THE UNETHICAL BEHAVIOURS AMONG PRACTITIONERS IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT STAGES IN KLANG VALLEY CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

BY

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this study is to examine the unethical behaviours among the practitioners in project management stages in Klang Valley construction projects. The objectives of this thesis are as follows: Firstly, to identify the factors that drive the practitioners to unethical behaviours in project management stages. Secondly, to identify the unethical behaviours that occur in the project management stages. Thirdly, to evaluate the level of awareness and application of the principles of the code of ethics when the practitioners carry out their duty in the projects. Fourthly, to develop the practical guidelines for managing and reducing the unethical behaviours in construction projects. However, it appears that practitioners in the building construction industry deemed to behave unethically when implementing project management on various stages that persist to lead to lower outcomes in project quality. This negative impact can damage the outcomes of economic and social development, which may also stop the sustainable development. The methodology adopted in this study was quantitative approach through literature reviews followed by the questionnaire to collect the required data from the practitioners. The respondents comprised of 336 practitioners from Board of Architects, Engineers and Quantity Surveyors. A pilot study was conducted to ensure validity of the research by fifty practitioners, who are from different fields (Engineers, Quantity Surveyors, and Architects) in Klang Valley. The data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as one-way ANOVA and Multiple Linear Regression (MRA). The results showed that project factors have the highest mean among the factors that drive the practitioners to unethical behaviours in project management stages followed by external environment, personal environment, individual attributes, work environment, professional environment, governmental environment, and social environment has the lowest mean. Based on MRA results, unethical behaviours were significantly by three of the eight factors, namely project factors, personal environment and Lastly external environment. Regarding the unethical behaviours in the project management stages, the fifth stage has the highest mean as the most occurred unethical behaviours, followed by stage two. On the other hand, stage three showed the lowest mean among other stages, this followed by stage four as the second lowest mean. Concerning the level of awareness and applying the principles of the code of ethics, honesty and reliability came as the highest principles of the code of ethics, followed by integrity, fair reward, objectivity, fairness, and accountability. In this regard, based on One-way ANOVA results, differences were found on honestly and fairness based on the respondents’ years of experience. However, no differences in the principles of the code of ethics were found on the respondents’ level of education. There are series of efforts should be made early in the life of the practitioner such as creating awareness, education, training, cancellation of license on repetitive violations, heavier penalties, and quality assurance group should be part of every project stage to ensure quality along with a project to prevent unethical behaviours in project management stages.
ملخص البحث

الهدف الرئيسي من هذه الدراسة هو فحص السلوكيات غير الأخلاقية بين المشاركين في مراحل إدارة المشروع في مشاريع البناء بوادي كلانج (Klang Valley).

تعمل أهداف هذه الورقة البحثية فيما يلي: أولاً، تحديد السلوكيات غير الأخلاقية التي تحدث في مراحل إدارة المشروع. ثانياً، تحديد العوامل التي تدفع المشاركين إلى السلوكيات غير الأخلاقية في مراحل إدارة المشروع. ثالثاً، تقييم مستوى الوعي وتطبيق مبادئ مدونة الأخلاق عند قيام المشاركين بواجبهم في المشاريع. رابعاً، وضع توجيهات عملية لإدارة السلوكيات غير الأخلاقية والحد منها في مشروع البناء. ومع ذلك، فقد ظهرت العديد من الحالات التي أشارت إلى أن المشاركين في صناعة البناء والتعميد عملاً ينصرون بشكل غير إخلاقي أثناء تنفيذهم لإدارة المشروع في مختلف المراحل المشروع، وذلك يؤدي إلى اتخاذ مسارات متزامنة جودة المشروع. وهذا ينشأ تأثير ضرير قد يضر بنتائج التنمية الاقتصادية والاجتماعية، مما قد يوقف أيضًا التنمية المستدامة. وقد أجريت المنهجية البحثية من خلال مراقبة الأدوات التي تتبعها استبيانات جمع البيانات المطلوبة من المشاركين لتجنب متطلبات البحث الكيمياء والخبرة، وتحلق عدد المشاركين 336 شركحة مماثلة من كل من مهنيين، والمهندسين، ومساهمين في أعمال البحث على اعتبارين كبير، وهو عبارة عن عشرة أكاديميين من أقسام فرعية (مهندسين، مساحون كيمياء، ومهندسين مهندسين) في الجامعة الإسلامية العالمية ممليزا.

