

# African Journal of Built Environment Research

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## EDITORIAL

This is our first Issue of the African Journal of Built Environment Research (AJOPER) for 2021. We have five interesting papers and they all contain useful insights and some contribution to current knowledge. We would like to thank all the 18 authors of the five papers published in this Issue.

The first paper by Chiwuzie *et al.* discusses the impact of changing macroeconomic variables on rental values of residential properties. In other words, to what extent are local rental values influenced by external changes in macroeconomic indicators? This is an important question particularly in context of the current uncertain global economic environment ravaged by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. By correlating local property values in Ede against macroeconomic indicators in Nigeria sourced from the database of the National Bureau of Statistics and Central Bank of Nigeria, the authors found a strong positive relationship between macroeconomic indicators and rental values of residential properties. In particular, they find that exchange rate and gross domestic product (GDP) had significant positive influences on rental values, while the lending and inflation rates exhibited insignificant positive and negative influences respectively on rental values. The main contribution of this study lies in providing insight into the way that changes in macroeconomic indicators influence local residential property values.

In the second paper, Ekung *et al.* examine the impact of claims on long term client-contractor relationships. In other words, to what extent is there a relationship between the claims culture or behaviour of a contractor and the willingness of a client to engage with them again in future projects? The data from 200 architects, engineers and quantity surveyors in Nigeria indicated that frequent claims weaken client-contractor relationship ties and the willingness to engage in future projects. The implication for clients is the need to ensure complete and clear definition of the project requirements to minimize changes leading to claims. For contractors, the key implication is to ensure good project legal management to build trust and good relations with clients to increase the likelihood of repeat relationships.

The third paper by Asigri *et al.* examines the fire safety design attributes of 42 students' housing facilities in one tertiary institution in Ghana and uses it as a basis to develop generic fire safety design attributes for student housing facilities. The main contribution of this study is that it provides empirical fire safety design attributes for designers of student accommodation facilities.

The fourth paper by Abubakar *et al.* discussed the changing nature of skills and competencies required for employment opportunities in the construction industry. This requires a corresponding response in the way that academic programmes are designed for the built environment professions. While employers would have their own view on the skills and competencies required of graduates of built environment programmes, this study examined the perception of 136 final year students across six different built environment programmes on the key skills and competencies needed to increase the prospects of employability in the construction industry. The research also investigated the extent to which the students believed they possessed such skills and competencies. The students indicated that self-confidence, qualitative reasoning and self-awareness were the most relevant competencies for their employability in the construction industry. However, self-confidence, time consciousness and collaboration skills were found to be the skills and competencies they believed they had mostly acquired while studying on their programmes. This reveals a gap which should be addressed in curriculum design. It would also be useful to compare the expectations of students with the skills and competencies that employers actually require from them.

In the fifth and final paper in this Issue, Bello *et al.* examined the nature of return on urban property investments using data from 420 properties in Abuja, Nigeria. The result showed a constant yield range for the properties examined although there were variations in risk and return of the different property types. The return on most property types did not correspond with their risks.

We would like to conclude by acknowledging and thanking the reviewers of the papers in this Issue. The expert work of our reviewers plays an important role in sustaining the peer review

process which is a fundamental principle for scientific publishing. We thank you for your time and expert reviews.

The Editors  
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- ✿ **Changing Macroeconomic indicators and the rental values of residential properties in Ede Nigeria - *Chiwuzie, A., Dabara, D. I., Omotehinshe, O. J., Prince, E. M. and Aiyepada, E. G.***
  
- ✿ **Claims culture and client-contractors' willingness to engage in future projects: a multivariate analysis - *Ekung, S., Okonkwo, C. and Nwosu, E.***
  
- ✿ **Fire safety design attributes of students' housing facilities in KNUST Ghana - *Asigri, E. O., Afram, S. O. and Ameyaw, C.***
  
- ✿ **Skills and competencies for survival in the modern construction industry: students' perspective in Nigeria - *Abubakar, M., Zailani, B. M., Abdullahi, M. and Dodo, M.***
  
- ✿ **Investment property typology analysis; evidence from Nigerian urban property returns and macroeconomic variables - *Bello, N. A., Agava, Y. H. and Olanrele, O. O.***

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