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TIME AND MOTION ANALYSIS FOR ENHANCING LABOUR PRODUCTIVITY IN CONSTRUCTION: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract
Labour productivity is a crucial factor influencing the cost, duration, and overall performance of construction projects. The construction industry is highly labour-intensive, and inefficient work practices often result in delays and increased project costs. Time and motion analysis is widely recognized as an effective technique for examining work processes, identifying inefficiencies, and improving labour productivity. This paper presents a comprehensive literature review on time and motion analysis and its application in enhancing labour productivity in construction projects. The review examines previous studies related to labour productivity measurement, factors influencing worker performance, and the application of time and motion studies in construction activities. Previous research indicates that a significant proportion of labour time on construction sites is often spent on non-productive activities such as waiting for materials, searching for tools, and unnecessary worker movement. Studies suggest that systematic observation and analysis of work processes can significantly improve labour efficiency. Additionally, recent technological advancements such as motion-data analysis, simulation modelling, and digital monitoring systems are contributing to improved productivity assessment in construction. The findings highlight the importance of time and motion analysis as a practical tool for improving construction productivity and supporting efficient project management practices.
Keywords: Labour Productivity, Time and Motion Analysis, Construction Management, Work Efficiency, Construction Productivity Analysis.

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1. Introduction

The construction industry is a key contributor to economic growth and infrastructure development worldwide. However, compared with other industries such as manufacturing, construction productivity has historically remained relatively low. Labour productivity plays a critical role in determining project cost, schedule, and overall performance.

Labour productivity in construction is commonly defined as the ratio between the amount of work completed and the labour hours required to complete that work. Efficient utilization of labour resources is therefore essential for improving project outcomes. Studies have shown that labour productivity significantly influences project duration and cost estimation (Reddy & Rao, 2020) .

One of the major challenges in construction management is identifying inefficiencies in labour performance. Construction workers often spend a considerable amount of time performing non-productive activities due to poor planning, inadequate supervision, or inefficient work methods.

Time and motion analysis is a systematic approach used to observe work activities, measure task durations, and analyze worker movements in order to improve operational efficiency. The concept

originated from scientific management theory developed in the early twentieth century and has since been widely applied in industrial engineering and construction management.
This paper reviews existing literature related to time and motion analysis and its role in enhancing labour productivity in construction projects.

2. Labour Productivity in Construction

Labour productivity is widely recognized as one of the most important performance indicators in construction management. It represents the efficiency with which labour resources are used to produce construction output.
Research has shown that labour productivity has a direct impact on project duration, cost, and profitability. According to Giri and Chhimal (2025), labour productivity is a fundamental parameter used to evaluate the efficiency of construction operations and resource utilization. Construction activities such as masonry work, concrete placement, and reinforcement installation rely heavily on manual labour, making productivity measurement essential for project planning.
Despite its importance, measuring labour productivity in construction remains challenging due to the dynamic nature of construction sites. Unlike manufacturing processes, construction projects involve changing work environments, varying labour skills, and unpredictable site conditions.
Several researchers have attempted to develop models for measuring labour productivity by analyzing work output per labour hour. These approaches help project managers estimate activity durations, allocate resources effectively, and identify areas where productivity improvements can be achieved.

3. Development of Time and Motion Study

The concept of time and motion study was introduced as part of scientific management principles developed by Frederick Winslow Taylor in the early twentieth century. Taylor's work emphasized the systematic analysis of work tasks to identify more efficient methods of performing them (Taylor, 1911).
Time study focuses on measuring the time required to complete specific tasks, while motion study examines the movements involved in performing those tasks. By analyzing both aspects together, researchers can identify unnecessary movements and inefficiencies that reduce productivity.
In construction management, time and motion studies are used to observe workers performing construction activities and record the time spent on each task. The collected data are then analyzed to determine how labour time is distributed among different activities.
Several studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of time and motion analysis in improving productivity. For example, Prakash et al. (2020) applied time and motion study techniques to construction activities and observed significant improvements in productivity and efficiency after eliminating unnecessary work processes and reducing idle time.
These findings indicate that systematic observation and analysis of work activities can lead to substantial improvements in labour performance.

4. Classification of Labour Activities

In time and motion studies, labour activities are generally categorized into three main groups: productive activities, supportive activities, and non-productive activities.