وثلاثة خرائط من شركات استثمارية، وتطويرية، ومقاولات، واحد من كل من مجال الهندسة المعمارية والهندسة ومساحين القيادة وأربعة خبراء في الإحصاء. تم تحليل البيانات باستخدام التحليل الوصفي، وتحليل البيانات المتباعدة (MRA) والاختبار الحياني الممتد (ANOVA) وأظهرت النتائج أن خصائص المشروع لها تأثير أعلى من بين العوامل التي تدفع المشاركين للسلوك غير الأخلاقي في مراحل إدارة المشروع. تليه البيئة الخارجية، والبيئة الشخصية، والبيئة الفردية، وبيئة العمل، والبيئة المهنية، والبيئة الاجتماعية، والبيئة الاجتماعية، وبيان على تأثير الأخطاء الخطي المتباعد (MRA) في التنبؤ بالسلوك غير الأخلاقي بشكل ملحوظ من خلال ثلاثة عوامل من العوامل المتناوبة، وهما:

- خصائص المشروع، والبيئة الشخصية والتي تعتبر أقوى مؤشر على السلوكيات غير الأخلاقية، وثانياً البيئة الخارجية. فيما يتعلق بالسلوكيات غير الأخلاقية في مراحل إدارة المشروع، حصلت المرحلة الحاسمة على أعلى مستوى وجود أعلى نسبة سلوكتيات غير الأخلاقية، تليها المرحلة الثانية ومن ناحية أخرى، أظهرت المرحلة الثالثة أدنى متوسط بين المراحل الأخرى، تليها المرحلة الرابعة باعتبارها المرحلة الثانية بأدنى مستوى. أما فيما يتعلق بمستوى الوعي وتطبيق مبادئ مدونة الأخلاق للمنحة، فقد تم تقديم الأدلة والمصادر كأساسي مبادئ في مراحل إدارة المشروع، وبعدهم الزيادة والمكافأة العامة (ANOVA)، فيما يشير على إختلافات في نسبة الأخطاء ونسل الاعتداء استنادًا إلى سنوات بيئة المشاركين. ومع ذلك، يتم اعتبار على أي اختلافات متبادلة مدونة الأخلاق للمهن، فيما يتعلق بمستوى التعليم الخاص بالمشاركين. في الختام، يجب أن يكون مهندس دوري في وقت مبكر من حياة الممارس مثل: حلل الوعي، التعليم، والتدريب، وإلغاء ترخيص الانتهاكات المتكررة، والعقوبات القيقية. يجب أن تكون مجموعة ضمان الجودة جزءًا من كل مراحل من مراحل المشروع لتحقيق الجودة جنب المشروع ومنع السلوكيات غير الأخلاقية في مراحل إدارة المشروع.
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or currently submitted as a whole for any other degree at IIUM or other institutions.

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………………………  ………………………
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This thesis is dedicated to my father, who taught me the best knowledge to gain is by learning for its own sake. It is also dedicated to my mother, who taught me that even the toughest task can be accomplished if it is done step by step. Last but not least, I dedicated this to my Ummah, who taught me on new appreciation for the meaning and importance of love. Their inspirations have kept me pursuing on whatever I do without giving up.
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All praises and thanks be to Allah (s.w.t), the Lord of the mankind. The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, by whose mercy I was able to conceptualise, develop and complete this thesis. Indeed, without His help and will, nothing could have been accomplished. I am grateful towards all He has given to me. May Allah (s.w.t) accept my humble PhD thesis as an effort of remembrance and to thank Him (s.w.t).

