

RISK OF CONSTRUCTION CORRUPTION FACTORS IN CONSTRUCTION
PROJECT LIFE CYCLE FROM CONTRACTORS' PERSPECTIVES

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DEDICATION

For my parents, lover and son.



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ABSTRACT

Oftentimes, construction industry is well known to be one the most easily corruptible industry in this world. This is due to the nature of the complexities of the industry itself, as there exists many loopholes that makes it easy for dishonest people looking to take advantage to gain for themselves. The practice of corruption in Malaysia have been severe as seen in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) which ranked the country, 58th out of 180 countries in 2019. This makes it important to study the corrupt practices construction industry moreover it contributed to more than RM60 billion towards the Malaysian GDP. Corrupt practices not only affect the economic side of the nation but it also affects the government's image as well as the nation's reputation. Hence this study intended to identify the factors contributing to corruption throughout the construction project life cycle phases as it reveals the riskiest phases which are prone to corrupt practices. From literature review, it was found that there were around 200 corruption factors relating to the corruption in construction industry. After similarity checking, it was found that only 31 corruption factors were relevant which would then be placed under the construction project life cycle (CPLC) phases to categorize it. The pilot study involved 13 construction experts and the study found that all the construction corruption factor (CCF) to be relevant and the questionnaire reliable which is all Cronbach Alpha value above 0.600. The actual questionnaire survey was conducted among contractors from Grade 1 to 7 of the southern region of peninsular Malaysia. From 150 questionnaires distributed, the study managed to get back 135 sets which means 90% response rate. Data was then established from these 135 valid sets of questionnaires and was analysed using statistical tools and risk matrix chart. It was found that the collected data were reliable as the Cronbach alpha values shows it to be reliable. The data was further used to analyse the ranking of occurrence and severity for each factor in construction project life cycle (CPLC) phases. Based on the occurrence and severity values, the risk level of each factor was identified and plotted using risk matrix chart to show the riskiest factor in the CPLC. Finally, for the high risk factors, this study has proposed mitigation plan that will help to counter the corrupt practices. The findings from this study will assist the construction community in Malaysia to take appropriate actions in resolving the corruption issues with the suggested mitigation strategies for their organisations. For the relevant authorities, these findings can help to formulate rules and regulations to prevent corrupt practices and ensuring the construction activities can be carried out with a clean, high quality and in sustainable manner.

ABSTRAK

Kebelakangan ini, industri pembinaan terkenal sebagai salah satu industri di dunia yang paling mudah berlakunya kegiatan rasuah. Ini disebabkan oleh, sifat kompleks industri itu sendiri kerana terdapat banyak celah yang memudahkan orang yang tidak jujur mencari peluang untuk mendapat keuntungan untuk diri sendiri. Kegiatan rasuah di Malaysia semakin parah, seperti dapat dilihat daripada Indeks Persepsi Rasuah (CPI) di mana negara berada ditangga ke 58 daripada 108 negara pada tahun 2019. Hal ini menjadikan betapa pentingnya untuk mengkaji kegiatan rasuah didalam industri pembinaan dan menyumbang lebih RM60 billion kepada KDNK negara. Kegiatan rasuah bukan sahaja memberi impak negatif kepada ekonomi negara, malah memberi impak negatif kepada imej negara dan reputasi negara. Oleh itu, kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti dan menilai faktor-faktor menyumbang kepada rasuah sepanjang fasa kitaran pembinaan projek (CPLC) dan mengenal pasti fasa paling berisiko yang terdedah kepada kegiatan rasuah. Daripada kajian literatur, didapati terdapat sekitar 200 faktor rasuah yang berkaitan dengan rasuah di dalam industri pembinaan. Selepas semakan kesamaan, didapati hanya 31 faktor rasuah yang relevan dan dikategorikan dibawah fasa kitaran projek pembinaan (CPLC). Setelah itu, faktor-faktor tersebut digunakan di dalam borang soal selidik semasa kajian lapangan dimana untuk melihat sama ada faktor-faktor tersebut relevan dengan industri pembinaan Malaysia. Kajian lapangan melibatkan 13 orang pakar pembinaan dan kajian mendapati bahawa kesemua factor rasuah pembinaan (CCF) adalah relevan dan borang soal selidik adalah boleh dipercayai di mana semua nilai Cronbach Alpha atas 0.600. Tinjauan soal selidik sebenar telah dijalankan dan melibatkan kontraktor Gred 1 hingga Gred 7 daripada Wilayah Selatan Semenanjung Malaysia. Daripada 150 set borang soal selidik diedarkan, kajian berjaya mendapatkan kembali 135 set borang soal selidik, ini bermakna, 90% kadar tindakbalas. Selepas itu, data terkumpul daripada 135 set borang soal selidik yang lengkap akan dianalisis menggunakan alat statistik dan carta matrik risiko. Didapati bahawa, data yang terkumpul boleh dipercayai sebagaimana nilai Cronbach alfa menunjukkan ia boleh dipercayai. Selanjutnya, data digunakan untuk menganalisis tahap keberangskalian kejadian dan keparahan untuk setiap faktor dalam fasa kitaran hidup projek pembinaan (CPLC). Berdasarkan nilai kejadian dan keparahan, tahap risiko setiap faktor dapat dikenal pasti dan diplot menggunakan carta matrik risiko untuk menunjukkan fasa paling berisiko di dalam fasa kitaran hidup projek pembinaan (CPLC). Akhir sekali, faktor yang telah dikenal pasti paling berisiko, kajian telah mengemukakan pelan mitigasi untuk membantu mengatasi kegiatan rasuah. Dengan hasil kajian ini, komuniti pembinaan di Malaysia dapat mengambil tindakan yang sewajarnya dalam menyelesaikan masalah-masalah ini dan memperbaiki strategi pencegahan rasuah di syarikat mereka. Bagi pihak berkuasa eksekutif, pengenalpastian fasa paling berisiko yang mungkin berlaku daripada amalan rasuah adalah penting kerana ia membantu menggubal peraturan dan undang-undang untuk mencegah amalan rasuah dan memastikan aktiviti pembinaan dapat dijalankan dengan pendekatan yang bebas dari rasuah, berkualiti tinggi dan pendekatan lestari.

