UNETHICAL CONDUCT AND CORRUPTION AMONG MALAYSIAN CONSTRUCTION PROFESSIONAL

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DEDICATION

This report is dedicated to my father, Mohd Zainudin Bin Mohd Yusof who is my mentor and my best teacher. It is also dedicated to my mother, Arbaaiah Binti Bahari who is an inspiration to me. Next is my beloved wife Farah Syazwani Binti Mohamd Tarmizi and all my children which their love and motivation had keep me going through thick and thin to complete this report.

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ABSTRACT

Corruption has been a major issue not just in construction industry but in other industry as well. However, reports show that corruption in the construction industry is the highest amongst other which make construction industry is a corrupted industry. Although law maker constantly fighting the issues, it is still a major worry to the involved party. In some cases, corruption in the construction industry can also be seen as a norm. Unethical business practices and corruption in international construction has resulted in notable human and financial losses; and destruction of the environment. The purpose of this study is to analyse perceptions of Malaysian construction professionals about unethical business practices and corruption in the construction industry. The study conducted for this paper is mainly through literature review followed by questionnaire survey. The study administered (50) set of structured survey questionnaire from random construction professionals. The findings show that the form of unethical and corruption practice is in the form of money exchange which can be considered bribery while the factor that lead to such act is caused by the individual's lack of professionalism in handling projects. The impact of unethical and corrupt practices shown that it impacting the growth and revenue of both public and private sectors while the possible remedies to minimize unethical and corrupt practices among Malaysian construction professional is to impose a better and stricter law. The paper concluded that the unethical and corrupt practices in Malaysia is still prevalent among construction professionals.

ABSTRAK

Rasuah telah menjadi isu utama bukan sahaja dalam industri pembinaan tetapi juga industri lain. Walau bagaimanapun, laporan menunjukkan bahawa rasuah dalam industri pembinaan adalah yang tertinggi di kalangan yang lain yang menjadikan industri pembinaan sebagai industri yang paling korup. Walaupun penggubal undangundang sentiasa menentang gejala rasuah ini, ianya masih menjadi kebimbangan besar kepada pelbagai pihak yang terlibat. Dalam banyak keadaan, kes rasuah dalam industri pembinaan dilihat sebagai suatu norma dan kebiasaan. Amalan perniagaan yang tidak beretika serta rasuah dalam pembinaan antarabangsa telah mengakibatkan kerugian nyawa dan kewangan yang ketara; dan pemusnahan alam sekitar. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk menganalisis persepsi profesional pembinaan Malaysia mengenai amalan perniagaan yang tidak beretika dan rasuah dalam industri pembinaan. Kajian ini dijalankan melalui kajian literatur diikuti dengan kajian soal selidik. Sebanyak (50) set soalan kaji selidik berstruktur telah diberikan kepada anggota profesional industri pembinaan secara rawak. Penemuan menunjukkan bahawa bentuk amalan tidak beretika dan korupsi adalah dalam bentuk pertukaran wang yang boleh dianggap sebagai rasuah sementara faktor-faktor yang menyebabkan perbuatan itu disebabkan oleh kurangnya profesionalisme dalam mengendalikan projek. Kesan amalan tidak beretika dan rasuah menunjukkan bahawa ia memberi kesan kepada pertumbuhan dan pengurangan hasil kedua-dua sektor awam dan swasta, manakala cadangan penyelesaian untuk meminimumkan amalan tidak beretika dan rasuah di kalangan profesional pembinaan di Malaysia adalah dengan menggubal undang-undang yang lebih baik dan ketat. Kertas ini menyimpulkan bahawa amalan tidak beretika dan rasuah di Malaysia masih banyak berlaku di kalangan anggota profesional pembinaan.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Problem Background

Dishonesty in the construction business is often the result of a mixture of the extremely competitive nature of the design tendering process, a lack of consistent variety of standards for many contracts, small margins, close relationships between developers, sub-contractors and (sometimes) project managers, and poorly trained, under-supervised and unchecked work in the industry, as well as a lack of compliance.

Corruption in construction projects would affect that of the performance, efficiency and profitability of public providers. Unethical practices will occur in every phase of a construction project: planning, review, design, contract agreement, installation, distribution of services, operation and maintenance (Zou, 2006).

Graft in procurement tends to reduce the efficiency of public investment, reduce the quality of existing infrastructure, reduce the profitability of capital spending and, as a result, lower the country's growth rate claimed Tanzi and Davoodi (1997).

Companies such as financer, guarantor, are threatened by the unethical and corrupt practices in the industry. This result into loses such as loses in the expenses of during procurement, raising confusion in bidding, making the project more costly, damaging the economy and risking the reputation of the concern parties. (Stansbury, 2005).

Nonetheless, it introduces the concept that corruption can not be fully remove d as the price of doing so would be unreasonably high (reduction of productivity and probably performance) (Cavill, 2006).

1.2 Problem Background

Globally, it is agreed that the unethical and corrupt practices such as corruption is not a new occurrence. The disruptive practice have been in the system for a long time and it has been a concern to the industry as the market value for the industry is \$3,200 billion a year (Othman *et al.*, 2014).