May peace and blessings of Almighty Allah (s.w.t) be upon our beloved Prophet Mohammed who was a mercy unto us from Allah (s.w.t). We believe that he demonstrated character and nobility none has seen before or after him (pbuh).

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I am grateful to the people whom Allah (s.w.t) has given me to make this thesis a reality. The contributions vary but the appreciation is still large thus I leave it in the hands of Allah (s.w.t) to repay the debt to those people Insha'Allah whom he (s.w.t) shall reward in the hereafter. Norshaimah binti Abd Ghani deserves special mention.

Not forgetting all the people who remembered me in their prayers, May Allah (s.w.t) give them a high status in paradise and may He give them the best of this world and in the hereafter. May He the Ever-Forgiving (AL-Ghaffar) also forgive all their sins. Ameen.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract .................................................................................................................... ii  
Abstract in Arabic .................................................................................................... iii  
Approval Page .......................................................................................................... iv  
Declaration ............................................................................................................... v  
Copyright Page ......................................................................................................... vi  
Dedication Page ....................................................................................................... vii  
Acknowledgements .................................................................................................. viii  
Table of Contents ..................................................................................................... ix  
List of Tables ........................................................................................................... xiii  
List of Figures .......................................................................................................... xv  
List of Abbreviations ............................................................................................... xvi  
List of Symbols ........................................................................................................ 1

## CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH ............................ 1

1.0 Introduction ............................................................................................ 1 
1.1 Background of the Study ........................................................................ 1 
1.2 Problem Statement .................................................................................. 3 
1.3 Research Questions ................................................................................ 7 
1.4 Research Objectives ............................................................................... 7 
1.5 Brief Methodology .................................................................................... 8 
1.6 Significant of the Study .......................................................................... 10 
1.7 The Scope of the Study ........................................................................... 11 
1.8 Structure of the Thesis ............................................................................ 11 
1.9 Summary .................................................................................................. 12

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW ........................................ 14

2.0 Introduction ............................................................................................ 14 
2.1 Definition of Ethics ................................................................................ 14 
  2.1.1 General Definition ......................................................................... 14 
  2.1.2 Ethical Philosophy ........................................................................ 15 
  2.1.3 Professional Ethics and Construction Industry Ethics .................. 17 
    2.1.3.1 Professional Ethics ............................................................ 17 
    2.1.3.2 Construction Industry Ethics ............................................. 18 
  2.2 Principles of Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct ............................... 21 
  2.2.1 Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct ............................................ 21 
  2.2.2 Ethical Principles .......................................................................... 23 
  2.2.3 Importance of Applying the Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct ........................................................................... 27 
  2.2.4 Impact of the Code of Ethics............................................................ 30 
2.3 Factors that Driver the Practioners to Unethical Behaviours in Project Management Stages in Construction Projects .................................................. 32 
  2.3.1 Individual Attributes ..................................................................... 33 
  2.3.2 Social Environment......................................................................... 39 
  2.3.3 Government and Legal Environment ............................................ 41 
  2.3.4 Professional Environment ............................................................... 41
2.3.5 Work Environment ................................................................. 42
2.3.6 Personal Environment .......................................................... 44
2.3.7 External Environment ............................................................ 45
2.3.8 Project Factors ................................................................. 47

2.4 Ethics and Project Management Definition .................................. 49
2.4.1 Definition of Project Management ............................................ 49
2.4.2 Definition of Ethics in Project Management .............................. 50
2.4.3 Project Management Stages ..................................................... 52
2.4.3.1 Definition of Project Management Stages ............................... 52
2.4.3.2 The Five Major of Project Management Stages ..................... 53
2.4.3.3 Addressing the Unethical Behaviours in Project Management Stages ......................................................... 55
2.4.3.3.1 Initiatition and Ethics ....................................................... 57
2.4.3.3.2 Planning and Ethics ......................................................... 60
2.4.3.3.3 Executing and Ethics ...................................................... 63
2.4.3.3.4 Monitoring Controlling and Ethics ................................. 65
2.4.3.3.5 Closing and Ethics ......................................................... 67
2.4.4 Benefits of Ethical Practices in Project Management Stages ....... 68

