

Review Study: Robotics and Automation in Construction

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Abstract - The implementation of robotics and automation in construction is transforming the industry by tackling long-standing challenges like workforce shortages, time inefficiencies, and safety concerns. This analysis focuses on the most recent innovations in robotics, covering areas like construction-site robots, self-driving automobiles, and automated parts fabrication systems. Additionally, it addresses the utilization of artificial intelligence (AI) in the realm of project management and in predicting results. The analysis indicates valuable benefits, such as boosted productivity, safer working conditions, and greener construction techniques. At the same moment, it analyzes the barriers that complicate widespread use, such as elevated initial costs, a dearth of qualified workers, and shifting regulations. It also highlights potential avenues for future research, particularly in the areas of robot autonomy, cooperative efforts with humans, and environmentally friendly construction practices. This article offers an extensive insight into the recent happenings, issues, and future possibilities related to robotics and automation in construction. This provides crucial insights for researchers, industry executives, and government officials to optimize the application of robotics and automation in construction projects.

Keywords: Robotics in Construction, Construction Automation, Artificial Intelligence in Construction, Smart Construction Systems.

I. INTRODUCTION

The role of the construction sector is crucial in advancing the overall economy on a global scale. It contributes to creating important assets like highways, housing, and civic buildings that facilitate the expansion of communities. The sector has faced challenges such as sluggish progress, heavy dependence on labour, and a slower pace in innovation compared to industries like manufacturing and technology. Construction projects frequently exceed their budgets, experience delays, and pose safety risks, complicating the development of the durable and environmentally friendly buildings that are increasingly necessary. While industries like manufacturing and healthcare have already been revolutionized by robotics and automation, these technologies are now beginning to play a major role in construction too.

This technology has the potential to address persistent challenges within the construction sector. In construction, robotics and automation refer to the use of machines and technology that take on physical tasks traditionally performed by people or improve the efficiency of processes that were previously manual. Among these innovations are robotic arms designed for bricklaying, drones that provide aerial views of construction sites, autonomous vehicles for transporting materials, and automated systems that manufacture components in factories separate from the construction area. The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) elevates these technologies by facilitating predictions, real-time monitoring of situations, and decision-making that can evolve with incoming information. By implementing these advancements, we aim to enhance our efficiency and accuracy, as well as decrease the dangers associated with hazardous work scenarios. While the construction sector plays a crucial role in driving global economic growth, it struggles with persistent challenges that hinder its ability to meet the rising demand for urban development and new structures. Issues such as insufficient workforce, intricate tasks, inefficiencies from traditional approaches, and safety issues have emphasized the importance of developing fresh ideas to boost efficiency, accuracy, and environmental sustainability. Industries such as manufacturing and healthcare have already experienced transformations due to robots and automation, and now these technologies are beginning to impact the construction sector as well. Construction robotics and automation incorporate several technologies, such as robots operating on building sites, machinery that produces elements in factories, autonomous vehicles, and AI tools designed for project management assistance. The purpose of these innovative concepts is to address industry challenges by enhancing efficiency, ensuring safety, and reducing environmental impact. For instance, robots capable of performing tedious tasks such as bricklaying and concrete pouring have demonstrated significant savings in both time and costs. The introduction of drones and self-operating devices is revolutionizing our approach to land surveying, site monitoring, and material movement. Simultaneously, the use of AI is allowing us to anticipate project schedules and improve our management of resources. Although there have been enhancements, the adoption of robots and automation within construction remains in the early stages compared to various other sectors. Progress has been

impeded by multiple factors, such as the significant startup costs of projects, insufficient worker skills, and the challenges associated with incorporating robotics into conventional construction techniques. Furthermore, it is important to thoughtfully evaluate policies and ethical matters, particularly in relation to job displacement. Automation and robotics in construction represent innovative technologies applied in the building and construction industry. By combining electronics, mechanical components, and programming, this technology enables the control of robots. It utilizes unique codes to direct the robots in performing their necessary functions. These methodologies are applied to enhance workplace conditions, protect the health and safety of individuals, keep projects on track, and improve the caliber of the materials being constructed. Investigations show that the construction field is not leveraging machinery sufficiently because the investment required for items like automated diggers and forklifts is quite substantial. Consequently, it becomes challenging for construction businesses to implement this equipment. Automation in construction utilizes technology and robotics to assist in the design, planning, and cost estimation of a project. By integrating cutting-edge machines and technologies, construction automation streamlines building processes and tackles common problems faced by workers in the construction field. By employing machinery in construction and using prefabricated parts, this process is becoming far more prevalent than constructing everything from scratch directly on site. Robots function under the management of electronic devices and rely on hydraulic systems for operation. As a result, they are effective in performing various construction tasks, which leads to a decreased need for labor. Automation is employed in building components and road initiatives to manage the heavy workload and mitigate the dangers of the working environment. Prefabricated components are produced under strict supervision and stable conditions, which helps maintain temperature consistency and guarantees product quality. A minimal team is needed to wrap up the last tasks at the location. This illustrates that the deployment of robots is becoming more common as a substitute for workers, especially in dangerous work environments. This investigation analyzes the ways in which automation and robots can be integrated into the construction field, just as they are utilized in manufacturing processes. It analyzes the existing literature on this subject to comprehend how it influences construction projects.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, the role of robots and automation has considerably grown in the construction sector. In the beginning, workers focused on machines made for specialized functions, including robotic systems that handle bricklaying. The latest enhancements encompass more sophisticated

