

Title: Investigating Barriers to Digital Leadership Enactment in the Construction Industry of Sri Lanka

Author names: H. G. S. I. Bandara, A. W. M. A. S. Wanninayaka, Risath Athamlebbe, M. N. M. Aashiq & Rahimi A. Rahman

Abstract: The construction industry increasingly recognises the importance of digital transformation in improving productivity, efficiency, and competitiveness. However, the adoption of digital leadership (DL), a key enabler of digital transformation, is still limited due to various barriers specific to the construction industry. Nevertheless, embracing DL can unlock innovation, streamline collaboration, and drive superior project outcomes. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the barriers to DL enactment within the Sri Lankan construction industry. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with construction professionals representing contractors, consultants, and client organisations. The collected data were analysed using thematic analysis. The analysis revealed twenty barriers, and those barriers were categorised into four main themes: Financial, People, Process, and Technology. The financial constraint theme includes four barriers, the people theme contains eight, the process theme has four, and the technology theme comprises four. The findings suggest that barriers may vary by location, providing valuable insights for construction industry stakeholders. These insights can support the development of tailored strategies to address location-specific barriers and enable the effective enactment of DL. This study is the first to explore the barriers to DL enactment in the Sri Lankan construction industry and one of the pioneering efforts in the literature to examine location-specific barriers, addressing a notable research gap.

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