2.5 The Practical Guidelines which can be Applied for the Betterment of the Projects for Managing and Reducing the Unethical Behaviours in Klang Valley Construction Projects .................................................. 69
2.5.1 Ethics Education ........................................................................ 70
2.5.2 Ethics Training .......................................................................... 72
2.5.3 Ethical Awareness ....................................................................... 74

2.6 Conclusion ....................................................................................... 76

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ................................. 77
3.0 Introduction ...................................................................................... 77
3.1 Research Design ............................................................................. 77
3.2 Justification of Quantitative Method .............................................. 81
3.3 Methods of Data Collections ......................................................... 81
3.3.1 Secondary Data .......................................................................... 81
3.3.2 Primary Data .............................................................................. 82
3.4 Stages of Data Collections ............................................................. 83
3.4.1 Literature Review ........................................................................ 83
3.4.2 Questionnaire .............................................................................. 83
3.4.2.1 Questionnaire Design .......................................................... 85
3.4.2.2 Questionnaire Formatting .................................................... 87
3.4.3 Pre-Test Stages .......................................................................... 89
3.4.4 Pilot Study .................................................................................. 90
3.4.5 Reliability and Validity .............................................................. 92
3.4.6 Population and Sampling ......................................................... 95
3.4.7 Questionnaire Distribution ....................................................... 97
3.5 Data Analysis .................................................................................. 98
3.5.1 Statistical Methods ................................................................. 98
3.5.1.1 Descriptive Analysis .......................................................... 98
3.5.1.2 Multi Regression Analysis ............................................... 99
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS ..... 104
4.0 Introduction ......................................................... 104
4.1 Participants’ Demographic Characteristics ........................................ 105
  4.1.1 Respondents ............................................. 105
  4.1.2 Age Group ............................................... 105
  4.1.3 Years of Experience .................................. 106
  4.1.4 Educational Level ..................................... 107
  4.1.5 Position in the Organisation .......................... 108
4.2 Results and Discussions of Objective One ......................................... 109
  4.2.1 Results of the Factors which Drive the Practitioners to the
       Unethical Behaviours in Project Management Stages ............. 109
  4.2.2 Discussions of the Factors which Drive the Practitioners to the
       Unethical Behaviours in Project Management Stages ............. 112
4.3 Results and Discussions of Objective Two ......................................... 127
  4.3.1 Results of the Unethical Behaviours which Occur in the Project
       Management Stages ........................................... 127
  4.3.2 Discussions of the Unethical Behaviours which Occur in the
       Project Management Stages ................................... 132
4.4 Factors that have the Strongest Influence on Unethical Behaviours in
       Project Management Stages .................................. 135
4.5 Results and Discussions of Objective Three ..................................... 143
  4.5.1 Results of Evaluation the Level of Awareness and Application
       the Principles of Code of Ethics .................................. 143
  4.5.2 Discussions of Evaluation the Level of Awareness and Application
       the Principles of Code of Ethics .............................. 148
  4.5.3 Important of Being Aware and Applying the Principles of
       Code of Ethics .................................................. 152
  4.5.4 Differences in the Level of Awareness and Application the
       Principles of Code of Ethics According to Practitioner’s
       Years of Experience .............................................. 154
  4.5.5 Results of One-Way ANOVA for the Level of Awareness and
       Application the Principles of Code of Ethics According to
       Practitioner’s Years of Experience ................................ 157
  4.5.6 Differences in the Level of Awareness and Application the
       Principles of Code of Ethics According to Practitioner’s Level of
       Education ......................................................... 158
  4.5.7 Results of One-Way ANOVA for the Level of Awareness and
       Application the Principles of Code of Ethics According to
       Practitioner’s Level of Education ................................ 162
  4.5.8 Discussions for the Level of Awareness and Application the
       Principles of Code of Ethics According to the Practitioners’
       Years of Experience and Level of Education ........................ 163
4.6 Results and Discussions of Objective Four .................................. 165
  4.6.1 Results of Developing the Practical Guidelines which can be
       Applied for the Betterment of the Projects for Managing and
Reducing the Unethical Behaviours in Project Management Stages in Klang Valley Construction Projects .................. 165
4.6.2 Discussions of Developing the Practical Guidelines which can be Applied for the Betterment of the Projects for Managing and Reducing the Unethical Behaviours in Project Management Stages in Klang Valley Construction Projects .................. 171
4.6.3 Level of Importance in Malaysia and Reducing the Unethical Behaviours in Klang Valley Construction Projects .............. 178
4.7 Summary .................................................. 180

