

## **CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING MASTERS DISSERTATION ABSTRACT**

### **Do collaborative approaches to procurement lead to improved project outcomes?**

The potential benefits of collaborative approaches to procurement have been widely documented, including; integrating teams earlier in the process to offer valuable advice, assisting designers develop efficient buildable solutions resulting in cost savings, reduced project durations and improved buildability. However, the existing body knowledge suggests there is little in the way of empirical evidence documenting the financial benefits of collaboration, potentially limiting the uptake of collaborative approaches to procurement across the UK construction industry.

Therefore using an explanatory mixed methods approach the aim of this research was to bridge this gap in knowledge. The first stage of the research consisted of analysing the financial performance of 203 UK projects across 3 organisations (main contractor, concrete frame contractor, M&E contractor). The projects were categorised based on the collaborative or adversarial nature of their procurement to investigate if consistent trends were present in relation to cost and programme performance. Secondly to provide further context and greater depth to the study, 17 interviews were conducted with industry professionals from main contractors, sub-contractors, clients and cost consultants to identify the relational factors influencing this topic.

The findings revealed that collaborative approaches to procurement can result in improved financial outcomes for main contractors and sub-contractors. However, the findings also revealed that clients are not fully benefiting from collaborative approaches to procurement, requiring the supply side to consider how they can better support clients in delivering value adding contributions throughout the procurement process. Furthermore for the full value of collaborative approaches to procurement to be realised all parties must resist opportunities to abuse the procurement process. This includes clients utilising market conditions to drive a purely lowest cost approach and the supply chain abusing opportunities presented through collaborative approaches to limit their own risk whilst only providing minimal benefit to clients. Therefore by adopting the recommendations outlined in this research which are centred on finding the “middle ground” it is proposed that these challenges can be overcome through adopting a more balanced approach to procurement. Delivering enhanced value to clients whilst reducing the level of risk to the supply chain leading to improved outcomes for all parties. It is believed achieving this will encourage clients to adopt collaborative approaches to procurement regardless of the economic cycle which has typically seen clients default to adversarial, lowest cost approaches during times of austerity.

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