

Conflicts among Construction Players during the Construction Stage in Kelantan



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ABSTRACT: Conflicts among construction players during the construction stage are a common occurrence. It became an unavoidable issue and negatively impacted the project's overall performance in terms of time, cost, work quality and productivity as well as damage to the business relationship. Therefore, this research aims to identify the factors contributing to the conflicts among construction players during the construction stage. To achieve the research objective, the questionnaire survey was selected as the research methodology. This research was conducted in Kota Bharu, Kelantan and the respondents for this study can be categorized into two (2) categories: contractor and consultant. The data was analyzed by using descriptive analysis from the SPSS software. Based on the data collected, lack of communication is a major factor in conflict arising among the construction players involved during the construction stage. The data obtained through this research can help resolve or reduce the occurrence of conflict and protect the interest of all the construction players involved during the construction stage in the future.

KEYWORDS: Conflict; Construction Players; Construction Project; Kelantan

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The construction industry was known as unique because it involves various construction parties with different skills, expertise, and experience. Due to their diverse background and culture, their interest, goal, and value may not be compatible with the organization as a result conflict between them may occur. Leong et al., (2014) affirm that conflict becomes an ordinary occurrence in construction projects due to its intricate and complex nature and the involvement of different participants within the project cycle. Besides, each professional has different opinions and interpretations on how things should be done. Those differing opinions also lead to conflicts. Moreover, this industry has a long project duration starting from inception until completion. Thus, the conflict becomes ordinary between parties involved in this process (San, 2013).

Conflict is one of the causes that lead to project failure. It can lead to a delay in the completion of a project, poor project cash flow, breakdown of a relationship and produce a poor image in the project performance. Shuib et al., (2011) stated that conflict can cause project delay, project cost overrun, productivity decrease, profit loss or impact on the business relationship. It was supported by Campbell & O'Leary, (2015) mentioned that they have many drawbacks like internal fighting, poor relationships, and misunderstandings which can adversely affect the performance of individuals in an organization. Additionally, Mbatha et al. (2021) added that those conflicts are one of the variables that subvert project success. This is because they can be time depleting, costly and unpleasant in that they can destroy the relationship amongst the project participants and add to the cost of the contract, bogging down and impeding the smooth implementation of projects.

Usually, when the conflicts occur, they can seriously threaten to achieve the project goal. The goal of the construction project is to be completed within the time and budget provided by the client. Resolving conflicts can be challenging and consume more cost and time, leading to a project is over budget and delayed. According to Younis et al., (2008) when a conflict occurs, it may require a minimum of twenty-five percent of the time to resolve the dispute. It was affirmed by Mbatha et al. (2021), that whenever these conflicts are not actively and positively resolved at the right level, the consequences are; a perception of threat to one's goals by another person, a blame game among the project participants, and low management success.

Following with that situation, this research will identify the factors that contribute to the conflict among construction players during the construction stage.

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2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conflict

Jaffar et al., (2011) define conflict as uncertainty, challenge, disagreements, or conflict in conflicting actions between two or more parties. While Chaturvedi et al., (2021) added that conflicts could be defined as severe disagreements between parties involved due to the different ideologies, beliefs and interests. This can be seen that conflicts will involve more than two parties. Besides, conflict arises when there are two or more individuals perceive an interference with the means to a goal or an interest. Conflict in the construction industry is a growing issue every year. A conflict causes delays in the work progress and subsequently increases the total construction cost. Due to this, Kamaruddeen et al., (2019) stress that when conflict arises, it took 25% of the time to resolve the conflict.

There are several types of conflict known as intra-personal conflicts, interpersonal conflicts, intra-group conflicts, inter-group conflicts, and intra-organizational conflicts as mentioned by (Brockman, 2014; Chaturvedi et al., 2021; Okuntade, 2015). Interpersonal conflicts exist when two construction players have different expectations, principles and interests. In contrast, inter-group conflict arises when there is a conflict within the organization itself that involves two or more groups. This can occur due to different aims, task habits, power, and influence.

2.2 Construction stage

Royal Institutions of British Architects (RIBA) has developed and updated the latest RIBA work plan 2020. This work plan is developed based on the feedback of designers, contractors, consultants, and other construction parties. Based on Table 1, there are 7 stages of the RIBA Plan of Work 2020 as outlined by RIBA. The RIBA plan of work provides a basis for identifying the essential steps that need to be taken through the construction project.



There will be different stages in the RIBA plan of work, and the stage outcome will be different core tasks. Table 1 below present the different core task and stage outcome for the RIBA Plan of Work 2020 (RIBA Architecture, 2020).

Based on table 1, the construction stage takes place in stage 5, manufacturing, and construction. During this stage, most of the construction players need to play their roles to ensure that all core task outlines need to be completed.







