ABSTRACT

The uniqueness of the one-of-a-kind production system in construction entails several problems that are inherent to the industry. It has been well-known that the industry has always been described as demanding, dirty and dangerous and because of this, there is an urgent need to look for solutions.

Lean construction is a relatively new term which has been targeting to provide solutions to alleviate the problems in the industry. It has looked into the possibility of bringing successful lean production theories from the Toyota Production System in Japan into the relevance of construction. The Construction 21 report has also highlighted lean construction for future development in the Singapore construction industry.

Since most of the management theories in Japan was partly influenced by the Chinese culture as was seen from the business management aspect, it was believed that lean production theories could be influenced by the essence of Sun Tzu’s Art of War when it was introduced into Japan many years ago.

By means of surveys and interviews, this study looks into the existence of lean practices in the industry and the similarities in the two sets of statements from lean principles and Sun Tzu’s principles.

The findings suggest that there is a correlation between lean principles and Sun Tzu’s principles. In conclusion, lean principles as applied in construction can be extended further from a strategic angle through Sun Tzu’s warfare principles.

Keywords: Lean construction, Sun Tzu’s Art of War, integration.