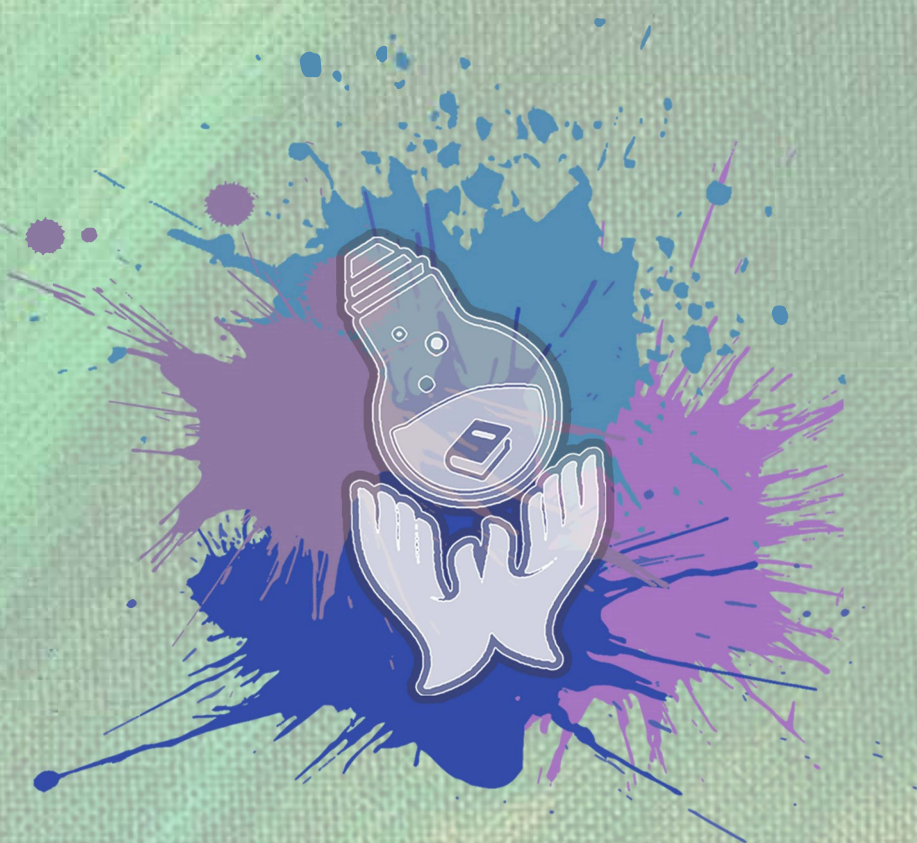




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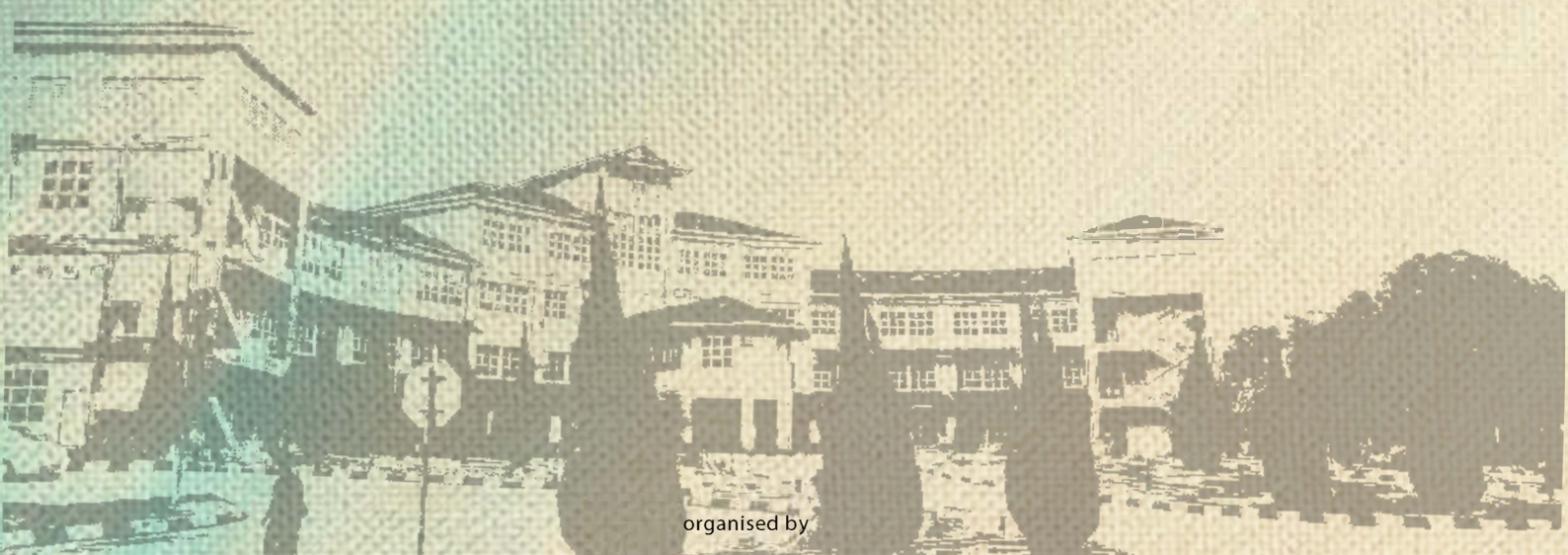
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# THE CHALLENGES FACED BY CONSERVATION PRACTITIONERS IN CONSERVATION PROJECTS IN UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE CITIES