In developed countries, this field accounts for 5-7% of GDP and about 2-3% of GDP in growing low-income generated countries (Rodriguez *et al.*, 2005). Corrupt practices can be seen in construction projects at every level, e.g. during the planning, during awarding project ceremony, and the project's operations and maintenance upon completion of construction (Kwan & Ofori, 2001; Rodriguez *et al.*, 2005; Stansbury, 2005).

Research from all over the world shows that the unethical and corrupt practices disturb the economic development, decreases public facilities, distracts substructure and social care investments and overwhelmingly give impacts to the poor's life (Khramkin, 2007) Therefore, the value of finding out the psychological underpinnings of unethical behavior and corruption is strong, offering scientific support in the fight against corruption.

Transparency International's Global Corruption Report (Rodriguez *et al.*, 2005) highlights the overwhelming influence of construction's corruption issues (such as misuse of properties, financial distortion, corruption and corruption, money laundering, industrial spying and intelligence, piracy and counterfeiting of products).

The outcome of the CPI published by Transparency International indicates that Malaysia is expected to have problems with corruption among the nations. While the 2013 CPI is seeing progress, the result does not mean that Malaysia is in the comfort zone. This is because the reading of corruption in Malaysia, as shown in the sequence of perception indices of corruption, is not too satisfying (from 60th in 2011 to 56th in 2012 and 53rd in 2013), suggesting that corruption must be taken seriously in Malaysia (Othman *et al.*, 2014). With that notion, it is necessary to do an analysis on the unethical conduct and corruption among Malaysian construction professional.

In Malaysia, various research has been done to recognize corruption issues, but practitioners lacked information on the causes of unethical behavior and corrupt practices. Al-sweity (2013) stated that regional qualitative research on unethical performance by professionals in the construction industry is incomplete, rendering the analysis of the current situation a developmental necessity.

Hence, the worldwide awareness of the problem of unethical behavior in the construction industry leads to the development of new approaches to solve this issue and the diffusion of ethics among industry stakeholders.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of Study

This study conducted to analyse perceptions of Malaysian construction professionals on the unethical practices and corruption in the construction industry. In order to achieve the aim, there objectives were outline as per list below.

The objectives of the research are:

i. To determine different forms of unethical and corrupt practices in construction.

- ii. To investigate the factors that lead to unethical and corrupt practices in construction.
- ii. To explore the impact of unethical and corrupt practices in construction.
- iv. To propose possible strategies to minimize unethical and corrupt practices in construction.

1.4 Scope of Study

In order to establish a concrete data and analysis, few scopes were outlined to ensure the objectives of this research can be fulfilled.

- i The industry that are involved and investigated is construction industry in Malaysia. The reason the author chooses to keep the data collection/sampling to Malaysia because factors are varied across the world mainly due to culture of the country itself.
- ii. The study also covers all construction personnel such as main contractors, sub-contractors, vendors, suppliers and government officers.

1.5 Methodology of Study

The study is done in order that the objective outlined can be achieved. The study is carried out in stages, starting with Literature Review, Data Collection, Data Analysis and at the end giving out recommendation. Several points are anticipated from this research which can help in achieving the aims and objectives of the study.

i The first findings will uncover the typical behaviours among the

industry player that lead to corrupt action. The type of behaviour predicted to be influenced by the cultural, ethic and the norms of the industry itself based on the preliminary study at the early stage of the research.

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The unethical and corrupt practices in the construction industry can take many forms but the most common ones in Malaysia are as found from the surveys.

- The second findings will list out the factors that contribute to the act of corrupt among the industry player. This will be done by extensive literature reviews and also from surveys that will be done among the industry's player. This will be done in order to get a more accurate data on what makes up the major factors that contribute to the act of corrupt and comparing it to previous data from literature review.
- iv. The third findings will show the impact of unethical and corrupt practices in construction. This impact may vary differently under different factors.
- v. The last findings from this research will list out suitable approaches in order to minimize the act of corrupt practice in construction industry.

Table 1.1 Findings Based on Objectives

Objectives		Objectives Method A		Analysis Tool	Outcome
1	To determine different forms of unethical and corrupt practices in construction.	L, Q	- Content analysis - Data analysis	Journals Questionnaire	Typical behaviours among the industry player that lead to corrupt action
2	To investigate the factors that lead to unethical and corrupt practices in construction.	L, Q	- Content analysis - Data analysis	Journals Questionnaire	Factors that contribute to the act of corrupt among the industry player
3	To explore the impact of unethical and corrupt practices in construction.	L, Q	- Content analysis - Data analysis	Journals Questionnaire	The scale of the magnitude of malpractices in the industry
4	To propose possible strategies to minimize unethical and corrupt practices in construction.	L, Q	- Content analysis - Data analysis	Journals Questionnaire	Suitable approaches in order to minimize the act of corrupt practice in construction industry

L = Literature review, Q = Questionnaire

1.6 Arrangement of Report

The report arranges starting with introduction to the topic, the objectives and scope as well as brief methodology of the study. This followed by findings from literature reviews which were obtained by reading journal, online research paper and other published contents online as well offline. The next chapter discuss the methodology of the study followed by discussion on the findings. The last chapter is about the conclusion for the study as well recommendation for future research on the topic.

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