

and testing, nonconformance reporting, and with corrective actions during the construction phase [10]. Previous studies have been conducted to facilitate information sharing and to link scattered information. However, these studies failed to fully utilize digital information in the design documents by automatically passing quality related information to the construction phase, and to sufficiently consider the interrelationship between the three main factors in quality management: product, organization and process. Because change orders and inspection schedules change continuously throughout the process of construction, the quality control plan should be adjusted based on both spatial and temporal data. The complex nature of these factors indicates that a 4D (3D model plus time) visualization technology would be advantageous for quality assessment during construction. The use of Building Information Modeling (BIM) technology on construction projects has the potential to improve not only the construction process but also the quality control process by changing the way project participants interact with each other [13].

1.2. BIM and its applications in project quality management

BIM is most frequently perceived as a tool for visualizing and coordinating AEC (architecture, engineering and construction) work, avoiding errors and omissions, improving productivity, and supporting scheduling, safety, cost and quality management on construction projects. It incorporates all the building components, including geometry, spatial relationships, properties and quantities [11]. BIM can also generate and maintain information produced during the whole life cycle of a building project—from design to maintenance—and can be applied to various fields [12]. Examples of this research are BIM-based: cost planning and estimating, safety checking integration for dynamic safety analysis [17–19], and dynamic construction site safety management [20]. Research indicates that BIM is beneficial in the preparation of schedules and estimates, tracking and managing changes, and managing site logistics [21]. More informed decisions by a project's stakeholders can be made due to the, now feasible, open communication and exchange of data after easily verifying design requirements [15] and performance can be analyzed through BIM [16]. However, there are no best practice studies that demonstrate implementation of a 4D BIM application to increase the quality of construction projects [28].

The use of BIM has provided a means of increasing total project quality [22]. It improves design quality in the following ways: 1) Increases efficiency and precision and improves design evaluation and communication [16,23]; 2) reduces errors due to better coordination between documents and the entire team, thus minimizes conflicts [24,25]; 3) simulation and optimization can be conducted for better performance, lower costs, and shorter lead times [26]; 4) automatic generation of engineering documents produces precise and consistent information [24]; 5) reduces maintenance costs and time by providing timely and relevant information to facility management (FM) as early as the design stage [27].

Researchers agree that BIM can be helpful to improve project quality and that more projects are likely to use BIM in the future to pass information from the design phase to the construction trades. However, there is no clear guidance about the use of BIM to improve quality [28]. In view of this, this paper proposes a 4D BIM-based application for quality management in the construction phase, which can benefit the project in following ways: (1) Ensure information consistency from the design through the construction phase. BIM is a parametric modeling effort that provides tabular views of components and characteristic interactions with their elements such as: name, type, attributes, relationships and metadata [15,29]. The extensive data for each construction product can be used as the basis to automatically assess the significance of deviations between the design and as-built conditions instead of manually evaluating individual drawings and change orders. (2) Process control consistency during construction. The percent completion of each activity in the construction schedule can be continuously

viewed in the BIM application [30]. Therefore, quality inspections can be scheduled immediately after the completion of one task, before the next task begins, making the quality inspection process timely and consistent with the construction process; (3) collaboration between participants. The use of BIM technology on construction projects has the potential to improve the process by allowing all team members to collaborate more accurately and efficiently than when using traditional processes [15,16]; (4) unlimited extension of the use of BIM information when combined with other advanced technologies. These advanced technologies link the digital to the physical entities [31]. Research has already been conducted to investigate the combination of BIM and other technologies such as AR (augmented reality) for quality defect management [32].

Considering the above advantages of utilizing BIM in construction quality management, this paper explores the implementation of BIM for construction quality management and proposes to integrate BIM with the existing POP data structure to improve current quality management process.

2. Research objective and methodology

The objective of this research was to develop a comprehensive, informative and practical 4D BIM-based application for the purpose of construction quality management and to investigate how it can fit into the current construction practice. Also, the research identified potential problems with using BIM technology with current quality management methods, and proposes solutions. During the research, quality models that contained process, organization, and product (POP) information were built using national, industrial and local quality standards and codes. Then, a scheduling model and the quality model were integrated into a virtualized 4D BIM-based application to identify quality control criteria and responsibility assignments in the construction process. This application includes inspection and testing, analysis during the construction phase, and feedback of inspection results.

