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Mitigation Strategies for Overcoming Delays in High-Rise Construction Projects: A Comprehensive Literature Review

Kevinkumar D Patel[1], Mamta B Rajgor[2]

[1]Student, Civil Engineering, Parul University, Gujarat, Vadodara, India

[2]Assistant Professor, Civil Engineering, Parul University, Gujarat, Vadodara, India

Abstract

Delays in high-rise construction projects pose a significant challenge globally, with about 75% of these projects experiencing setbacks, resulting in cost overruns of 15-30%. Approximately 40% of construction projects worldwide exceed their timelines, averaging a 20% delay. In India, around 68% of high-rise projects face delays of 6 to 12 months.

This paper explores effective strategies to address these delays, highlighting key techniques such as the Critical Path Method (CPM) and Program Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT), which can reduce project durations by up to 25%. Robust risk management, including early risk identification and contingency planning, can decrease delay occurrences by nearly 40%.

Technological integration, particularly through Building Information Modeling (BIM) and predictive analytics, has been shown to enhance project visualization and improve completion times by 20%. Effective stakeholder communication can mitigate nearly 60% of delays. Furthermore, continuous workforce training can lead to a 25% increase in productivity. Employing analytical methods like Earned Value Management (EVM) can reduce project overruns by 30%.

By implementing these strategies, project managers can enhance decision-making, optimize resources, and ensure timely and budget-compliant project completions.

Introduction

High-rise building construction delays significantly affect timelines and budgets, and it could be caused by changes in design, labor deficiencies, equipment failures, and other site-related unforeseen conditions. This paper therefore provides, based on the high complexity and size of the project, a synopsis of all possible mitigation strategies that are viable for high-rise building construction through a review of literature culled from research works.

Poor scheduling and planning are the two most significant causes behind delays. The largest offenders are poor scheduling methods, along with poor planning. Labor and low productivity cases have great influence on time scales. Procurement delays or malfunctioning equipment are some of the most significant causes of setbacks under equipment and material problems[1].

Other technological advancements include frameworks of machine learning, which will be useful in predicting and managing any form of delays to be experienced [2]. Early identification and making plans for mitigation start effective risk management[3]. Clear and consistent communication with the stakeholders will prevent misunderstandings and assures being on track of project goals[4]. The site meetings must be more frequent. Such information must be shared openly, as Islam [5] suggests.

This paper reviews a variety of mitigation practices and their effectiveness within high-rise construction projects and offers insight along with recommendations for future research and practice. For instance, such automated tools for scheduling and multi-criteria optimization methods can help enhance project timelines[6]. Further, critical delay factors and the mitigation frameworks are identified for high-rise construction projects[7].

Literature Review

Delay Factors in High-Rise Construction Projects

The causes of delay in high-rise construction are due to poor planning and scheduling, labor shortage, equipment and material problem, unexpected site conditions, and communication. Poor scheduling and inadequate early planning increase the delay to considerable extents [8]. Labour shortage is due to other external factors including economic conditions and attraction within sectors that affect the timeline. Failure and delay in procurement also lead to deviations, which attract additional cost [9], [10], [11]. Site conditions are unexpected in some instances and require effective risk management [9]. Proper communication is required among various stakeholders to avoid any misunderstanding and project delay so that it will be delivered well within time. This will be solved by dealing with all the above factors to enhance the outcomes of a project.

These practices prevent delays during high-rise building constructions. Proper planning, adaptive scheduling, and advanced computer software with real-time data and predictive analytics are part of management practices within a project [5], [12], [13]. Risk management involves the identification of risks in advance and preparation of contingencies using risk registers, among others [14], [15], [16]. Technological advancement in machine learning and multi-criteria optimization would be able to predict and prevent delays. Proper and timely communication among stakeholders with regular meetings and reporting in a very transparent way would avoid misunderstandings between them. Proper procurement and maintenance of materials and equipment that would avoid delay in the construction process. Training of workforce is needed to increase productivity and avoid delays.

Effective mitigation strategies for construction delay in high-rise structures have been discussed in some of the case studies. Analysis by Islam [5] established those predictive analytics applied together with traditional project management enhanced the controls on delay significantly. Anita Rauzana [17] further established that continuous workforce training enhances productivity and reduces delays. Khare S 2019 [15] successfully demonstrated multi-criteria optimization and automated scheduling as effective methods reducing delays achieved through optimizing resource allocation. Richa Chouksey [10] argues that effective communication and interaction with stakeholders, such as regular meetings and open reporting reduced the cases of delays and disputes drastically. Haslinda [2] argued that proper risk management with significant early identification and mitigation planning resulted in fewer delays. Çevikbaş & Işık [4] have studied various projects and emphasized that mitigation strategies have to be tailor-made and target individual project-specific issues.

