The challenges of creating actionable knowledge: an action research perspective

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Abstract
Academia has a critical role in developing new knowledge which construction industry practitioners need to envision, undertake and sustain successful innovation. The new knowledge produced by academia, however, often does not satisfy the needs of practitioners. This unsatisfactory state of affairs is frequently taken to be the consequence of the cultural, motivational and operational differences between the two communities. Actionable knowledge is presented as a useful concept which can fuse the expectations, contributions and outputs of academia and practitioners. Within this context, action research is argued to be an appropriate methodology to develop successful actionable knowledge. Results from an action research project are given which provide researchers and practitioners greater understanding of the key factors that shape the degree to which action research produces actionable knowledge: change focus, collaboration capabilities and systematic process. The criteria intrinsic to Mode 2 research (Gibbons et al., 1994) are demonstrated to have utility in evidencing actionable knowledge. The implication for policy is that there is a need to develop and use appropriate actionable knowledge frameworks and measures to design funding calls, and to evaluate research proposals and outputs.

Keywords: Actionable knowledge; action research; Mode 2 knowledge production