A case study approach was adopted to explain the dynamic quality control model that was developed from a comprehensive review of the literature and site investigation. The inspection template is derived of Construction Quality Integration System® and the CQIS is the foundation of this research. In the case study, the inspection data was acquired from the project general contractor and CAD drawings and the construction schedule were obtained from the project owner and from contractors.

The research consists of four major sections: (1) Investigation of quality control strategies in large infrastructure construction through site survey; (2) creation of the 4D BIM model by Autodesk Revit® and Navisworks®; (3) formulation of the method to match the quality data structure with BIM based on theoretical research; (4) development of a 4D BIM application workflow for quality management. Validation of the proposed model is obtained through a case study of the foundation construction at the Wuhan International Expo Center. The foundation work was completed with no delay due to major quality defects. A brief explanation and application of the four-step approach of this research is presented in the following sections.

3. Quality management plan in large infrastructure construction

Quality control covers inspection and testing, nonconformance reporting, and corrective action taken during the construction phase [10]. The quality control process begins with making quality management plans based on the design drawings and specifications, which establish the quality of the material and equipment, the acceptance criteria for the work in place, and the inspection and testing to be performed. Then, through coordination between material engineers and project engineers, all the technical and quality data in the procurement requisition for material and equipment have been transmitted for procurement. During construction work, the subcontracted work is

monitored for conformance by the general superintendent and the field engineer. They also monitor all work and identify deficiencies beyond tolerable limits. Upon completion of the work, acceptance inspection and validation testing are conducted to verify conformance with the requirements of the approved construction documents [35]. In general, the control of quality on a construction project consists of field inspections which guarantee that workmanship, physical properties, equipment, and material supplied by the contractor conform to the design plans and specifications [36].

In the current practice in China, checklists in the form of electronic templates are used for quality inspections. Each checklist contains quality control criteria categorized based on national, industry and locally-based quality control codebooks for each inspection lot. Each inspection lot can be considered as a product. The responsibilities of each organization that participates in constructing the final product are identified and recorded along with the lot checklist. Construction quality acceptance is divided into the unit (sub-units) project, the segment (sub-segment) project, the sub-project and the inspection lot. An inspection lot is composed of a certain number of samples that are reproduced in the same conditions and pooled in a prescribed manner for testing. The sequence of acceptance is in the opposite direction from traditional acceptance methods – from the bottom lot to the whole project. The inspection lot is the smallest unit and can be considered as a construction product equal to a component in a BIM model.

Fig. 1 shows the overall process of quality inspection plan utilizing a BIM quality model. First, the quality control plan is developed based on the work plan, the inspection plan and project characteristics. Second, the corresponding quality checklist is retrieved from the 4D BIM-based construction quality model, according to work classifications

and the process of construction activities, when requested by a contractor. Third, the inspection is conducted by recording the field measurements and test results required in the checklist. Fourth, an objective comparison between design requirements and construction results is automatically generated. Fifth, decisions are made whether to accept and proceed to next process or to reject this lot and issue a nonconformance report (NCR) with specific requirements from the BIM-based quality model. Finally, the inspection work results in feedback, and it is reflected in the model. Subsequently the model and the inspection plan are updated.

Quality management is a precise and complex process which requires knowledge and work experience. The mobility of construction practitioners and the lack of accurate understanding of quality codes lead to negligence or failure to conform to quality requirements. Therefore, research and development of a construction quality management model are necessary for barrier-free quality data circulation between different trades at all stages of the project. The integration of 4D BIM and construction quality codes provide accurate and consistent data for the whole process, allowing the participants to fully understand the quality requirements.

4. Architecture of BIM-based construction quality model

In a standard BIM, each element is only defined with geometry attributes; this does not include the detailed information necessary for quality management such as construction process, method, material, and participants. In order to contain all available information elements, evaluation criteria and relationships, the quality model consists of a standard BIM, scheduling and the standard POP model.