Besides, advanced software and predictive analytics help to better plan and schedule. Robust risk management involves the early identification of risks and continuous monitoring thereof so that delay can be reduced [4], [15]. Better communication with stakeholders by establishing clear lines of contact and through regular meetings helps avoid misunderstandings that might come as a predisposition of delay [5], [10]. More importantly, investment in labor productivity through continuous training, and ensuring that materials and equipment are acquired on time and maintained as well would be crucial factors.

Further research should focus on exploring the application of AI, machine learning, and blockchain in delay management, while performing empirical studies regarding the different strategies that can be applied in various contexts.

Strategies to Overcome Delays in High-Rise Construction Projects

Project Planning and Scheduling

Effective project planning and scheduling is a basic strategy against delay in high-rise construction projects. The project plan should contain realistic time scales, milestones, and deadlines set with consideration for all potential

variables and uncertainties. Advanced tools of project management software can aid in the more detailed scheduling and real-time monitoring of the project. Such advanced tools could enable clearer visualization of the project timescales, allowing recognition of potential bottlenecks before they cause delays.

With techniques such as CPM and PERT, accuracy in the scheduling method can be improved. These techniques help the selection of critical tasks or activities that need to be completed on time to avoid delays in the project schedule. Gantt charts would also give a better graphical representation of the project schedule, allowing one to follow up on the status of his or her project and then make suitable changes in the plan [9].

Risk Management

Overcoming delays requires a sound risk management framework. This would involve identifying risks early in the project lifecycle and their impact, developing plans to mitigate the effects, and conducting regular risk assessments to update the register. Other tools would be risk matrices that enable ranking risks based on their likely possibility and probable impact and thus concentrate efforts more probably with more impact mitigations [10].

A contingency reserve in the project budget and schedule would be an integral part of the proactive risk management approach. It will assist any unanticipated event within the project timeline laid out without causing severe disruption to the overall timeline. Furthermore, risk workshops and training sessions for the project team will also raise further awareness and preparedness of the risks.

Technological Integration

Technological changes such as Building Information Modeling (BIM) can further minimize delays in high-rise construction projects. BIM allows for the creation of detailed 3D models of buildings which will help in better visualization, planning, and coordination of stakeholders with respect to the project. This can identify conflicts in design stages and potential construction issues that can be rectified within the project schedule [2].

Finally, based on these advancements, predictive analytics and machine learning can be integrated to enhance the delay management system. Thus, with the help of previous data regarding projects, these technologies can forecast upcoming delays that may be encountered in the future and prevent them from happening. For example, through machine learning algorithms, trends and patterns could be captured which would raise a warning in advance, and this helps project managers to take proactive steps by avoiding such delay-prone factors [9].

Furthermore, automation and site inspections via drones may also provide for efficiency and reduce the chances of delays. Drones would be used to provide real-time data on site conditions, progress, and problems which could quickly be reasoned on and resolved.

Stakeholder Communication and Collaboration

Effective communication and cooperation among all the stakeholders involved in the project can help in eliminating delays. Proper communication channels and protocols are defined to minimize misunderstandings, thus making sure that everyone is on the same track as far as the goals of the project are concerned. Regular meetings and the progress report, among many other essential elements of a communication strategy, will help realize success through the endorsement of such a strategy [4].

By using collaborative platforms and tools, communication between stakeholders can be initiated. The sharing of information and documentation regarding a project happens in real time, which may lead to increased coordination and a reduced probability of delays as a result of miscommunication. Engagements of all stakeholders may occur early in the project, and continuous communication over the entire project lifecycle can improve collaboration and problem-solving [9], [17].

Procurement Management

Proper management of procurement would ensure that materials and equipment are available when needed so that delays in the activity can be minimized. It involves a good relationship with suppliers to negotiate favorable terms;

maintaining a buffer stock of critical materials to avoid stockout, and having long-term contracts signed with reliable suppliers to reduce the risk of procurement and ensure delivery on time.

In JIT procurement strategies, supplies can be stored in optimal levels such that the storage cost gets reduced while the supply is available when needed. Suppliers also have regular audits and performance appraisals to maintain high standards and to address any deviation accordingly. Regular audits and performance appraisals of suppliers can help maintain high standards and to bring deviations to notice early. By maintaining quality, the costs would be optimized [9].