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ........ 182
5.0 Introduction .................................................. 182
5.1 Conclusion of Each Objective .................................. 183
  5.1.1 Conclusion Objective One .................................. 183
  5.1.2 Conclusion Objective Two .................................. 184
  5.1.3 Conclusion Objective Three .................................. 186
  5.1.4 Conclusion Objective Four .................................. 188
5.2 General Conclusion ........................................ 191
  5.2.1 Project Manager should do .................................. 191
  5.2.2 Organisations should do .................................. 192
  5.2.3 Professional Bodies should do ............................ 192
  5.2.4 Government Agencies should do ...................... 193
5.3 Recommendations for Further Studies ......................... 194
5.4 LIMITATIONS ........................................ 195
REFERENCES ........................................................................................................... 197

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY FOR THE PILOT STUDY .................................................. 219
APPENDIX B: SAMPLE OF LETTERS FOR COLLECTING DATA .................................................................................. 232
APPENDIX C: SAMPLE OF LETTER AND FINAL QUESTIONNAIR .................................................................................. 235
APPENDIX D: PUBLICATIONS OF THE AUTHOR ........................................................................................................... 245
LIST OF TABLES

Table ۱٫۳ The Pre-test of Experts for the Questionnaire 91
Table ۲٫۳ Reliability Analysis Results Using the Cronbach’s Alpha 94
Table ۳٫۳ Number of Population of Practitioner Firms in Klang Valley 96
Table ۴٫۳ Number of Distributed Survey to Practitioner Firms in Klang Valley 96
Table ۵٫۳ Number of Individuals from the Practitioners Firms in Klang Valley 96
Table ۶٫۳ Statistical Methods for Research Questions 101
Table ۷٫۴ Respondents’ Type 105
Table ۸٫۴ Respondents’ Group Age 106
Table ۹٫۴ Respondents’ Years of Experiences in the Construction Projects 107
Table ۱۰٫۴ Respondents’ Level of Education 108
Table ۱۱٫۴ Position in the Organization 108
Table ۱۲٫۴ Factors Drive to the Unethical Behaviours in Project Management Stages 110
Table ۱۳٫۴ The Unethical Behaviours in the Project Management Stages in Klang Valley Construction Projects 129
Table ۱۴٫۴ Tolerance and VIF Statistics 138
Table ۱۵٫۴ Correlation of the Predictor and Criterion Variables 140
Table ۱۶٫۴ ANOVA Results 140
Table ۱۷٫۴ Model Summary 141
Table ۱۸٫۴ Coefficients Dependent Variable: Factors Drive to Unethical Behaviours 142
Table ۱۹٫۴ The Level of Awareness and Application the Principles of the Code of Ethics 146
Table 4.14 The Difference in the Level of Awareness and Application the Principles of the Code Ethics Based on Years of Experience 155

Table 4.15 Results of One-Way ANOVA for Participants’ Level of Awareness and Application the Principles of the Code of Ethics According to their Years of Experience 159

Table 4.16 The difference in The Level of Awareness and Application the Principles of the Code of Ethics Based on the Level of Education 160

Table 4.17 Results of One-Way ANOVA for Participants’ Level of Awareness and Application the Principles of the Code of Ethics According to their Level of Education 162