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<i>CIDB</i>	-	Construction Industry Development Board
<i>USAID</i>	-	United State Agency for International Development
<i>CPLC</i>	-	Construction Project Life Cycle
<i>GDP</i>	-	Global Development Plan
<i>GNI</i>	-	Gross National Income
<i>GFCF</i>	-	Gross Fixed Capital Formation
<i>MACC</i>	-	Malaysia Anti-Corruption Commission
<i>OECD</i>	-	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<i>TI</i>	-	Transparency International
<i>EU</i>	-	European Union
<i>IMF</i>	-	International Monetary Fund
<i>ACA</i>	-	Anti-Corruption Agency
<i>PCB</i>	-	Public Complaints Bureau
<i>MAMPU</i>	-	Malaysian Administration Modernization and Management Planning Unit
<i>GIACC</i>	-	Governance, Integrity and Anti-Corruption Centre
<i>CPI</i>	-	Corruption Perception Index
<i>KPMG</i>	-	Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler
<i>IEM</i>	-	Institute of Engineer Malaysia
<i>BEM</i>	-	Board of Engineer Malaysia
<i>CCF</i>	-	Construction Corruption Factors
<i>IRM</i>	-	Institute of Risk Management
<i>HM</i>	-	Her Majesty
<i>PMBOK</i>	-	Project Management Book of Knowledge
<i>ISO</i>	-	International Standard Organization
<i>CRM</i>	-	Corruption Risk Management

<i>UN</i>	-	United National
<i>MCI</i>	-	Malaysian Construction Industry
<i>AI</i>	-	Average Index
<i>G</i>	-	Grade
<i>NS</i>	-	Not Significant
<i>SS</i>	-	Slightly Significant
<i>MS</i>	-	Moderately Significant
<i>VS</i>	-	Very Significant
<i>ES</i>	-	Extremely Significant
<i>JKR</i>	-	Public Work Department



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In the world, the construction industry plays a major role in developing the national economy and socio-economic development which ultimately supports other industries (Abd Nifa, 2013; Ofori, 2015; Ali Khan, Liew and Ghazali, 2014). The construction industry also contributes to job-creation, re-distribution of wealth and income generation (Durdvey and Ismail, 2012; Kasimu and Kolaweli, 2015). While, according to Ibrahim, Roy, Ahmed and Imtiaz (2013) the industry plays a role in improving the quality of life and a lifeline for the sustainability of a country. In Malaysia, the construction industry also contributed to the development of Malaysia in all aspects including tourism, technology and other industries in which it supports other by providing infrastructures to hold the pieces together (Ali Khan *et al.*, 2014).