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## **Abstract:**

Conservation projects normally involve work that cannot accurately predetermine in terms of extent, specification, duration or cost. It was because conservation projects were unique and non-duplicate project which do not have precedent case to study. Thus, the aim of this research is to investigate the challenges faced by the conservation practitioners in conservation project in Malacca and Georgetown. To achieve the aims, data of this research is collected through survey which is by distributing questionnaires to the consultants, contractors and clients to identify challenges faced in conservation project. The method use is questionnaire survey and the responses are from 74 conservation practitioners consist of contractors, consultants and clients who involved in conservation projects in Malacca and Georgetown which listed under UNESCO World Heritage Cities. The data collected were analysed by SPSS version 23. This study identified that the highest mean value for challenges faced by conservation practitioners in conservation projects in Malacca and Georgetown was the expensive construction cost with mean value of 3.31.

## **Keywords:**

Conservation; Heritage Building; Heritage Cities

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Many words may be used to describe the buildings conservation. In general, conservation is a technical activity towards historical buildings. It involved physical action to preserve the fabric and material of the heritage buildings (Harun, 2011). It is a process to prevent decay and the action is aiming to prolong the life of the buildings. Conservation is a field that involves retention and maintenance custody of legacy buildings from being destroyed by taking into account its importance to the country and society such as historical and aesthetic factors found in a heritage building. In addition, the age factor is also one of the important factors to be considered (Harun, 2005).

According to 13<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary in 2015, Dato' Boon Som a/l Inong, senator at Dewan Negara has asked the ministry to regulate arts, cultural and cultural heritage values in the preservation of historic buildings. He claimed that the main challenge in heritage building faced by practitioners such as there was a contractor appointed to repair the buildings to be more profit-oriented by hiring other contractors or with permits, lower or unskilled graduates who indirectly reduced the aesthetic value of the building.

Through this statement by the senator, it is proven that there are few challenges that still occur in conserving building especially heritage building according to the age of the building. However, the ministry of tourism and culture through the national heritage department has indeed implemented proactive measures to regulate the value of art, culture and cultural heritage in the preservation of historic buildings.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

This section is described the literature review briefly on the challenges faced by the conservation practitioners, the impact of the challenges and the strategies in reducing the challenges in conservation projects from previous research.

## 2.1 The Challenges Faced By the Consultants, Contractors and Clients in Conservation Projects

The search for values to a particular heritage building has become a pressing concern in our modern society (Ahmad, 2006). In heritage buildings, historical features are tangible aspects of cultural heritage that provide an identity we affiliate with. Cresswell (2004) reminds us that heritage buildings go beyond aesthetic appreciation and provide a ‘sense of place’.

