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CONSTRAINTS IN IMPLEMENTING QLASSIC FOR STRATIFIED HOUSING

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Abstract:

QLASSIC was developed by CIDB on 2006 however there is only a small number of projects which applied this assessment. 6% projects were assessed using QLASSIC in 2015 yet it still far from the target 2020. Thus, the objective of this paper was to identify the constraints in implementing QLASSIC for stratified housing. 10 questionnaires were analysed and the highest constraints come from manpower. From the analysis, 90% agreed that the external assessors might come to competitors' company. Other constraints are lack of awareness and confidence in QLASSIC and CONQUAS is more widely recognized and accepted by construction player. The output of this paper is expected to be beneficial to the contractor and developer in order to set a benchmark on the quality of workmanship for their project so that it can improve their credibility and trust in the eyes of public.

Keywords: Quality; Quality Performance; QLASSIC; Construction Industry; Housing

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In Malaysia's construction industry, the issue related to quality of building does not comply with workmanship standards and specification are still occurred (CIDB,2008). QLASSIC system is used to measure the workmanship quality of completed building project and benchmarking the contractor's workmanship quality in Malaysia's construction industry (CIS 7, 2006). According to Ofori and Gu (2001) the building constructed must have the minimum satisfaction level in term of build quality in to cater and satisfy the customers with the product they purchase.

People nowadays are very particular on the quality aspects of the building. They desire for a value for money building, zero defects, zero risk and sustainable development for their selection of living especially for residential area whether it for short or long term. In addition, the QLASSIC approach is still new in the construction industry development. Thus, encouragement in application of QLASSIC for every project should be highly suggested by the Construction Development Industry Development (CIDB) Malaysia. Since it was first introduced in 2006, QLASSIC has been around 11 years but the take-up has been slow because it is not mandatory and it is only employed among established developer as to see the value of it. Therefore, CIDB has come with initiative to educate home buyers about their right to demand for QLASSIC whenever they want to buy a house.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview of Quality Assessment in Construction Practice

The quality of construction is aptitude to satisfy the needs and expectations of the end-user. However, the definition of quality is complex as it is a subjective word. In order to have a common and standardized explanation of quality, every country has applied some systems with several requirements and specification to be followed in order to achieve the quality standard for construction industry. The current system used in Malaysia is Quality Assessment System for Building Construction Works (QLASSIC). It is an assessment system that measures and evaluates the workmanship quality of a building construction work based on Construction Industry Standard(CIS:2014). It enables the quality of workmanship between

construction projects to be objectively compared through scoring system. This assessment method was developed by the Construction Industry Board Development (CIBD) with various industry players and stakeholders in 2006. The assessment is based on a scoring system and it is carried out only once by a qualified person. There are various elements in the building construction work that will be tested and inspected. Specific and specialized tools are used to identify the quality of workmanship, from paintwork to joints of tiles to the roofs and many more.

2.2. Constraints of QLASSIC - Implementation Financial Constraint

In order to obtain the certification of QLASSIC, there are barriers normally faced by applying companies. The barrier faced is more obvious in financial constraints. In fact, this was pointed out by Barrier and Zuckerman, as cited from Kam and Hamid (2015) who suggested that the main reason remains the inability to meet the implementation and maintenance costs due to insufficient financial capacity. According to Dato' Laxana as cited from Bhatt (2016) the most common concern is cost because there is a premium to be paid in achieving higher construction standards as more training and supervision is involved. These might give problem to developers, especially medium sized one.

Furthermore, Kam and Hamid (2015) stated that small construction companies especially newly set companies or low-graded contractors such as contractors who registered under Grade G1-G3 with Malaysia's CIBD with project tendering capacity not more than, Ringgit Malaysia 200,000 for G1 contractors and Ringgit Malaysia 1,000,000 for G3 contractors would mostly face problems if they seek for the certification of QLASSIC. This is because their initial capital does not allow such hefty investment into QLASSIC certification in the initial phase of such companies. Moreover, there are also disadvantages associated with the certification of QLASSIC such as the extra costs required in order to achieve the certification of QLASSIC and less attention is being paid to the development of company personnel, as mentioned by Peter et al., as cited from Kam and Hamid, (2015).