However, this industry faces high risk due to the complexities of construction business such as high employee turnover ratios in the sector, low frequency of construction projects, insufficient regulations and understaffing due to cost reduction strategies also corruption issues (Gunduz and Onder, 2012). Recently, Malaysian's construction industry faces many challenges that can affect project success, such as the lack of local manpower, cost overrun, delays in payments, financial issues and most concerning are the corruption issues (Rahim, 2010; Adnan, Hashim, Yusuwan and Ahmad, 2011; Asohan, 2014; Lee, 2019). According to Asohan (2014), corruption in the construction industry is critical and affects the Government's image as well as the nation's reputation. Corruption occurs due to many causes such as characteristics of construction project, tendering system, inspection system and greediness of some parties (Stansbury, 2005; Mohd Nordin, Takim and Nawawi, 2011; Shan, Yun, Chan and Yi, 2014).

Corruption has been critical issues in the construction industry worldwide and it is ranked first in the risk of corruption amongst other industries (Transparency International, 2018). Corruption is a misuse of power was granted for public officials and its stakeholders. This misuse of power is for self-benefit that is undisclosed and lacking transparency (World Bank, 1997; Transparency International, 2017 (a)). According to the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC, 2017 (a)), the parties that are likely to be involved with corruption are government officials, project owners, financiers, consultants, contractors, sub-contractors, suppliers, partners and agents. However, from the previous studies, the party that usually deals illegitimately with corruption are usually contractors as they are required to cooperate with other parties and as one of the main roles in the construction industry (Zou, 2006; Mohd Nordin, Takim and Nawawi, 2013).

Hence, there is a need to understand the risk of corruption as a way to overcome corrupt practices in the construction industry (United Nations Global Compact, 2013). Thus, this study considers contractors who are registered in CIDB as the targeted respondents. This study intends to uncover issues regarding corrupt practices in Malaysian construction industry and also to determine the level of risk for corruption propensity in Malaysian construction industry.

1.2 Problem of Statement

Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad had introduced Vision 2020 in 1990 which inspires Malaysia to be a fully industrialized country by the year 2020 (Ali Khan *et al.*, 2014). Since the inception of the vision, Malaysia has experienced rapid development and seeing an increased demand for the construction industry which have recorded significant growth and about RM 250 billion, worth of construction contracts is expected to be awarded with the announcement of 2020 Budget (Tan, 2019). However, there are many challenges to achieve a transparent construction industry such as shortage of labour, safety and corruption issues. Based on Transparency International (2020), Malaysia is one of the Asia Pacific countries that is in the bottom half which was ranked as 51 over 180 countries for the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) in 2019. Several newspapers also reported that the construction industry is highly prone to corruption and these are serious issues that ruins the Government's image and the country's reputation (Abdullah, 2017; Lee, 2017).

There are several studies on corrupt practices in the construction industry and amongst them is by Sohail and Cavill (2006 (a)) on the effect of corruption in the

construction industry and the methods to combat corruption. Then in 2008, Sohail and Cavill conducted two studies specifically on the effect of corruption in the United Kingdom's construction industry throughout the project life cycle and also on developing the accountability initiative to combat corruption. Research by Clarke (2010) is regarding the effect of corruption in competing for a government contract in Afghanistan. While in India, Tabish and Jha (2012) conducted a study on the impact of corruption in public construction projects and developing an anti-corruption strategy model. There are also studies on corruption in the China construction industry by Ming Shan *et al.*, (2014) which relates to the forms of corruption, the impact of corruption and anti-corruption strategies applied to avoid corrupt practices for the future. Ming Shan, Chan, Yun and Bo, (2015) further explained by developing a systematic model to measure the corruption level in a public construction project. The latest studies by Locatelli, Giacomo, Tristano and Marco, (2017) in Italy is regarding project characteristics can favour corruption and the effect of corruption on project performance.

There are several research works related to corrupt practices in the Malaysian construction industry. Namely, a study by Mohamad and Abdul Aziz, (2005) which discussed the ethical practices in the construction industry and found that many unethical practices were happening during the whole construction project life cycle which leads to corruption. Later Salim (2009) developed a strategy to combat corruption in the construction industry by using corruption factors from previous studies in each phase of Project Life Cycle. Mohd Nordin *et al.*, (2011) published a reviewed work on critical corruption factors which partly extracted from Rahim (2010). Furthermore, Mohd Nordin *et al.*, (2013) conducted a study on the behavioural factors that lead to corruption and developed the corruption combating action model for Malaysian construction. In the same year, Gevansri (2013) studied corruption in the Malaysian construction industry which identifies the causes of corruption in the construction industry, consequences and also methods to minimize corruption in the construction industry. The next year, Zakaria, Lee, Nilashi, Abd Majid, Ibrahim and Mohamad Zin (2014) studied the behavioural factors contributing to corruption issues and suggested the need to identify the corruption factors in the Malaysian construction industry. The latest study in 2019 by Lee investigated the corrupt practices in the Malaysian construction industry and developed preventive strategies.