2.3 Construction players

There is various construction player involved in the construction. They are town planners, engineers, architects, quantity surveyors and others. These construction players are known based on their professionalism, experts, knowledge, and experience. Each construction player has different responsibilities in ensuring that the project is completed within the agreed time, cost and quality. Adnan et al., (2012) found that among the parties involved in conflict in construction industry are, client, developer, consultant team, contractor, sub-contractor, supplier and financier.

Table 1: Stage outcome and core task for RIBA Plan of Work 2020

 <p>0 Strategic Definition</p>	<p>Stage outcome: The best means of achieving the Client Requirements confirmed</p> <p>Core Task:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare client requirements 2. Develop business case, review project risks and project budget 3. Ratify option for client requirement 4. Review feedback from previous projects 5. undertake site appraisal
 <p>1 Preparation and Briefing</p>	<p>Stage outcome: Project Brief approved by the client and can be accommodated on the site</p> <p>Core Task:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare a project brief 2. Undertake feasibility studies 3. Agree on project budget 4. Source information including site surveys 5. Prepare project programme 6. Prepare project execution plan

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<p>2</p>  <p>Concept Design</p>	<p>Stage outcome: Architectural Concept approved and aligned to project brief</p> <p>Core Task:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare architectural concepts to include with strategic engineering requirements and aligned to the cost plan, project strategies, and the outline specification 2. Agree on project brief derogations 3. Undertake design reviews 4. Prepare stage design programme
<p>3</p>  <p>Spatial Coordination</p>	<p>Stage outcome: Architectural and engineering information spatially coordinated</p> <p>Core Task:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Undertake design studies, engineering analysis and cost exercises to test the architectural concepts 2. Initiated change control procedure 3. Prepare stage design programme
<p>4</p>  <p>Technical Design</p>	<p>Stage outcome: all design information required to manufacture and construct the project completed</p> <p>Core Task:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop architectural and engineering technical design 2. Prepare and coordinate design team building system information 3. Prepare and integrate specialist subcontractor building system information 4. Prepare stage design programme
<p>5</p>  <p>Manufacturing and Construction</p>	<p>Stage outcome: Manufacturing, construction and commissioning completed</p> <p>Core Task:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finalise site logistics 2. Manufacture building systems and construct 3. Monitor progress against the construction programme 4. Inspect construction quality 5. Resolve site queries 6. Undertake the commissioning of building <p>Prepare building manual</p>
<p>6</p>  <p>Handover</p>	<p>Stage outcome: building handover</p> <p>Core Task:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hand over building in line with the plan for use strategy 2. Undertake a review of project performance 3. Undertake seasonal commissioning 4. Rectify defects 5. Complete initial aftercare task
<p>7</p>  <p>Use</p>	<p>Stage outcome: the building used, operated and maintained efficiently</p> <p>Core Task:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement facilities management and asset management 2. Undertake post-occupancy evaluation 3. Verify project outcomes including sustainability outcome

i. Town Planner

The town planner is responsible for planning the whole area development based on the different land usage (Anyanwu, 2013). The town planner also considers the population, culture, infrastructural facilities, socioeconomic and other human needs in designing the area's development.

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ii. Architect

The architect is known as the main designer in the design team. The architect is responsible for preparing the architectural drawing (Anyanwu, 2013; Rauzana, 2016). This architectural drawing will be used as the basis for the engineer to prepare the engineering drawing. Besides, the quantity surveyor will also use the drawing to prepare the bills of quantities and total construction cost for the project. The architect is one of the construction players involved in the construction project from the earliest stages of design through to the completion of the project.

iii. Engineer

The engineer is one of the design team members responsible for assisting the architect in designing the project. The engineer mainly focuses on the civil, structure and electrical drawing as well as engineering specifications for the related work. Anyanwu, (2013) added that engineers also need to visit the construction site periodically for works inspections. These work inspections are carried out to ensure the construction complies with the engineer's drawing and specifications.

iv. Quantity Surveyor

The Quantity Surveyor is responsible for preparing the contract document for the construction process. The quantity surveyor is an expert in preparing the construction cost for the construction project (Rauzana, 2016). Once the quantity surveyor receives the design briefing, he should come up with the budget plan which includes the total construction cost for the client. Besides, a quantity surveyor must also prepare bills of quantities based on the requirement outlined in Standard Measurement Method II (SMM2) by the Institution of Surveyor Malaysia.

v. Contractor

The contractor is the person responsible for constructing and completing the construction project. The contractor needs to ensure that the construction project is completed within the agreed time, cost and quality. If any dispute or conflict arises during the construction project, this will delay the contractor's work progress (Rauzana, 2016; Chaturvedi et al., 2021). Subsequently, this will affect the total construction cost as well as the construction period.