2.3 Constraints of QLASSIC - Manpower constraints

According to Ali et al (2014) one of the challenges in conducting QLASSIC assessment is the constraints of manpower in CIBD. This is because CIBD has to outsource the QLASSIC assessment to external assessors which is the technical personnel who has construction background. This is important because they need to meet essential requirement from CIBD to become QLASSIC assessor. The difficulties arise when the external assessors come from competitor's companies that may give rise to elements of discrimination during the assessment. It is recommended that CIBD have to monitor frequently appointed external assessors to ensure the integrity and the fairness among the assessors during assessment. As a result, the people can respect and aware of the role of QLASSIC assessment. Other than that, less number of technical personnel during quality assessment and less number of assessors of QLASSIC are the the manpower constraints in QLASSIC implementation in Malaysia.

2.4 Constraints of QLASSIC - Time constraints

Ali et al (2014) mentioned that current time taken to produce required reports is reasonably long, normally more than six weeks from the last date of assessment. The duration for producing the report need to be reduced. Since construction of building is always moving fast, many applicants such as developer and contractor require faster QLASSIC report for them to indicate the quality of their completed project. Longer time taken in producing the assessment report can become a discouragement factor in opting for QLASSIC assessment. In addition, unfamiliarity with QLASSIC implementation will result to longer time consuming in implementation.

2.5 Constraints of QLASSIC - Other constraints

The Construction Industry Development Board (CIBD) in Malaysia provides QLASSIC assessments at no cost but due to lack of awareness and confidence in QLASSIC, only a few developers have engaged CIBD to assess the quality of their projects using QLASSIC. In contrast, CONQUAS is more widely

recognized and accepted by developers as well as contractors in this country (HBA, 2009 as cited by Ahmad et al, 2014). According to Dato' Seri Dr Judin, as cited from Yvone (2014) awareness on QLASSIC was low as the focus of QLASSIC was only on industry players. He added that CIDB will change their approach and will educate the public on QLASSIC via mass media to create awareness among property purchasers on what to look out for in terms of quality when they buy a home and so that the purchasers focused on examining the quality of the finishers when buying a home. Moreover, Bhatt (2016) also stated that currently CIDB is more aggressive in creating awareness among property developers, contractors and government agencies through road show and seminars. Besides that, the organization provides courses and training for developers and contractors to guide them in applying QLASSIC for both ongoing and new projects.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objective of this study, few methods were applied on how to get the information about the constraints in implementing QLASSIC for stratified housing. In order to know the constraints in implementing QLASSIC for stratified housing, a set of 30 questionnaires has been distributed to contractors' representatives around Klang Valley through email. Figure 1 is the research methodology framework for this study.

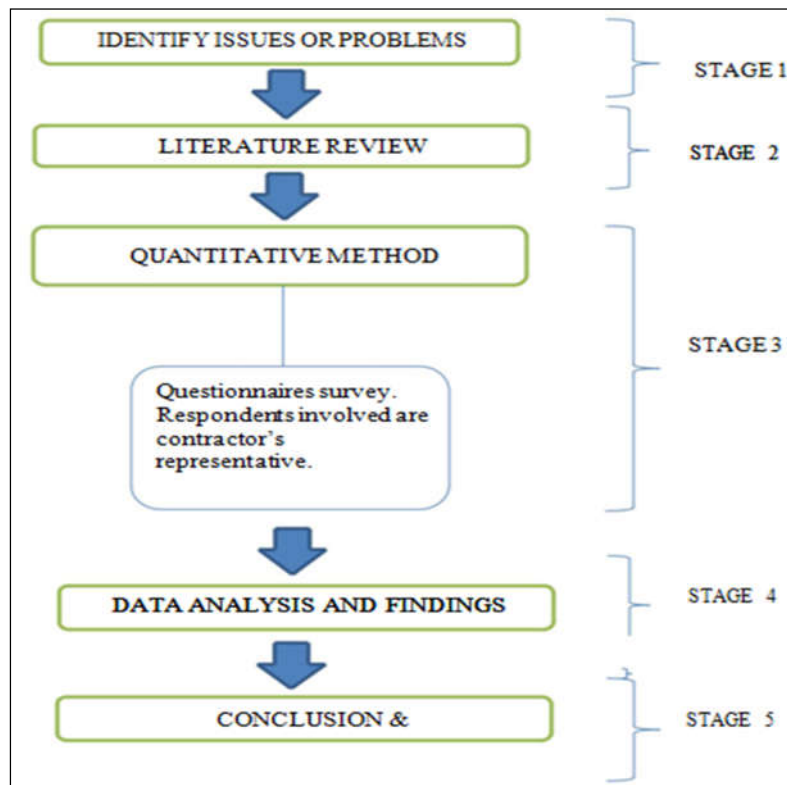


Figure 1: Research Methodology Framework

4.0 ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Out of 30 distributed questionnaires, only 10 respondents (33%) participated in the survey. Even though the response rate in this study was low, it was considering acceptable to produce results that can be believed and trusted in order to achieve the objective of the study.