These studies indicate that there are gaps to pursue more studies and one of them is to uncover the risk level of construction corruption factors throughout the construction project life cycle (CPLC) for the Malaysian construction industry. There are many

opportunities to explore the corruption practices in Malaysia construction industry like the forms of corruption, the occurrence and severity of the practices, the risk of the corruption and others. Hence this study takes the advantage to explore and assess the construction corruption factors throughout the construction project life cycle (CPLC) for Malaysia construction industry which is still not being investigated and will contribute to new body of knowledge. Beside that the findings from this study will benefit the relevant stakeholders of the construction community.

1.3 Research Question

Based on the problem statement of the study, the research questions here are designed to assist the researcher to achieve the main goal. This research focuses on the following research questions:

- i. What are the corruption factors related to the Malaysian construction industry?
- ii. What is the degree of occurrence and severity of the construction corruption factors in Malaysia?
- iii. What is the level of risk each of the construction corruption factor in Malaysia?
- iv. What is the riskiest phase for corruption in construction phases?
- v. What are the mitigation measures for high risk of corruption factors?

1.4 Research Objectives

This study aims to assess the risk of corruption factors in the Malaysian construction industry by Construction Project Life Cycle (CPLC). Referring to the statement of the problem, the objectives are as follows:

- i. Identify the construction corruption factors in construction industry
- ii. Determine the degree of occurrence and severity for corruption factors
- iii. Assess the risk level of corruption factors by CPLC phases
- iv. Propose mitigation measure for high risk the corruption factors

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study was conducted based on conventional construction management method as this approach is typically adopted in Malaysia. It is conducted through a quantitative approach to achieve the objectives. The pilot study conducted using a structured questionnaire

survey with 13 experts in the construction industry. While the data collection conducted using the same questionnaire survey after it has been verified from the pilot study. The targeted respondents of data collection are building/civil contractors G1 until G7 from Southern Part of Malaysia (Johor, Malacca and Negeri Sembilan). There were 150 questionnaires distributed amongst the respondents through face-to-face surveys, by e-mails and by Google form. These respondents are chosen for this study because they are highly susceptible to corrupt practices and the type of sampling carried out for this study is nonprobability sampling approach. The average index score and risk matrix are tools for analyzing the data collection to determine the degree of occurrence and severity of each corruption factor and risk level of each construction corruption factor.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This research has significant benefits for construction practitioners; government bodies and academia alike which its significance is outlined as follows:

- This study has identified the impact of corruption on the construction industry.
- This study also investigates the construction corruption factors that can contribute to the academic world by providing the risk of construction corruption factors and mitigation towards corruption practices.
- This finding contributes to the community to have a good quality construction at a reasonable price due to contractor used low quality of materials to cover the cost of corruption.
- This finding contributes to construction industry practices and Malaysia Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) in handling corruption practices in construction industry.

1.7 Thesis Structure

Chapter 1: This chapter is the introduction of the entire research. It discusses briefly the background of the study and the need for this study. It also contains the problem statement, objective, scope of study and significance of the study. The thesis structure also provided as an introduction to every chapter in this study. Finally, a summary of the first chapter is highlighted.

Chapter 2: The second chapter is about the literature review related to this study and was carried out to provide a comprehensive understanding of the

background of the construction industry and corruption issues in the construction industry. It discusses the phases in the construction industry which is the construction project life cycle (CPLC). This chapter also explained the corruption definition, forms of corruption, the impact of corruption and discusses corruption in the construction industry in Malaysia. Corruption risk management was discussed including the definition of risk for deeper understanding. Then, the factor contributing to corruption from previous studies is extracted. Finally, the mitigation strategies were extracted and simplified from previous studies and the description was explained.

Chapter 3: This chapter is explained the research approach and methods adopted for this study. Firstly, it discusses the research design which is a quantitative research method used for this research using the survey. Then, the research framework is designed to provide guidelines for the researcher to conduct the study. This chapter also describes the quantitative research method including questionnaire development for a pilot study and actual survey. Then method selection of respondents was discussed. The purpose and method of the pilot study and the actual survey were explained in detail. Then, discussion regarding the reliability test analysis by using Cronbach Alpha. The data analysis using SPSS 19.0 software. Finally, it discusses the analysis method adopted for this study.