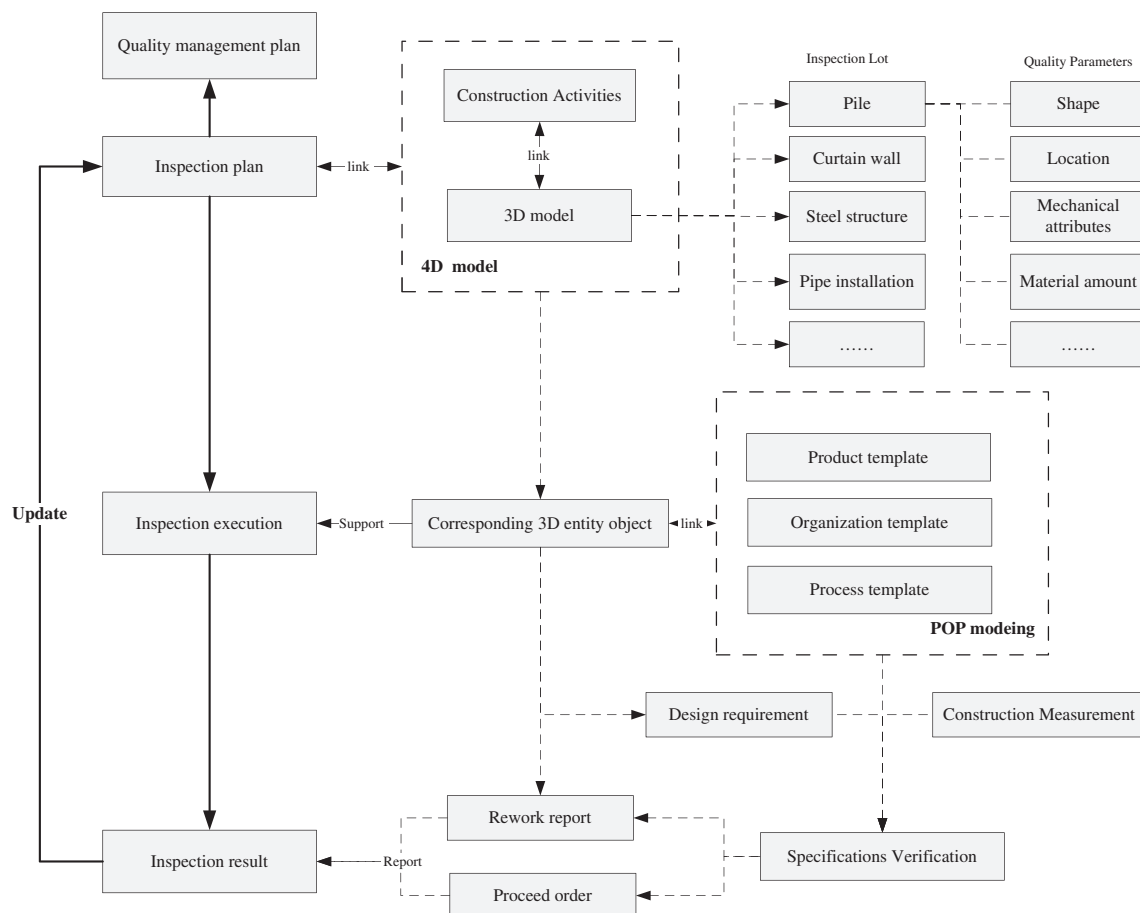


Fig. 1. The execution of construction quality management inspection plan using BIM quality model.

