ACHIEVING SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH VALUE MANAGEMENT: A PASSING OPPORTUNITY?

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Abstract
Sustainability issues should be considered throughout all stages of decision-making to ensure that decisions made are in the best interest of the clients without detriment to the society and the environment they live in. Presently, engaging sustainability issues in construction projects face several challenges that impede effective application. It is therefore prudent to continuously explore any opportunity which could contribute towards improving sustainability. Value management (VM) possesses many qualities which can be utilised to enhance the incorporation of sustainability issues within project plans, designs and decisions. This paper begins by articulating these qualities and how they can be used to improve sustainability consideration. From the survey and interviews conducted to investigate the integration of sustainability issues in VM workshops, it was revealed that the opportunities offered from VM are hindered by many factors. These factors, if not handled effectively, would frustrate the opportunities that VM can offer as a mean to embed sustainability concepts and issues within construction projects. Based on the recommendations by the interviewees, several factors which can promote better integration of sustainability are highlighted. Harnessing VM capabilities require active promotion and participation from those involved in VM to prevent this opportunity from passing by without notice.

Keywords
Sustainability, sustainability issues, value management, project improvement.

INTRODUCTION

The rise of the sustainability phenomena in today’s construction world instigated the search for opportune ways which will enable this phenomena to be absorbed into present working environments. The production of sustainable buildings depends on the application and commitment on sustainability issues within the project process, where the decisions, designs and plans for the projects are made. Raising sustainability awareness early in the project process is encouraged to influence the course of the project. Presently, engaging sustainability issues in construction projects face several challenges that impede effective application. One way to absorb sustainability thinking and promote performance is to know exactly where to intervene in the project process to gain maximum leverage. Any opportunity to enhance integration should be explored and seized. Value management (VM), which is a well-known technique to improve project value, possesses many interesting characteristics that can be used to improve sustainability in construction.

This paper begins by discussing the challenges faced in pursuing sustainability and exploring the assistance that VM can offer towards enhancing sustainability integration at critical decision-making stages of the construction process. Surveys and interviews have been conducted to investigate the integration of sustainability issues in VM workshops. It was revealed that the use of VM for sustainability improvement currently has been thwarted by several challenges.