Role of knowledge in managing construction change

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Abstract
Purpose – Unplanned changes in construction projects are common and lead to disruptive effects such as project delays, cost overruns and quality deviations. Rework due to unplanned changes can cost 10-15 per cent of contract value. By managing these changes more effectively, these disruptive effects can be minimised. Previous research has approached this problem from an information-processing view. In this knowledge age, the purpose of this paper is to argue that effective change management can be brought about by better understanding the significant role of knowledge during change situations.

Design/methodology/approach – Within this knowledge-based context, the question of how construction project teams manage knowledge during unplanned change in the construction phase within collaborative team settings is investigated through a selected case study sample within the UK construction industry.

Findings – Case study findings conclude that different forms of knowledge are created and shared between project team members during change events which is very much socially constructed and centred on tacit knowledge and experience of project personnel.

Originality/value – Building on the case study findings the paper finally offers a model that represents the role of knowledge during managing project change.

Keywords: Construction industry,