Assessing the Process of Knowledge Transfer – An Empirical Study

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Abstract
This paper investigates and evaluates the process of knowledge transfer in construction projects. Due to the highly competitive nature of business environments, knowledge transfer between organisations has become increasingly popular in recent years. However, although organisations can realise remarkable benefits by transferring knowledge from one unit to another, successful knowledge transfer can be difficult to achieve. The discussions presented in the paper are mainly based on findings of two case studies. The two cases were selected from Private Finance Initiative (PFI) projects in the UK. According to the case study findings, different stages of a knowledge transfer process can be overlapped, omitted, repeated as well as intermitted and then restarted. One of the significant findings of the case studies was the role of the "knowledge mediator". In selected case studies, there were external consultants and expert staff in the form of knowledge mediators. The importance of their roles was frequently highlighted by the interview participants. They were not only facilitating the close liaison between the knowledge source and the receiver, but also their role was strongly associated with practices of translation and interpretation. This combined role of mediator/translator, therefore, appears to be particularly significant for inter-organisational knowledge transfer in PFI projects.