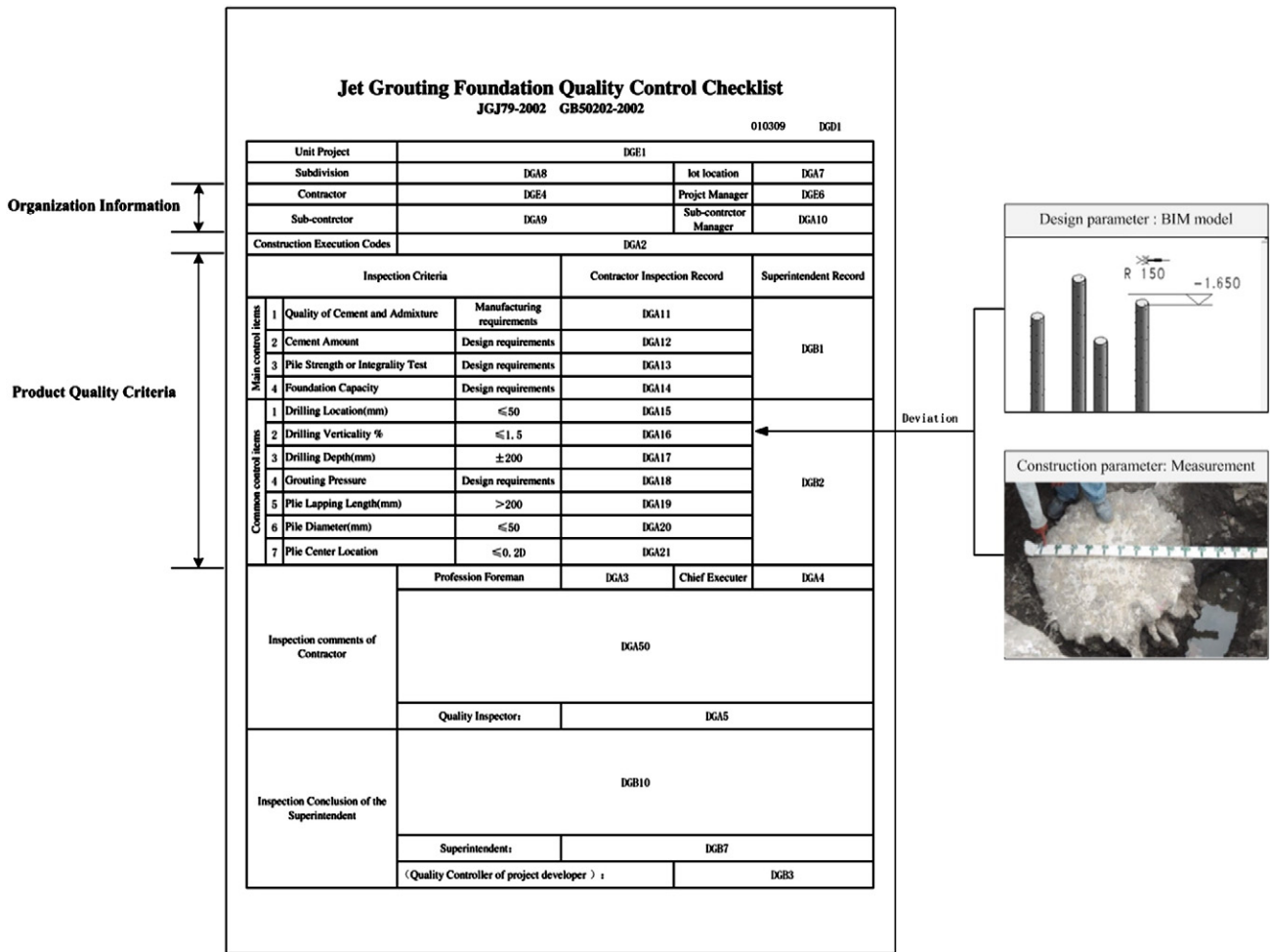


Fig. 3. Quality inspection checklist for jet grouting foundation.

reorganized into inspection lots that establish a correspondence between inspection lots and BIM elements. Considering the uniqueness of each engineering project, the rules for dividing inspection lots and the creation of the BIM model would be different for each project. Normally the parameters in a BIM only cover geometric attributes which is not enough information to connect the component to an inspection lot.

Therefore, it is best to extend the quality attributes when creating and updating the model information with the construction method and material requirements that are usually specified in the design of overall instruction in a 2D design environment. Therefore, the BIM model must be created with significant quality attributes for each building element, such as material and construction method. So that the BIM elements

