

ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING: CONCEPTUAL CHALLENGES FROM A PROJECT PERSPECTIVE

Paul W. Chan*, Rachel Cooper and Patricia Tzortzopoulos

Address:

Salford Centre for Research and Innovation (SCRI)

in the Built and Human Environment

University of Salford

Bridgewater Building

Salford

Postcode M7 1NU

UK

CFM

*Author for correspondence: p.w.c.chan@salford.ac.uk

Abstract: Organisational learning has been widely acknowledged as holding the key for companies to survive and prosper and has, in recent years, gained currency in construction management research. Much research centred upon the study of organisational learning as a process, as well as the view and understanding of companies as learning organisations. However, non-construction management researchers have recently begun to recognise the incoherence of the concepts presented in the literature and identified a lack of a solid theoretical and empirical foundation. To further exacerbate the challenge of embracing organisational learning in construction, the industry is largely project based, thus increasing the difficulties for organisational learning to occur. This review paper suggests that past research into organisational learning had also mainly concentrated on an intra-organisational perspective and where construction is specifically concerned, on project partnering. However, we regard such a focus to be myopic as a means of exploring organisational learning at the construction project level. As such, a number of research challenges are recommended including the need to examine organisational learning beyond project partnering; an emphasis on the interorganisational dynamics involved in both the process and outcomes of organisational learning and the investigation of construction projects as learning networks.

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