Table 4.18 Practical Guidelines for Reducing and Managing the Unethical Behaviours in Project Management Stages 168

Table 4.19 Practical Guidelines for Reducing and Managing the Unethical Behaviours in Project Management Stages in Klang Valley Construction Projects 169
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 General Flowchart of Research Approach 9
Figure 1.2 Agent, Action and Results 6
Figure 1.3 A Proposed Behavioural Model of Ethical/Unethical Decision Making 35
Figure 1.4 The Flowchart for Completing the Research Objectives 80
Figure 1.5 Steps in Conducting Questionnaire Survey 86
Figure 1.6 Factors Drive to the Unethical Behaviours in Project Management Stages 111
Figure 1.7 The Unethical Behaviours in the Project Management Stages in Klang Valley Construction Projects 130
Figure 1.8 Scatterplot for Checking the Assumption of Homoscedasticity 36
Figure 1.9 Histogram for Checking the Assumption of Normal Distribution 37
Figure 1.10 The Level of Awareness and Application the Principles of the Code of Ethics 147
Figure 1.11 The Level of Awareness And Application the Principles of the Code of Ethics Based on Years of Experience 156
Figure 1.12 The Level of Awareness and Application the Principles of the Code of Ethics Based on the Level of Education 161
Figure 4.8 Practical Guidelines for Reducing and Managing the Unethical Behaviours in Project Management Stages in Klang Valley Construction Projects 169
**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACA</td>
<td>Anti-Corruption Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASCE</td>
<td>American Society of Civil Engineers</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANOVA</td>
<td>Analysis of Variance</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIDB</td>
<td>Construction Industry Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIMP</td>
<td>Construction Industry Master Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMAA</td>
<td>Construction Management Association of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Continuing Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DV</td>
<td>Dependent Variable</td>
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<tr>
<td>ERB</td>
<td>Engineering Registration Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMI</td>
<td>Fails Management Institute</td>
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<td>IIUM</td>
<td>International Islamic University Malaysia</td>
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<td>IPMA</td>
<td>International Project Management Association</td>
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<td>IV</td>
<td>Independent Variable</td>
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<tr>
<td>MRA</td>
<td>Multi Regression Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRR2</td>
<td>Middle Road Ring Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMBOK</td>
<td>Project Management Body of Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMI</td>
<td>Project Management Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>PMP</td>
<td>Project Management Professional</td>
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<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy</td>
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<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPSS</td>
<td>Statistic Package for the Social Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIF</td>
<td>Variance Inflation Factor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZRESID</td>
<td>Standardized Residuals</td>
</tr>
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</table>
LIST OF SYMBOLS

B    Path Coefficient
DF   Degree of Freedom
F    f-Value
P    p-Value
r    Correlation Coefficient Value
R    Correlation
Sig  Significance Value
T    T-Statistic
CHAPTER ONE
OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

1.1 INTRODUCTION
This chapter is split into eight sections. Each section is focusing on specific sub-topics that are related to ethical/unethical behaviours among practitioners in project management stages in Malaysian construction projects, especially in the Klang Valley. The first section discusses the background of the study from different literatures. In the second section, the research problem statement is introduced through identifying several problems areas in this study. Research objectives and research questions are illustrated in sections three and four, followed by research design and significance of study in section five and section six. The final section presents the scope and limitations of this study, besides these sections have explained the structure of the whole thesis for clarification and structural organisation, with a summary of the end of this chapter.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY
These days across the globe, construction industry is a demanding and challenging business sector. On the other hand, ethical practice among the practitioners within the cycle of the construction industry is very significance in the same manner to various disciplines (Shah and Alottaibi, 2017).

As far as the construction industry is concerned, it is cleared that unethical practice positions top among the most thoughtful problems influencing the sector. Some ethical problems that are facing this sector are included however are not confined to: interest conflict, bills inflation, incompetence by the professionals,
kickbacks, extortion, misconduct of the professionals, and poor work delivery among a few other problems. The results of these unethical practices in the construction industry can cause confidence reduction as regard the profession, constant doubtful practices that threat lives and property, loss of pay by customers and governments, unnecessary and unfounded disbursements that raise poverty levels and quality of life reduction among others (Shah and Alotaibi, 2017).