Workforce Training and Development

Training and development of workers are the next most critical investments in high productivity and prevention of delay. Training is integral to their ongoing development, increasing a workers' skills and knowledge and keeping him abreast of the latest construction techniques, best safety practices, and various technologies. This further increases productivity while reducing the errors and rework that could cause considerable delays Provisions of incentives along with good working environment may act as a morale as well as motivational factor that boosts the productivity. Perpetual performance reviews and feedback sessions may identify areas of shortcomings and may improve training in those areas where improvement is necessary [4].

In summary, overcoming delays in high-rise construction projects requires a multifaceted approach that includes effective project planning and scheduling, robust risk management, technological integration, strong stakeholder communication, efficient procurement management, and continuous workforce training. By implementing these strategies and learning from empirical evidence, the construction industry can improve project outcomes and minimize the impact of delays.

Analytical Methods to Overcome Delays in High-Rise Construction Projects

1. Relative Importance Index (RII)

The Relative Importance Index is a statistic that helps identify and rank the factors behind delays concerning the relative importance assigned by stakeholders. It gathers data via a survey in which respondents rate the different factors on a Likert scale, and it calculates and then presents the Relative Importance Index in order to rank these factors guiding the mitigation efforts accordingly.

- **Methodology**: Questionnaires have been distributed to the stakeholders in the high-rise construction field. Then, the RII is obtained along with ranking of delay factors, for example poor site management, material delivery delays, and financial problems[1], [18].

2. Monte Carlo Simulation

Monte Carlo simulation is that probabilistic method used to determine how various risk factors affect the schedules of the project. Through this approach, several simulations are run such that possible outcomes have corresponding probabilities and, hence, an all-inclusive risk analysis is conducted.

- **Methodology**: Data collection Interviews and project documents were used to do Monte Carlo simulations. It relied on using data generated by simulations, which in turn predicted potential delays for different risk scenarios. [19]

3. Critical Path Method (CPM)

The Critical Path Method (CPM) will then help determine a sequence of activities that determines project duration. This sequence of critical activities, within the focus of the project managers, will show which activities, when delayed or not commenced on time, will affect the overall timeline of the project.

- **Methodology:** CPM analysis was conducted to identify and categorize the delay of this case, thereby giving insight into the impact of changes in the critical path and concurrency delays. [10]

4. Regression Analysis

Using regression analysis will help in understanding the association of many factors with the delay in times related to the projects. The knowledge of the historical data will be useful to know the number of factors which influence the timeline the most.

- **Methodology**: A mixed-method approach has been utilized, incorporating the combination of quantitative data analysis with the qualitative case studies. The statistical tools like regression analysis helped to identify the most important influencing factors for project efficiency. [20]

5. Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is a statistical technique for extracting underlying relationships among variables; it actually reduces the number of variables by grouping them into factors that can then be addressed more effectively.

- **Methodology**: The study applies the survey-based approach in collecting data from the stakeholders to identify and determine the factors causing a delay in completion and interrelationship among them by the use of factor analysis and correlation techniques. [9]

6. Time Impact Analysis (TIA)

Now, one such tool used in determining the impact of delays and changes on the project timeline is time impact analysis, which means it is followed by this step in breaking down the thought process into building a model of a timeline for the project and simulating how the delay would impact it under various different scenarios.

- **Methodology**: The study compared various delay analysis techniques, including TIA amongst others, to outline their applicability in different contexts of projects. It has demonstrated that TIA is accurate and at the best for complicated projects. [21]

7. Thematic Analysis

The qualitative method of thematical analysis is the approach of finding patterns or themes in the qualitative data. It simply helps in understanding the underlying reasons behind delays in the case studies and interviews.

- **Methodology**: The qualitative data derived from the surveys and interviews have been analyzed by thematic analysis to establish the principal causes of delay in high-rise construction projects. [22]

8. Risk Assessment Matrix

A Risk Assessment Matrix is utilized to weigh the possibilities, with corresponding relative impacts of the risks, thus giving a priority to those most critical risks that require mitigation. This method proves especially useful while identifying and acting toward any kinds of expected delays in project schedules.

- **Methodology**: Based on the data collected by the researcher from the sample of project managers and stakeholders, a risk assessment matrix was devised. This will identify the higher-risk areas and formulate how to reduce those risks[23].