Conservators are often faced with various issues – some of which are commonly recurring in the local Malaysian scene. This paper reviews past studies about challenges of historic building conservation, then goes on to describe a small pilot study carried out in Malaysia to attempt to measure the number of significant challenges faced among local conservators.

Table 1 shows the list of challenges faced by the conservation practitioners in previous projects that had been done from 2009 to 2015. Most of the research is from consultants views. Total of 20 challenges from previous challenges are included.

Table 1: Summarization of Literature Review Related to Challenges in Conservation Projects

NO	CHALLENGES IN CONSERVATION PROJECTS	Muhamad (2009)	Harun (2011)	Zuraiddi, Akasah & Rahman (2011)	Menon (2014)	Lim & Ahmad (2015)	Perovic (2015)	Azizi, Razak, Din, Nasir (2015)	Mui, Ahmad, & Nabavi (2015)
1	Miscommunication	C1			C1		C3	C1	
2	Blurred boundaries in information			C1	C1			C1	
3	Lack of knowledge	C1			C1		C3	C1	C2
4	Inappropriate repairs		C2					C1	
5	Lack of technical focus	C1	C2			C1	C3	C1	
6	Little co-ordination and							C1	
7	Difficulties in complying with bylaw requirements		C2					C1	
8	Availability of organisations with suitable experience							C1	
9	Limited material availability	C1				C1	C3	C1	C2
10	Rely upon high levels of specialist advice							C1	C2
11	Poor resources available							C1	
12	Unskilled workers / expertise	C1	C2	C1	C1	C1		C1	
13	Material shortages		C2	C1				C1	
14	Insufficient number of technical							C1	
15	Identifying viable means of cost							C1	
16	ensive and restrictive							C1	C2
17	Poor financial support							C1	
18	Increasing demand for housing in urban central areas							C1	
19	Expensive conservation cost	C1						C1	C2
20	Changing needs for social and economic				C1			C1	

C1: Consultant C2: Contractor C3: Client

## 3.0 METHODOLOGY

Quantitative approach is used in this study. 40 companies were listed out by using purposive sample. A total of 80 questionnaires, which 2 respondents from each companies responded to the questionnaire comprising of clients, contractors and consultants who experienced in conservation projects in Malacca and Georgetown. Malacca and Georgetown were chose because both states are well known for their conservation projects due to larger number of heritage buildings compared to other states. And that is why Georgetown and Malacca were listed under UNESCO World Heritage Cities. The questionnaires were distributed via face-to-face and online method such as e-mail and survey form. Non probability method i.e. purposive sampling is used to draw samples of respondents. The data is analysed in descriptive analysis presentation involving frequency, percentage and mean rank by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Software version 25.0. Out of 80 questionnaires, 74 questionnaires were returned, thus the response rate is 92%. The analysis of data is based on the objective which is the challenges faced by the conservation practitioners in conservation projects in Malacca and Georgetown.

## 4.0 ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

According to the analysis on the respondents, 73% of the conservation practitioners who faced the challenges in conservation projects were consultants. Consultants consist of engineer, conservator, architect and engineer. It shows the highest percentage among the others. 18% of the conservation practitioners were client while another 9% were contractor.

Table 2: Rank order of the level of challenges

Rank order of the level of challenges		
Challenges	Mean	Ranking
Expensive construction cost	3.31	1
Lack of skilled worker/expertise	3.23	2
Blurred boundaries in information	3.19	3
Lack of knowledge	3.18	4
Poor financial support	3.16	5

Based on the findings, the data of mean value for the level of challenges faced by conservation practitioners in Malacca and Georgetown is being measured to meet the objective. It is found that mean value recorded for the level of challenges is expensive construction cost with a mean of 3.21.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

There are many challenges that can contribute to failure of conservation project due to weaknesses of the conservation practitioners. Through this research, it is proved that consultants faced most of the challenges in conservation project depend to contractor and clients. This can maximize the chance of the project being had the negative effects. Thus, conservation practitioners who experienced dealing with conservation project need to find out the best solutions to overcome the challenges that can be adopted in handling the project. As a conclusion, the researcher hope that this study will help conservation practitioners on minimizing the impact of the challenges faced by them when running the project by identifying the challenges and the best strategies to minimize them.

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