2.4 Factors of conflict among construction players during the construction stage

When disagreement and conflict arise between the construction players, it will lead to several problems, especially during construction. The causes of conflict can be categorized into six main categories. The categories are owner-related, design-related, contract-related, human behaviour-related, contractor-related, and external factor-related. Table 2 below presents the categories of conflict and the causes of conflict (Jaffar et al., 2011; Adnan et al., 2012; Brockman, 2014; ; Çakmak, 2016; Chaturvedi et al., 2021)

Table 2: Category of Conflict and Causes of Conflict

Category of conflict	Causes of conflict
Owner-Related Conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Variations initiated by the owner b) Change of scope c) Late site possession d) Delays in payments
Design-related Conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Design errors b) Incomplete design specifications
Contract-related Conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Ambiguities in contract documents b) Different interpretations of the contract provisions c) Poor contract management
Human Behaviour-related Conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Controversial culture b) Lack of communication c) Lack of team spirit
Contractor-related Conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Financial failure b) Poor site management c) Low quality of works d) Delay in work progress
External factor-related Conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Lack of quality control b) Unforeseen changes c) Changes order by the contractor

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3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted by utilizing a questionnaire survey. Sixty (60) copies of questionnaires were distributed randomly to the contractors and consultants involved during the construction stage in Kota Bharu, Kelantan. However, out of the sixty (60) copies of questionnaires distributed, only fifty (50) copies were completed and returned.

The questionnaire was constructed into two sections. The first section asked the general information about the respondent. Meanwhile, the second section required the respondents to answer questions on twelve (12) factors that contribute to the conflicts among construction players during the construction stage, as listed in Table 3. The statistical analysis method used for this study is a descriptive analysis from the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The result from the data was shown in the form of a table under section 4.0.

4.0 ANALYSIS AND RESULT

Table 3: Gender, Age, Working Experience and Job Position of the Respondents

Items	Sub – Items	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	22	44
	Female	28	56
Age	21 – 30 years old	29	58
	31 – 40 years old	18	36
	41 – 50 years old	3	6
Working experience	1 – 5 years	30	60
	6 – 10 years	15	30
	11 – 15 years	4	8
	16 – 20 years	1	2
Job position	Consultant	31	62
	Contractor	19	38

Table 3.0 demonstrates the general information of the respondents in terms of gender, age, current work position and working experience in the field. The respondents that participated in the survey consisted of 44% male and 56% female. Most of the respondents' age is in the range of 21 until 30 years old (58%). Another 36% of respondents are aged between 31 and 40 years old. Meanwhile, 6% of respondents came from the range age of 41 to 50 years old. Moreover, 60% of respondents had 1 to 5 years of working experience in the construction industry. It was followed by 30% of respondents with 6 to 10 years, 8% of respondents with 11 to 15 years, and only 2% of respondents with 16 to 20 years of working experience in this field. This table also indicates that most respondents are consultants with 62 % compared to contractors (38%). The consultants in this survey consisted of quantity surveyor, architect, engineer, land surveyor and others. Based on the analysis conducted, all the respondents are qualified to be involved in this study.

Table 4: Ranking scale of the factors that contribute to the conflicts among construction players involved during the construction stage.

Factors that contribute to the conflicts	Average Index	Ranks
Lack of communication	3.28	1
Delay in work progress	3.24	2
Lack of team spirit	3.22	3
Lack of quality control	3.18	4
Error and omission in the project design	3.14	5
Unforeseen changes	3.12	6
Poor contact management	3.10	7
Changes order by the contractor	3.10	8
Technical problem to uncertainty is measured as the issues in the project operation	3.08	9
Design Change due to Variations of Developers	3.06	10
Incomplete scope definition	2.94	11
Unclear payment	2.90	12

Referring to Table 4 above, the data was analysed by using frequency analysis and average index. The frequency analysis is applied to know the percentage of the respondents who give their point of view for each question. The result obtained will be used

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to rank their status for each factor stated in the questionnaire. This table indicates that lack of communication among construction players takes the first place in the ranking scale with an average index of 3.28. Lack of communication is always occurring among construction players and consequently distract the construction process. It was reinforced by Ayoko & Pekerti, (2008) stated that lack of the communication is having a tremendous impact when it does happen among the parties involve. When the parties involve during the construction stage do not trust each other and not willing to communicate and exchange their opinion and information freely, it can lead to less collaboration among them. Thus, communication should be two-way, clear, and effective and open so that the understanding of client's requirements is enhanced (Adnan et al., 2012). This is followed by a delay in work progress on the second-ranking scale with an average index of 3.24. In addition, the third-ranking scale factor is the lack of team spirit, with an average index, is 3.22.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, conflict may distract the construction works and subsequently cause a delay in the progress of works and boost the construction cost. To avoid conflict, happen repeatedly in the future, it is essential to trace the root factor of the conflict in the construction industry. Thus, the research objective is to identify the factors contributing to the conflicts among construction players during the construction stage in Kota Bharu, Kelantan. Besides that, twelve (12) factors of conflict were identified from the literature review and survey conducted. From the survey result, lack of communication is a major factor contributing to conflicts among construction players during the construction stage. The effective communication among them is the key ingredient for the project success. It is crucial for all construction parties involved in the construction project to be aware of these issues to protect their interest and maximize the project performance in terms of cost, time, and quality.

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