According to Miller (2011), unethical behaviours in the construction industry is an area that is rarely discussed and explored openly, because, the majority of the people avoiding damaging their own reputation which is akin to “throwing stones in a glass house”. Nowadays, ethics’ practice in the construction industry is considered a topic for high profile discussions (Mason, 2009).

In addition, across the globe including Malaysia, project management has a major significance role in the construction industry, because of the rapid development and expansion to the construction industry that needs to encounter the requirements of an increasing population and also to sustain this industry by close observation and monitoring behaviours on major projects. Moreover, according to May, Wilson and Skitmore (2001), unethical behaviours of the practitioners involved in the project management have caused many problems that give a negative image which leads to a loss of faith in the projects that are conducted in the construction industry.

It is known that practitioners in the construction industry usually have the ethical standards and regulations, in order to ensure conformity to quality assurance and safety. In this regard, practitioners might also have identical ethical standards that will give and provide a universal foundation for all practitioners in this industry. Otherwise, the projects will not be completed on time and with the desired requirements of the stakeholders (Construction Archives, 2009; Concrete-Ethics,
Accordingly, the importance of ethics and the recognition of the value orientation in the construction projects is found by the researchers who focused on addressing and identifying the unethical behaviours that occurred in each stage of the project management in this industry (Concrete-Ethics, 2009).

Thus, it has been found that the code of ethics in the construction industry is very helpful for practitioners in achieving harmony within the company and generally, in contributing profitability and viability of the whole industry.

The unethical behaviours that consequently impacted the provided value and the expected outcomes of a project, meaning that instead of having profit it leads to loss. Similarly, due to non-adherence to ethics, some unethical behaviours have caused many problems within projects management and if these unethical behaviours are left without being resolved, it will have a highly negative impact on the projects and on the companies operating within this industry. A good example of a great company collapsed due to unethical behaviour and doubtful integrity is about the Enron Corporation (Concrete-Ethics, 2009).

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT
Malaysia construction industry in particular Klang Valley is facing many challenges such as socio-economic, cultural, political and business environment, either domestically or globally. The level of the competition in the construction industry according to Yinghi and Eng (1999) has risen in the past decade and forecasted to be more intense in the new millennium. This happens as a result of the market opening for the international competitors and the adoption of technology by the competitors.
The construction industry in the face of its size and universality is recognised as the corrupt industry and the main problem that surfaces is the fragmentation of the different sectors in the industry (Toor and Ofori, 2006). Construction practitioners exercise their own skills and judgement and are accountable to the client and bound by their professional code of ethics. Whereas contractors are keen to make a profit and thus their actions are inclined to their respective principles in business ethics. It is one of the most inclined to unethical behaviours, as a result of the substantial capital investments, investments which cannot be redeployed after implementation, and also the large-scale opportunities for rent extraction that is provided. In the recent studies in the construction businesses, engineering, and manufacturing sectors, fraud is shown to be the most common shape of unlawful activity, which are prone to fraudulent activities.

A serious contribution to economic growth is from investment in infrastructure, and in construction projects, corruption and mismanagement can damage the outcomes of economic and social development, which may also block the sustainable development (Adnan et al., 2012). According to Abdul-Rahman et al. (2010), one of the main reasons for success in any project from the beginning stage to the closing stage is considered the behaviour of the individual who involved in that project.

According to Adnan, Hashim, Mohd and Ahmad (2012), in the construction projects, many practices are affected by the unethical behaviours. These unethical behaviours may be due to many reasons such as, poor education of ethics in the professional institutions; schools; and universities, cultural changes, economic pressure, insufficient legislative enforcement, and the great difficulties during construction work. The reasons that cause the unethical behaviours, and the different aspects coming from either pressure, reports, change of status, backdates of
signatures, which hides the reality of project’s progress by suspicious documentation or approving sloppy work.