systems that leverage sensors, AI, and IoT technologies. This alteration reflects the industry's commitment to resolving challenges, improving safety standards, and adapting to the rising need for environmentally friendly construction.

Principal Thoughts: Expressing in Different Terms the Role of Automation and Robotics in Construction Projects

- **On-Site Robotics:** The term on-site robotics describes the use of robots for various tasks, including welding, constructing walls with bricks, and transporting materials. Examples include:
- **Bricklaying Robots:** When it comes to bricklaying, the SAM100 (Semi-Automated Mason) outperforms humans in both speed and consistency. Research indicates that utilizing robots in construction can enhance the speed of work by a factor of three compared to standard approaches. (Bock & Linner, 2015).
- **Concrete Spraying and 3D Printing:** The use of machines like Shotcrete robots in tunnel construction and large-scale 3D printers for fabricating building elements is on the rise. (Bos *et al.*, 2016).

Prefabrication and Modular Construction

Off-site fabrication automation is vital to modular construction since it improves the accuracy of processes and lowers the amount of waste produced. The term prefabrication describes the creation of construction elements in a factory setting utilizing automated equipment. The pieces are delivered to the construction location for their final assembly. By adopting this method, we conserve materials and expedite the finishing of projects. (Lu *et al.*, 2020).

Autonomous Vehicles and Drones

Self-operating construction equipment, like excavators and bulldozers, is being deployed to carry materials and manipulate dirt.

Specialized drones featuring sophisticated sensors and top-notch cameras are deployed to survey areas, oversee construction activities, and examine tasks in progress. This facilitates access to more accurate data and streamlines operations by minimizing the amount of manual effort required. (Roca *et al.*, 2019).

Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning in Construction

In the construction industry, AI is utilized for overseeing projects, assessing risks, and analysing real-time data. Utilizing predictive models allows for improved resource management and minimizes the risk of exceeding the budget. (Oesterreich & Teuteberg, 2016). For example:

Tools powered by AI can dynamically respond to unexpected setbacks, allowing operations to proceed more seamlessly. Predictive analysis of potential structural issues is achieved through machine learning tools that utilize data gathered from sensors, contributing to enhanced safety.

Benefits of Robotics and Automation

- **Productivity:** The use of robots speeds up the project process and guarantees uniform quality with each execution. (Bogue, 2018).
- **Safety:** The use of automated systems reduces the requirement for individuals to operate in risky settings, including elevated sites and areas containing dangerous materials. (Zou *et al.*, 2017).
- **Sustainability:** Technologies including 3D printing and smart material enhancement tools support ecological preservation by consuming less energy and producing reduced amounts of waste. (Huang *et al.*, 2021).

Challenges in Adoption

- **Economic Barriers:** The significant initial expenses and uncertain returns create challenges for small and medium-sized enterprises when it comes to making investments. (Kamat *et al.*, 2021).
- **Workforce Issues:** Implementing advanced technology calls for individuals to gain new competencies, but the supply of trained workers is insufficient to address this need. (Adegbite *et al.*, 2019).
- **Technological Integration:** The introduction of robotic systems into established workflows demands considerable changes in project design and management practices. (Tay *et al.*, 2018).
- **Regulatory and Ethical Concerns:** Regulations regarding safety and job displacement are lagging behind advancements in technology.

Future Research Directions

- **Advanced Robotics and AI:** Studies should focus on developing adaptable and multifunctional robots capable of performing a variety of construction tasks.
- **Human-Robot Collaboration:** To effectively handle intricate jobs, it is vital to strengthen the partnership between human innovation and robotic accuracy.
- **Sustainability Focus:** Environmentally conscious building projects can benefit from robots created to utilize safe materials and practices.
- **Policy and Standards Development:** Establishing standardized guidelines for construction robots will promote their wider adoption and inspire innovative concepts.

III. CONCLUSION

Using robots and automation in construction is changing the industry, which has mostly relied on manual work and scattered methods in the past. This review talks about how these technologies can help solve important problems like not having enough workers, being wasteful, and safety issues, while also promoting eco-friendliness and new ideas. New developments in robots, like those used for building, self-driving cars, and off-site construction methods are helping to make work faster, more accurate, and better for the environment. Also, using artificial intelligence improves decision-making, project management, and real-time data analysis, making construction processes more flexible and efficient.

