

# **KWAZULU-NATAL STRUCTURAL ENGINEER WINS CCSA 'YOUNG CONCRETE RESEARCHER' AWARD**



**DR. BENEDICT OLALUSI**

Cement & Concrete SA (CCSA) has named Dr. Benedict Olalusi, lecturer at the University of KZN's School of Civil and Environmental Engineering, South Africa's top Young Concrete Researcher for 2021.

The new award, made at CCSA's recent Young Concrete Researchers, Engineers and Technologists' YCRETS 2021 online symposium, recognizes young researchers making a significant contribution to advancing concrete technology through research excellence at an early stage in their careers.

Dr. Olalusi, 31, is a structural engineer who holds a Ph.D. Degree in Civil Engineering from Stellenbosch University, based on his research in Structural Reliability and Risk Assessment. He obtained his M.Eng degree in Structural Engineering and B.Eng degree in Civil Engineering from the Federal University of Technology Akure, Nigeria. Also, He spent time as an international scholar at the Technical University (TU) of Dortmund in Germany on the institution's 2019 Gambrinus Fellowship for global cooperation in teaching and research.

The CCSA Young Concrete Researcher for 2021's research focuses on structural reliability and risk analysis, shear in concrete beams, probabilistic safety evaluation of existing design standards, and innovative construction materials and application of machine learning and data mining in structural engineering. Dr. Olalusi has already won several awards for his research projects from various institutions and has received several research grants from the SA National Research Foundation (NRF) and international bodies.

With years of industry experience in civil/structural engineering, risk consulting, and structural software development, he has authored and co-authored articles in peer-reviewed conference proceedings and reputable journals. He has been a supervisor for many postgraduate students.

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In accepting the CCSA award, Dr. Olalusi said he was highly honored to win such an important accolade, inspiring him to greater heights in his research work. “I have received inspiration from my seniors and my colleagues, for whom I have the most profound respect, and from whom I have derived the strength to challenge myself to perform better at each stage,” he stated.

Prof Mike Otieno, of the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of the Witwatersrand, who chaired the CCSA Young Concrete Researcher adjudication panel, said CCSA decided to introduce the award, scheduled to be part of future YCRETS symposia, to recognize and appreciate the contributions of young researchers for:

- \* The advancement of knowledge in the field of concrete;
- \* Their engagement in activities of industry bodies; and
- \* Their promotion of a “culture of excellence” among young researchers.

“CCSA wanted to encourage both established and young researchers to mentor and introduce novice researchers into the concrete community,” Prof Otieno stated.



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