9. Earned Value Management (EVM)

Earned value management is a method of project management that incorporates data on scope, time, and cost to evaluate project performance and progress. In all such cases, it always picks up early schedule variances and cost overruns.

- **Methodology**: The current study used the EVM method to monitor the performances of high-rise construction projects. This has been achieved by tracking planned versus actual progress and performance indices of the project in order to predict what the future performance of the project would look like[13].

10. Building Information Modeling (BIM)

Broadly put, Building Information Modeling refers to the virtual depiction of a facility's physical and functional characteristics. It has improved the collaboration process, visualization, and simulation of the construction process, thus helping identify the areas requiring greater speed in improving prevention.

- **Methodology**: The study executes BIM at planning as well as the implementation stages of a tall building construction project. It showed how BIM is utilized in identifying prospective conflict and streamlining the workflow of projects[16].

11. Critical Chain Project Management (CCPM)

Critical Chain Project Management uses schedule management under resource constraints, with dependencies while running a project in a very different way than traditional projects because it emphasizes much more resource leveling and buffer management.

- **Methodology**: CCPM is a methodology that can be applied in high-rise construction projects to optimize resource usage and cut delays to the minimum. It involves developing a project plan whereby task dependency and resource availability can be put forward together[24].

12. Delphi Technique

Delphi Technique is a structured communication method of expert consensus. It involves several rounds of questionnaires, with the respondents being provided with feedback in between rounds, to identify and prioritize delay factors.

- **Methodology**: To collect the industry experts' views on reasons and mitigation of delays in high-rise construction projects, the Delphi Technique was employed. And thus, after a number of experiences, consensus over critical delay factors might be achieved[25].

13. System Dynamics Modeling

System Dynamics Modeling is an exercise that describes the behavior of complex systems over time. The approach in such research formulates simulation models to study how various project variables interact with each other and other sources of delay in a project.

- **Methodology**: The system dynamics model was developed to simulate high-rise building construction. In the modeling, it helped in understanding the subject's profile on how resource availability and workflow efficiency may influence project timelines[26].

14. Root Cause Analysis (RCA)

Root cause analysis, or RCA, is a process through which the causes of problems or delays are established. Essentially, it deals with the examination, identification of contributing factors, and determination of root causes of a problem through the systematic investigation of factors necessary for effective mitigation strategies.

- **Methodology**: The study involved the use of the RCA method during detailing analysis on the delay incidents in the high-rise construction site. A detailed inquiry was made using such tools as the fishbone diagram[27].

The inclusion of these analytic methodologies in the process of project management secures a better chance to predict, identify, and mitigate delays in high-rise building construction. This is through the proper application of data-driven insights and advanced modeling techniques in bettering decisions regarding resource allocations and ensuring on-time completion projects.

Case Study

Celestia height is a residential project in Bengaluru that has successfully implemented innovative construction techniques and delay mitigation measures. This project shows the effectiveness management in building and brings India to the forefront for efficient and sustainable construction practices. The project was located at Bengaluru, Karnataka, during the period 2020-2022. It encompassed 180 apartment units spread over 30 floors. Still, several issues encompassed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on labor availability, supply chain disruptions, regulatory changes, and complex site constraints.

The key solution to these challenges was the adoption of state-of-the-art digital construction management tools adopted by contractor, which allows live monitoring and collaboration with stakeholders. Thus, issues were

prevented proactively, and respective delays were kept at bay, and overall efficiency improved. Prefabrication techniques were applied; these ensured minimum manpower on site, hence good quality. Pod-based bathrooms and kitchens, electrical and plumbing systems, were one of the advanced glazing techniques for energy efficiency. Materials were just-in-time procured to ensure timely delivery thereby cutting down on inventory costs and waste. Training of the skilled labor and regular progress meeting guided collaborative planning among all stakeholders with improved productivity.

All these measures resulted in an amazing outcome. Project duration was brought down to six months, and construction costs could be saved to the tune of 5%. Labor productivity touched 95%, and contractor would feature solar-powered generation, rainwater harvesting, green building materials, and energy-efficient systems. The features served not only to reduce the environmental footprint of the project but also to offer healthier and more sustainable living conditions for residents.

Contractor has yet to create a new standard for residential projects in India, providing an example of how such development can be accomplished efficiently and sustainably. Innovative techniques and management strategies can successfully reduce delays and save developers costs, which will eventually lead to superior quality projects. It can be concluded that contractor has proved that with innovative construction techniques and delay mitigation measures, the problems can be overtaken. This will show the efficiency in sustainable construction practices in India and present a model to be followed for future residential projects.