Productive activities refer to tasks that directly contribute to construction output, such as bricklaying, reinforcement installation, or concrete pouring. These activities are essential for completing construction work and generating measurable results.

Supportive activities include tasks that assist the main construction work but do not directly produce output. Examples include preparing materials, transporting equipment, and organizing workspaces.

Non-productive activities refer to idle time or delays during which workers are not actively engaged in productive work. Examples include waiting for materials, equipment breakdowns, or unnecessary movement across the construction site.

Research has shown that non-productive activities can account for a significant portion of labour time on construction sites. Identifying and minimizing these activities is essential for improving labour productivity.

5. Factors Affecting Labour Productivity

Various studies have identified multiple factors that influence labour productivity in construction projects. These factors can generally be classified into management factors, labour-related factors, and environmental factors.

5.1 Management Factors

Management practices play a crucial role in determining productivity levels. Poor planning, inefficient scheduling, and inadequate supervision can result in delays and reduced labour efficiency. Effective project management and proper coordination among workers are essential for maintaining productivity.

Material management is also an important factor. Delays in material delivery or shortages of required resources often cause workers to remain idle, leading to productivity losses.

5.2 Labour Factors

Worker characteristics such as skill level, experience, motivation, and physical condition significantly influence productivity. Skilled workers are generally able to complete tasks more efficiently and with fewer errors.

Motivation is another important factor affecting labour performance. Studies have shown that factors such as wages, job satisfaction, and working conditions can influence worker motivation and productivity.

Fatigue and health conditions may also affect productivity, especially in physically demanding construction tasks.

5.3 Environmental Factors

Environmental conditions such as weather, site congestion, and safety constraints can significantly affect labour productivity. For example, extreme weather conditions such as heavy rain or high temperatures may slow down work activities.

Site layout and accessibility also influence worker performance. Poorly organized work areas may lead to unnecessary movement and increased time spent transporting materials and tools.

6. Applications of Time and Motion Analysis in Construction

Time and motion analysis has been widely applied to various construction activities in order to identify inefficiencies and improve productivity.

Recent research has explored the use of motion-data analysis and simulation modelling to estimate labour productivity in construction operations. For example, motion-time analysis has been used to analyze concrete pouring operations and estimate production rates by examining worker movement patterns and cycle times.

These approaches enable researchers and project managers to simulate different construction scenarios and evaluate potential productivity improvements.

Similarly, time and motion studies have been applied to structural steel installation and other construction tasks to measure efficiency and identify idle time. The findings from these studies indicate that reducing idle time and improving workflow organization can significantly enhance labour productivity.

7. Technological Advancements in Productivity Analysis

Recent technological advancements have significantly improved the accuracy and effectiveness of time and motion studies in construction. Digital technologies such as video recording, wearable sensors, and automated data collection systems are increasingly used to monitor worker activities and analyze productivity.

Simulation modelling and digital monitoring systems allow project managers to evaluate different work scenarios and identify optimal work processes. These technologies also provide real-time information about worker performance and project progress.

Additionally, research trends indicate that integrating digital technologies with productivity analysis can help address the long-standing issue of low productivity in the construction industry (Adebowale & Agumba, 2022).

8. Research Gap

Although many studies have examined labour productivity in construction, several research gaps remain. Most existing studies focus on general productivity factors rather than detailed analysis of worker movements and task durations.

Furthermore, limited research has explored the integration of time and motion analysis with modern digital technologies such as Building Information Modeling (BIM), artificial intelligence, and automated monitoring systems.

Future research should focus on combining traditional productivity analysis methods with advanced digital technologies to improve construction efficiency and support data-driven decision making.

9. Conclusion

Labour productivity is a critical factor influencing the performance and success of construction projects. Inefficient work practices, poor planning, and delays in resource availability often result in productivity losses and increased project costs.

This literature review examined previous studies related to time and motion analysis and its application in improving labour productivity in construction projects. The review highlights that time and motion studies are effective tools for identifying inefficiencies in construction processes and optimizing labour performance.

Several factors affecting labour productivity were identified, including management practices, worker skills, site conditions, and resource availability. Reducing non-productive activities such as waiting for materials and unnecessary worker movement can significantly improve productivity levels.

The findings suggest that systematic observation and analysis of work processes can provide valuable insights for improving construction efficiency. Future research should explore the integration of advanced digital technologies with time and motion analysis to further enhance labour productivity in the construction industry.

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