Even with these improvements, there are still major obstacles to getting more people to use it. High costs, difficulties in using new technology, not enough skilled workers, and unclear rules make it hard to include robots and automation in regular construction work. To overcome these challenges, researchers, industry leaders, and government officials need to work together. Ways to solve these problems include training workers, creating affordable solutions, and setting common rules for construction robots.

In the future, robots and automated machines in construction will focus on creating smart systems that can work together with people to do difficult jobs. Human-robot teamwork, improved by new developments in machine learning and smart computing, will change traditional jobs and methods in construction. Also, focusing on eco-friendly building methods using robots—like 3D printing, using less material, and energy-saving systems—can really help reach worldwide environmental goals.

This review highlights the importance of ongoing research, new ideas, and funding to make the most of robotics and automation in building. By using these technologies, the construction industry can become much more efficient, safe, and eco-friendly, leading to buildings that are stronger and better able to adapt to changes. Researchers, workers, and decision-makers need to team up to use these new improvements, so the building industry can handle today's needs.

Future Scope for Robotics and Automation in Construction

Robotics and automation in construction have a lot of possibilities for growth and new ideas. As technology improves quickly, future research can solve current problems and create new ways to change how construction is done. Here are the main areas for future opportunities:

1. Advancements in Robotic Autonomy and Intelligence

- **Fully Autonomous Construction Systems:** Creating robots that can do complicated jobs on their own, like getting a site ready, putting things together, and finishing work.
- **Adaptive Learning Robots:** AI technologies capable of adapting to chaotic construction environments enhance flexibility and efficiency.
- **Swarm Robotics:** The concept of collaborative robotics refers to a group of smaller robots joining forces to complete significant projects like digging or assembling parts.

2. Enhanced Human-Robot Collaboration

- **Co-Bots for Construction Sites:** Engineering robots that team up with individuals, leveraging the innovative potential of humans and the accuracy of machines.
- **Wearable Technology Integration:** Implementing wearable technology such as AR glasses can enhance workers' interactions with robots by delivering immediate guidance.
- **Safety-Driven Collaboration Models:** Investigating ways to protect individuals working alongside robots, decreases hazards during their tasks.

3. Application of Emerging Technologies

- **AI and Machine Learning:** Increased adoption of AI for forecasting results, evaluating risks, and enhancing workflows.
- **Digital Twin Technology:** Employing robots in conjunction with digital twins to develop simulations that enable real-time monitoring and enhancement of construction activities.
- **IoT and Smart Construction:** Enhance the interaction between robots and IoT devices to facilitate seamless communication and collaboration.

4. Sustainable Construction Practices

- **Eco-Friendly Robotic Systems:** Developing robots that incorporate eco-conscious materials and adopt construction methods that benefit the planet.
- **3D Printing for Green Construction:** Large-scale 3D printing minimizes material usage to aid in waste reduction and environmental conservation.
- **Circular Economy Integration:** By recycling construction materials directly at the job site, robots contribute to a framework that encourages material reuse instead of waste.

5. Modular and Prefabrication Advancements

- **Automated Prefabrication Facilities:** Manufacturing plants utilize robots to produce building components more efficiently and with higher quality.
- **Transportation and Assembly Robots:** Techniques for conveniently combining and adjusting prefabricated elements at the location.
- **Customization and Scalability:** Robotic technologies designed to produce a range of designs customized for individual project needs.

6. Addressing Challenges of Adoption

- **Cost-Effective Robotics:** Exploring methods to reduce the expenses associated with the production and upkeep of robots, making them accessible for small and medium-sized enterprises.
- **Workforce Upskilling Programs:** Designing instructional programs and lessons aimed at teaching workers how to operate and care for robotic technologies.
- **Policy and Regulation:** Formulating worldwide rules and recommendations to promote the safe and ethical integration of robotics in the construction sector.

7. Integration of Robotics in Specialized Applications

- **Disaster Recovery and Reconstruction:** Robots are utilized to swiftly assist in disaster-stricken regions by performing tasks such as removing rubble and constructing temporary shelters.
- **Underwater and High-Risk Construction:** Robots are designed for use in submerged or risky areas, including the restoration of nuclear sites and the maintenance of tall buildings.
- **Heritage Preservation:** Implementing robotic technology to repair and maintain antiquated architectural sites.

8. Research into Ethical and Social Implications

- **Job Market Transformation:** Exploring the effects of robotic technology on job opportunities in the construction industry.
- **Human-Centered Design:** Making sure that robots are designed and used in a way that keeps workers safe and includes everyone.

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Citation of this Article:

Er. Manpreet Singh, & Er. Jeevanjot Singh. (2024). Review Study: Robotics and Automation in Construction. *International Research Journal of Innovations in Engineering and Technology - IRJIET*, 8(11), 260-264. Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47001/IRJIET/2024.811033>