4.1 Respondents Profile

There are 10 valid and useful responses, 20% were engineer, 30% manager, 30% quantity surveyor and others represent 20% as shown in Figure 2.

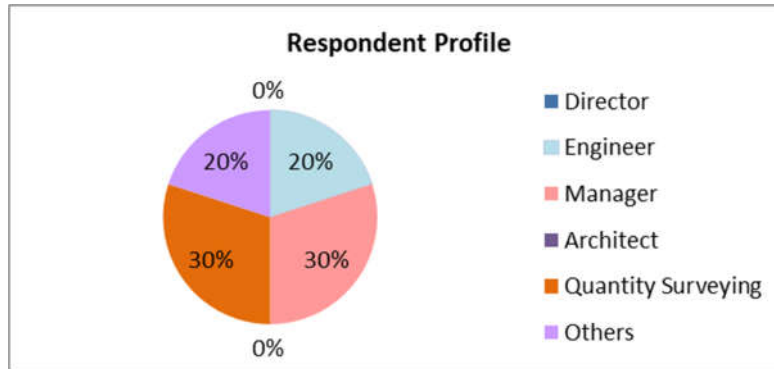


Figure 2: Respondent Profile

4.2 Constraints in Implementing Classic For Stratified Housing

The identified constraints are divided into 4 categories which are financial constraints, manpower constraints, time constraints and other constraints as displayed in Figure 3,4,5, and 6.

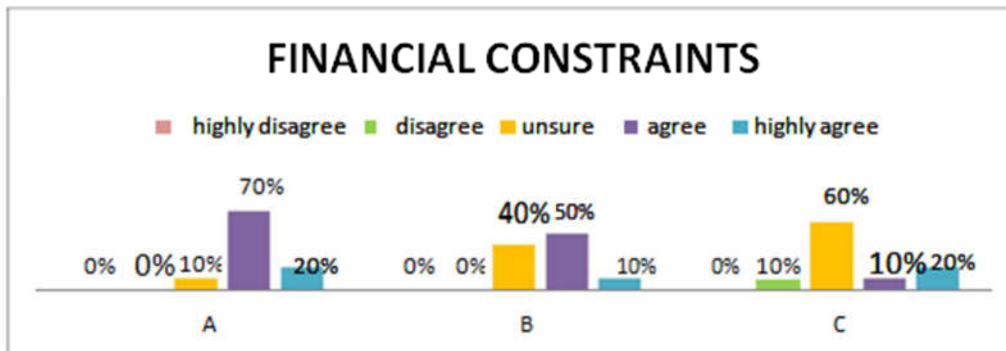


Figure 3: Financial constraints

Based on Figure 3, most of the respondents agree there is premium to be paid to achieve higher construction training and supervision with 70% agree and 20% highly agree meanwhile another 10% unsure. Other than that, most of the respondents agree the initial capital does not allow such hefty investment and 40% unsure about the statement. Regarding extra cost in order to achieve the certification, only 30% agree while 10% disagree and remaining 60% unsure.