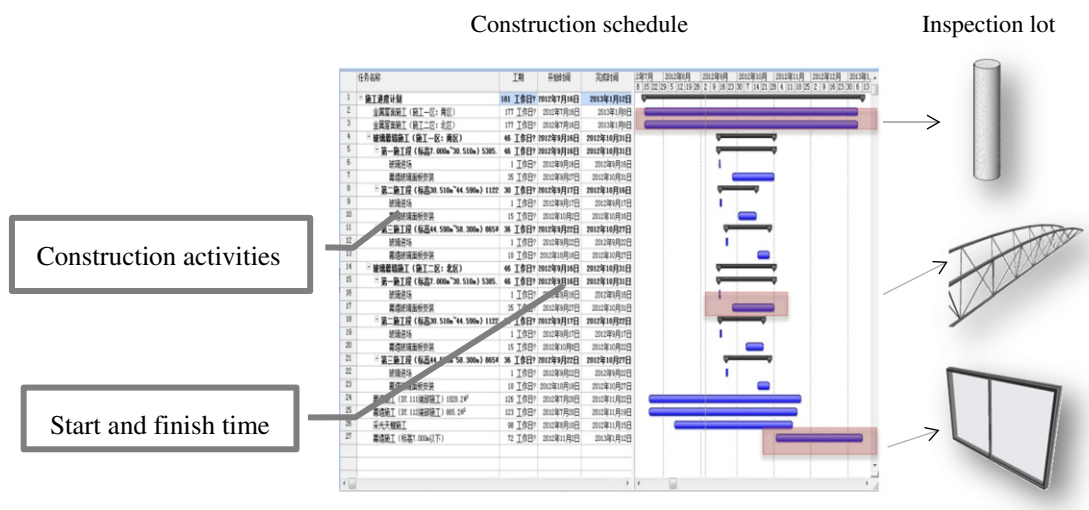


Table 1
Color metaphor of quality status in BIM-based quality model.

Quality state		Color coded metaphor
Before inspection	Before construction	Grey
	Under construction	Purple
	After construction	Green
After inspection	Failed	Red
	Passed	Yellow

contains the design and construction parameters and official construction codes as reference data. The BIM-based quality model compares the actual quality testing data to these standards. The BIM-based application displays value deviations and the degree of deviation by using different warning symbols (triangle, circle, etc.) so unacceptable inspection results are obvious. For example, the location of the grouting foundation should deviate less than 1.5% from the design parameter based on construction codes.

- (4) Compliance analysis. The BIM-based quality model provides management for the whole construction project quality process in a multi-level acceptance sequence. The model provides analysis for every quality control item and displays whether the actual quality testing results meet the requirement of corresponding codes in the quality model. Take interior decoration as an example, eligibility criteria of inspection lot is listed as follow: 1) Each dominant item should be quality tested by sampling inspection; 2) general items should each be qualified by sampling inspection, during the counting inspection. Allowable defect items are less than 80% of total samples and the maximum deviation must be no more than 1.5 times the permissible deviation; 3) quality inspection records must be completed during construction operations. The lot will be accepted if the selected samples meet the system defined requirements.
- (5) Quality status feedback. As schedule information is integrated in the model, a status for the construction product is defined as: before construction or under construction before inspection. After the inspection is performed, the results are displayed in the model with color metaphors and NCRs or rework orders are generated if necessary. The 3D BIM describes quality status in different colors as shown in Table 1. When the lot is accepted,

the next procedure can start; if the lot fails an inspection, the lot will be marked red and then a nonconformance report that states the violation of codes that fail to deliver the consistency of design intent and construction results will be issued for corrective action.

6. Implementation

Wuhan International Exhibition Center is the largest facility of this type in the Midwest China and the third largest exhibition venue nationally with an exhibition area of 130,000 m². The total cost for this project was approximately 3 billion dollars. The exhibition venue has 12 single halls which are designed without columns. Due to the large investment, tight schedule, complexity of construction and large amount of participants, the project quality had to be closely scrutinized and strictly controlled according to relevant construction codes throughout the construction phase to prevent the value of the end product from being compromised and off schedule.

The proposed BIM-based quality model of this paper was applied to the construction process for the foundation of work. After one month of high pressure jet grouting foundation work, 156 jet grouting piles were completed in accordance with the schedule as shown in Fig. 7. The contractor requested inspection since 28 days of completion according to the code for acceptance of construction quality of building foundations (GB50202-2009).

When the inspection request for specific objects in the model was accepted, the corresponding checklist template for high pressure jet grouting foundation was identified based on the information about construction method and material from BIM model. The professional quality inspector completes the checklist with the organization information and inspection data obtained from the construction site. Then, site data was analyzed, and compared with the design parameters in the BIM-based quality model. Any data with a deviation beyond tolerated variance will be identified and marked with symbols. Then an acceptance rate for each row of quality control items in the checklist will be generated and compared with the codes, as shown in Fig. 8. The template in Chinese in English refers to the same template in Fig. 3. Finally, the decision is made whether the inspection results are in accordance with construction codes, then reflected in 3D model. The next construction activities in this area may proceed, if the lots are accepted. Otherwise, the lots that failed inspection would be displayed in red, and a nonconformance report or rework order will be issued to provide the