Chapter 4: Chapter Four presents the pilot study and data collection which is conducted in the Southern Part of Malaysia (Johor, Malacca and Negeri Sembilan). The pilot study conducted to determine the relevancy for each construction corruption factor with Malaysia's situation and involved 13 construction experts. This chapter also discusses the actual survey of data collection which is carried out amongst the Southern Part of Malaysia's Grade 1-Grade 7 contractors. It presents the demographics profile of construction workers including position, the grades of the company based on CIDB and experience. Besides that, the degree of severity and occurrence by using the average index score. Then, the risk level of each construction corruption factor is identified by using risk matrix which multiplies of occurrence and severity. After the data analysis, the result discussed deeply. Then the mitigation strategies were proposed based on previous studies and only for

riskiest construction corruption factors. Finally, the summary of the chapter is outlined.

Chapter 5: This chapter is discussing the conclusion of the overall findings of the entire research. It also provides a summary of its main findings and its achievements by providing answers to the aim, objectives and questions of the research. Besides that, the limitations of the research are outlined and recommendations for practitioners and further research is given out.

1.8 Summary

This chapter intends to describe the introduction of this study. It consists of the background of the research, problem statement, research questions, aim and objectives and scope of this study. It also explains briefly the significance of this study and discusses the thesis structure.



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CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the literature review carried out by this study. The purpose of this literature review is to provide the researcher with a general overview of corruption in the construction industry and also in helping to build the foundation for the theoretical framework of this study. The first part of this chapter gives a brief description of the construction industry and an in-depth description of the Malaysian construction industry. Afterwards, this chapter also discussed the phases/stages of the construction industry, which is the Construction Project Life Cycle (CPLC). Additionally, the corruption issues in the construction industry will be discussed in-depth in this chapter. From the discussion, several corruption factors in the construction industry have been identified and extracted from previous studies. Next, corruption risk in the construction industry discourse was presented to assess the risk of each factor. Finally, this chapter will end with the summary

2.2 Construction Industry

Construction industry includes all immobile structures such as buildings, tunnels, pipelines, dams, canals, airports, power plants, railroads and factories. The construction industry is one of the economic sectors that are responsible for planning, designing, constructing, maintenance and demolition of buildings and works. The industry plays roles in the success of major national policies, strategies, economic development and productivity rather than the size of the industry (Halim, Jusoh, Osman and Amlus, 2014). According to Olanrewaju and Abd Aziz, (2015), the roles of the construction industry should be as following;

- a. *A strategic tool to achieve sustainable development outputs which are growth-initiating and growth-dependent*
- b. *Contribution to the economy as part of; Global Development Plan (GDP), Gross National Income (GNI), Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF)*
- c. *Provide utilities and infrastructure for other industries*
- d. *Contributing significantly to another informal sector*
- e. *As income for wealth generation and wealth re-distribution*
- f. *Providing vacancies for job creation*

Construction is a dynamic and responsive industry which relates and reflects to the economic investment and development of a country (Mohd Nordin *et al.*, 2011; Durdyev and Ismail, 2012). The industry is unique and one of a kind which means that each and every of projects has a different nature of work, location, different personalities to employ, parties and type of production such as dam, stadium and road (Abd Sani, 2011). It also involves huge and complex of activities where the quality is hard to assess and this industry can be categorized as a high-risk business (Kenny, 2007 (a); Zakaria *et al.*, 2014). Since the industry involves a complex process that sometimes non-standardized modes that can raise the asymmetric information between clients and suppliers which connect to the government (Kenny, 2007 (b)). The construction industry comprises projects from government and private sectors that involve numerous parties, different phases of work, complex working process and input either from public or private sectors (Takim and Akintoye, 2002; Stansbury, 2005).

2.3 Malaysian Construction Industry

Malaysia is categorized as a developing country and set the way forward for national development plan for 2021 until 2025. The Twelfth Malaysia Plan (12MP) aligned with the shared prosperity initiative encompassing three dimensions which are economic empowerment, environmental sustainability and social re-engineering for next 2021 until 2025. The plan to transform Malaysia economic is include Industrial Revolution 4.0 (Economic Planning Unit, 2020). Malaysia depends on the construction industry as an economic investment for opening opportunities for other industrial development. The construction industry has been significantly contributing towards the revenue generation, capital formation and employment creation which ultimately support the growth of gross

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