value of the project