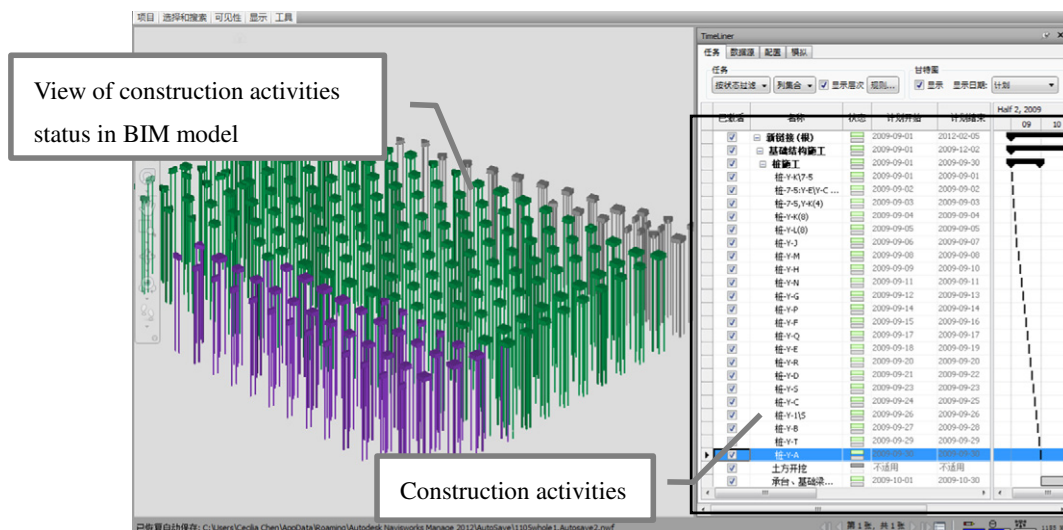


Fig. 7. Color-coded inspection lot of high-pressure jet grouting foundation and corresponding time schedule in BIM.

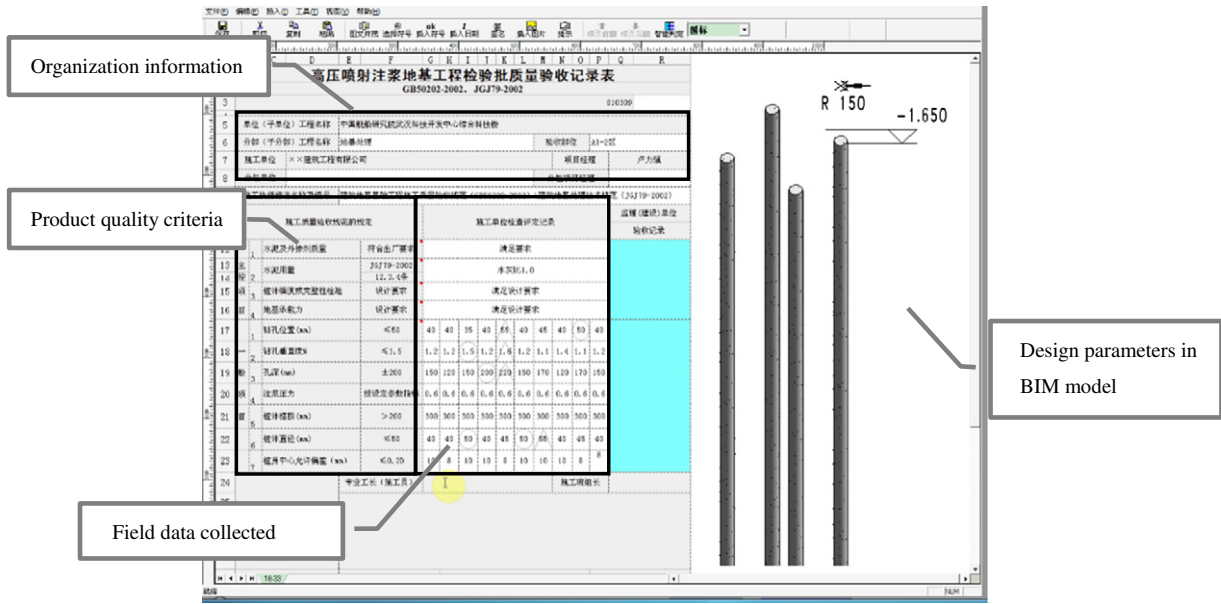


Fig. 8. Quality data analysis screenshot of high pressure jet grouting foundation inspection lot.

basic information of lots, description of violation in material, workmanship or procedure as well as plans for corrective action as is shown in Fig. 9. The coding method of blank space in the rework order in Fig. 9 is consistent with the original checklist in Fig. 2. Then, the result of the corrective action is reviewed and approval is given to proceed with successive activities.