In addition, some of the project managers are not aware of the reasons that cause unethical behaviours in the projects. Almost 18% of project managers fail to realize that the unethical behaviours happen in their project (Robb, 1996). Consequently, examples of the unethical behaviours are exaggerating the budget of the project proposals and inaccurate of estimations of time and cost. In addition, unethical behaviours include situations, where it is difficult to determine if the behaviour is right or wrong. Nevertheless, is it acceptable to ensure customers wrongly on the track? when, in fact, you are only doing so to prevent them from panicking and making matters worse? (Gray & E.W, 2003).

Equivalently, the unethical behaviours widespread that are identified in businesses are similarly true for projects that include: covering prices, bribes, use of mediocre materials, buy-in, wired bids and contracts, loyalties consultant, shortchanging cost estimates, violating standards, exaggerating payoffs in project proposals, paddling of time, compromising safety, and shortcuts (Nixon, 1987).

According to Adnan et al. (2012), there is no difference in the Malaysian construction industry, despite guidelines and acts for following ethical standards, the unethical behaviours still exist in the projects and still high to which leads to lower outcomes in project quality. In Malaysia, projects in many public sectors are faced by issues such as suspension of school building projects, delaying in completing computer labs of the schools, in the state of Terengganu, the roof of the Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin Stadium is collapsed and recently it was found that there are thirty-one (31) columns which have cracked in the Middle Road Ring Two (MRR2) project by
the head office of the MATRADE (Malaysian External Trade Development Corporation) (Abu Hassim et al., 2010).

According to CIDB (2008), the project stages in the Malaysian construction industry are related to the term (3D) which means dirty, dangerous, and demanding. However, in the construction industry, the occurrences are not always as expected, but it accommodates a little above 500,000 jobs for both the foreign and local workers. This indicates that practitioners who are involved in engineering, quantity surveying, and architectural activities in construction projects are used to illegal or unethical behaviours from time to time. Moreover, many practitioners mentioned above have faced other related matters and regarding their work encountered illegal or unethical acts (Berawi et al., 2008).

Within the Malaysian construction industry, a study conducted using survey techniques indicated that low ethical education is the fourth-ranked among the main other factors that lead to the unethical behaviours. Thus, the construction industry in Malaysia needs a high improvement about the unethical behaviours because the problems of the unethical behaviours are generally discussed and have raised many practical concerns. In addition, the literature that discussed ethics in project management or project management PMI code of ethics is limited (Baker, 1999).

Lastly, the discussion on ethics in project management has received very little attention in journal papers or in project management conferences. Therefore, due to the importance of ethics in the field of project management, Project Management Institute of United States of America (PMI) has recently involved a section on ethics in Project Management Professional (PMP) certification examination and on professional responsibility. Therefore, in light of the significance of the unethical behaviours among practitioners in project management stages and through this
phenomenon of unethical behaviours that observed, the problem statement developed in this study seeks to identify the unethical behaviours and identify the factors that drive the practitioners to these unethical behaviours which occur in various project management stages in Malaysian construction projects especially in Klang Valley.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

There are four research questions which are extracted from this study’s objectives:

1. What are the factors that drive the practitioners to unethical behaviours in project management stages in Klang Valley construction projects?
2. What are the unethical behaviours that occur in the project management stages in Klang Valley construction projects?
3. What is the level of awareness and application the principles of the code of ethics when the practitioners carry out their duty in project management stages in Klang Valley construction projects?
4. What are the practical guidelines that are supposed to be applied for the betterment of the projects for managing and reducing the unethical behaviours in Klang Valley construction projects?

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study has the main goal with specific four objectives. The main goal of this study is to determine the unethical behaviours in project management stages in the Klang Valley construction projects, while the specific four objectives are to:

1. To identify the factors that drive the practitioners to unethical behaviours in project management stages in Klang Valley construction projects.