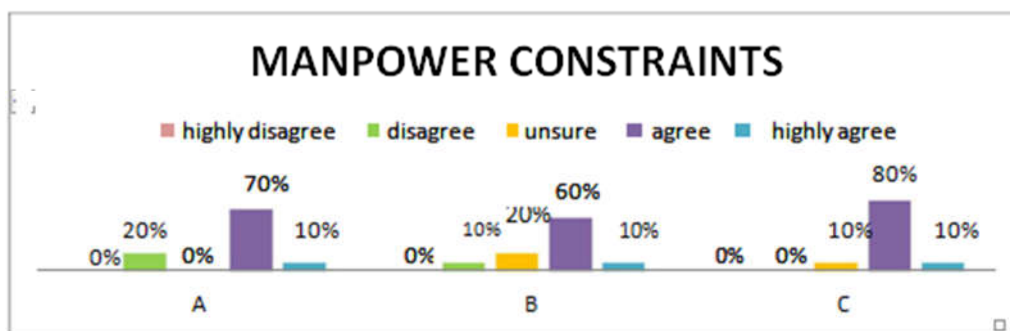


Figure 4: Manpower constraints

Based on Figure 4, most of the respondents agree that there is lack of qualified assessors of QLASSIC. However, 20% disagree with the statement. 60% agree and 10% highly agree with the lack of technical personnel during QLASSIC assessment while 10% disagree and 20% remain unsure. In addition, 80% agree and 10% highly agree that the external assessors might come from competitor's company.

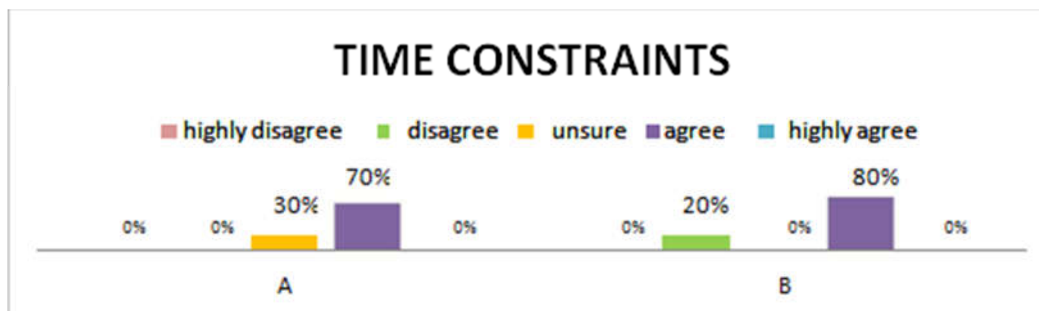


Figure 5: Time constraints

From the Figure 5, most of the respondents agree time taken to produce the report by CIDB is too long which is 6 weeks from the last date of assessment. In addition, most of them (80%) agree the contractor is unfamiliar with QLASSIC procedure.

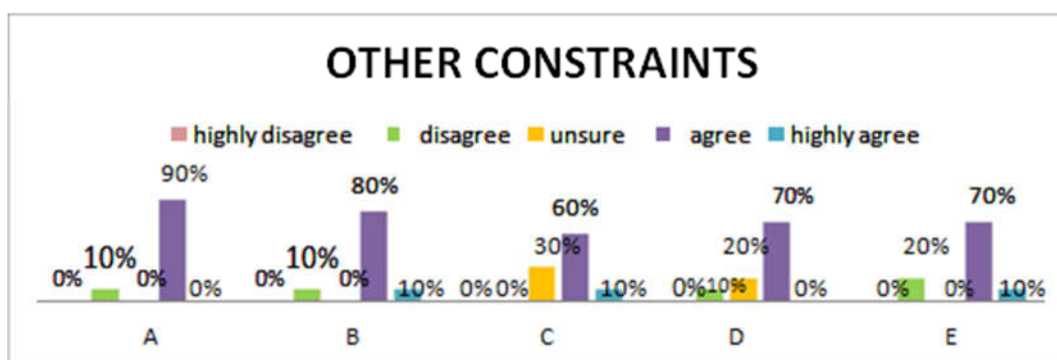


Figure 6: Other constraints

From the Figure 6, 90% of respondents agree that they are lacked in awareness of the system and confidence in QLASSIC. Most of the respondents agree CONQUAS is more widely recognized and accepted. Other than that, 60% agree and 10% highly agree on the low reputation if QLASSIC score less than CIDB requirement, meanwhile 30% of the respondents stated unsure. In addition, 70% agree builders' attitude refuses to implement QLASSIC and most of the respondents agree complex building design makes QLASSIC difficult to be implemented, however 20% disagree.

5.0 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the highest constraints come from manpower category which is the external assessors that might come from competitor's company. Other than that, lack of awareness and confidence in QLASSIC, and CONQUAS is more widely recognized and accepted. A few ways to improve are CIDB should ensure the elements of integrity and the impartiality among the assessors during assessment, increase competency of the assessors, conduct a periodic re-training for the assessors. In addition, more advertisement and campaign should be done for both the construction player and home owner to increase their awareness. Lastly, CIDB should make QLASSIC assessment mandatory for every construction project.

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