In this way, design information in the BIM is fully utilized in data analysis and report generation. The field photos and model images are attached in the report to better illustrate the defects and the new schedule is defined. Therefore, the BIM-based construction quality model is effective and reliable for participants to understand problems of the quality defects or non-conforming works and track the corrective action. This is especially important for concealed works before it is concealed. There was a case on the project which was not covered in this research. The internal structures of the support columns were completed and proceeded to the external formwork without completing the required quality inspection. When the consultant discovered that the formwork was completed, he filed to suspend work and remove the formwork. Utilizing a BIM quality model prevents such mistakes or negligence because tasks are arranged in time sequence and the uninspected zone is flagged in green for easy identification.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

The presented findings contribute to the understanding of the potential use of BIM in construction quality management and fill an existing gap in the knowledge on the use of BIM for construction quality management. This paper explored the implementation of BIM in quality management and proposed integrated solutions to improve current quality management processes with assistance of a BIM working environment. A BIM-based quality model has been proposed to combine BIM and the existing quality POP model. Also this paper discusses how these two models will work together to facilitate construction quality management. It helps the project participants to better understand the quality progress and to collaborate more effectively thanks to a visualized data format.

The key benefits of the construction quality model proposed in this paper lie in the following aspects: First, the utilization of design information ensures information consistency and facilitates quality

management process. Second, the fully standardized and structured construction codes are integrated in the model to provide clear construction task requirements for instruction and verification. Typical errors caused by misunderstanding of cross-reference codes can be avoided. Third, 4D application ensures the timely inspection and virtualization of the whole process, which helps the project participants to better understand the quality requirements acceptance, and to collaborate in a visualized manner.

It can be concluded that the BIM-based construction quality application is suitable and helpful in quality compliance management. First, due to data consistency, it is possible and feasible to apply BIM for quality management and to fully utilize design information through virtualization of the construction process. Second, BIM can be fit into the current industry standard practices in quality management and validated through a case study. Although quantitative results are not given due to the limitation of this research project, comparisons are made between BIM-based and non BIM-based projects. Traditional quality management failed to dynamically interact with scattered design drawings and the quality management process. In this case study, with the application of BIM-based construction quality model, the information is accumulated and abstracted from the same data source to fully coordinate and communicate between the design and the construction phase. As complete construction requirements are clarified in a 3D format for better understanding, the project was delivered on time related to foundation works.

However, the BIM-based quality model does have the following limitations: (1) A BIM model developed for design purposes does not contain temporary structures, such as external formwork, and scaffolding. Therefore, temporary structures must be added to the original BIM design-oriented model. (2) The use of computers onsite is not convenient at this time with the proposed method and mobile devices should be used in the future for improvement in recording field data and direct data transfer to BIM.

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Rework Order Form

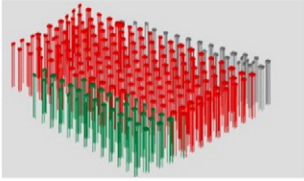
1. General information

Lot No.: _____ [DGD1] Subdivision: _____ [DGE4]
 Contractor: _____ [DGE4] Location: _____ [DGA5]

2. Causes analysis and response

According to requirements of specification [DGA2], the deviation of [DGA1]- DGA21] is beyond permissible deviation or doesn't meet design. Measures should be taken for correction.

Quality Inspector: _____ [DGA5]



3. Disposition of Product

Lot Quantity: _____ Defect Qty: _____ Defect Rate: _____

Defects to be: Reworked Scrapped & replaced Accepted as is

Date returned: _____

4. Impact analysis

Rework time: _____ hrs. Entire rework Cost: _____

5. Acceptance Signature

Contractor: _____ [DGE4]

Superintendent: _____ [DGB7]

A/E Engineer: _____
 (If applicable)

Fig. 9. BIM-based construction quality model.

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