Key Takeaways:

1. Digital construction management enhances efficiency and collaboration.
2. Prefabricated construction reduces site labor requirements and improves quality.
3. 3. Collaborative planning ensures timely completion and reduces delays.
4. 4. Skilled labor training improves productivity and quality.
5. 5. Sustainability features reduce environmental footprint and enhance resident experience.

Key Findings

The literature review on mitigation measures to overcome delay in high-rise construction projects reveals some serious insights:

1. **Effective Planning & Scheduling:** Techniques like CPM and PERT help determine the critical tasks and manage timelines to allocate resources effectively so that none of them is delayed.
2. **Comprehensive Risk Management:** Early identification of threats, monitoring, and its continued management help in mitigating delays by controlling risks from the beginning.
3. **Technological integration:** The use of tools like BIM, drones, and predictive analytics mainly helps in better visualization of the projects, real-time monitoring, and as an indicator of possible delay early.
4. **Communication with Stakeholders:** Open communication at regular intervals with information flow aligns all the stakeholders to avoid any sort of miscommunication.
5. **Effective Procurement Management:** Delivery of materials on time along with good relations with suppliers avoids and prevents delays.
6. **Training workforce:** A process of constant training develops the productivity of workers and makes their work safe, thus minimizing the chances of delay.
7. **Analytical Methods:** Techniques like Earned Value Management and Root Cause Analysis predict delays and avoid them with analytic decisions.
8. **Lean Construction:** Methods like VSM and LPS minimize waste and maximize value in order to achieve efficiency
9. **Predictive Models:** Simulations like Monte Carlo provide a prediction about delay and track possible mitigation.

10. **Continuous Improvement:** Regular performance reviews and feedback drive process adjustments to reduce delays and enhance flow in a project.

Research Gaps

Despite the extensive research on mitigating delays in high-rise construction projects, several gaps still exist:

1. **Integration of Emerging Technologies**: There has been significant accomplishment in the adoption of technologies such as BIM and drones; however, other emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, blockchain, and Internet of Things (IoT) are yet to be explored fully to mitigate construction delays. Further research should outline the approach in which these technologies can be implemented into construction processes to achieve more efficiency at lower construction delays [4], [5].
2. **Holistic Risk Management Approaches**: Current risk management practices are rather fragmented in nature where every risk identified is separately treated without looking at a holistic approach. Further research studies should be conducted to develop integrated risk management frameworks of a project, covering financial, operational, environmental, and human factors of construction projects.
3. **Impact of Organizational Culture**: There is little interest in this paper studying the influence of organizational culture on affecting the schedule of a project. It can be insightful to investigate organizational culture, leadership styles, and relationships related to team dynamics and impact on project performance to determine mitigation strategies for delay issues.
4. **Quantitative Analysis of Delay Factors**: Qualitative analyses of delay factors are quite common, but quantitative research based on huge datasets statistically validates the various delay factors. Such research may aid in empirical prioritization of mitigation efforts [5], [17].
5. **Case Studies and Comparative Analysis**: The case studies with comprehensive comparative analysis on the mitigation of delay across projects of various types and geographies are not available. In-depth case studies can provide practitioners with valuable practical lessons learned applicable to other projects [2], [4].
6. **Sustainability and Delay Mitigation**: Sustainability and Delay Minimization Sustainability practice and project delay. There is insufficient information on the connectivity of sustainability construction practices with project delay. Future studies should find out how the sustainability activities influence project timelines and whether project delay can be reduced using sustainable construction practices maintained [10], [15].

Conclusion

In conclusion, reducing delay in high-rise construction projects is a complex challenge. Detailed planning and scheduling, strengthened risk management, technological integration, efficient procurement management, and continuous workforce training are some of the strategies that are effective for this purpose. Analytical tools like CPM, PERT, EVM, RCA, simulation modeling, and statistical analysis play important parts in identifying, forecasting, and mitigating these delays.

Emerging technologies like BIM, predictive analytics, and drones have huge potential to improve the management of a project and reduce associated delays. However, further research is required on integrating other emerging technologies with practice, developing holistic risk management frameworks, and understanding the organizational culture effect on the overall project performance. Others are quantitative analysis, comprehensive case studies, and explorations in sustainable construction practices.

Therefore, by filling these research gaps and also new strategies, it will empower the construction industry to increase more on their outputs regarding the high-rise construction projects, and also, be in a position to reduce delays to appropriate levels.

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