

# Factors That Influence the Successful of a Conservation Project – A Literature Review

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## ABSTRACT

*This research investigates the factors influencing the success of conservation project, particularly focusing on the challenges faced by licensed conservators in Malaysia. This research opted using qualitative method by using observation and analysis from previous studies. Findings highlight the primary obstacle encountered by conservators that is the arduous task of maintaining the original materials of heritage buildings during conservation work. Additionally, the research evaluates the level of expertise and capabilities among conservators in heritage building conservation. While the scope is narrowed to the challenges faced by conservators in Malaysia, the study emphasizes the critical importance of preserving original materials for future generations to experience genuine cultural and historical heritage. Practical implications underscore the need for heightened awareness among conservators regarding the difficulties inherent in conservation work, urging stakeholders to prioritize the preservation of heritage buildings' authenticity. Socially, the research underscores the significance of experience and expertise in successful conservation efforts, signaling potential challenges for future generations entering the field. By illuminating these challenges, this study provides an early insight for conservators, professionals, and policymakers, fostering a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in heritage building conservation and the imperative to address them effectively.*

**Keywords:** Conservation project, heritage buildings, challenges.



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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Heritage buildings in Malaysia exhibit variations in architectural style, function, and structural design. The extent of damage and faults in heritage buildings is influenced by elements including age, location, environmental hazards, and regular upkeep, which directly impact the building's longevity and integrity. Consequently, the preservation of heritage structures necessitates a thorough and methodical strategy to guarantee that the authenticity and significance of a heritage structure are maintained for future generations (Ghafar, 2010).

Conservation efforts are a vital measure to ensure the preservation of historical cultural structures. The implementation is necessary as cultural heritage structures in Malaysia face escalating threats of destruction, stemming not only from conventional damage but also from shifts in social and economic

situations (Zaki et al., 2014). The obliteration or diminishment of culture will lead to the annihilation of heritage for all nations globally. Consequently, community management and engagement are crucial to avert the degradation and obliteration of historical heritage items. The ongoing endeavor to preserve contemporary heritage encompasses the conservation of places, buildings, cities, and villages with significant legacy value, monuments, cultural elements, socio-economic factors of the community, and other essential components of historical history. Fauzi and Abdul Ghani, 2022.

Yuszaidy (2018) asserts that stringent heritage regulations can effectively safeguard cultural heritage in Malaysia. Conservation can foster social, economic, and political stability, positively influencing the community for future generations as a cornerstone of its identity.

Despite numerous conservation efforts focused on colonial structures, traditional Malay houses, mosques, businesses, and public edifices, a minority remains oblivious to the significance of this discipline. Some believe that the preservation of heritage buildings is challenging and does not yield significant economic benefits. Some conservation efforts may not adhere to established principles and practices of conservation. This diminishes the aesthetic and architectural significance of heritage buildings and decreases community, visitor, and investor interest in them. Nonetheless, drawing from the experiences of foreign nations such as England, Italy, Australia, Japan, and South Korea, heritage conservation can enhance the economic standing of local communities via the advancement of value-added historical tourism. Consequently, Malaysian society ought to be trained to value and safeguard the nation's cultural heritage (Ghafar, 2010).

On July 7, 2008, Malacca Historical City and the Inner City of George Town were declared and inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List as World Heritage Sites. Since then, the conservation of heritage buildings has become a primary focus, particularly within the tourism business, where it has emerged as a significant demand. The public, professionals, and researchers are increasingly concerned about and aware of cultural heritage. The focus extends beyond monuments and structures to encompass the conservation process and the ultimate aesthetic of heritage buildings. The preservation of heritage buildings fosters emotional connections and awareness to history among individuals. (Harun, 2011)

## 2 THEORY

To safeguard a heritage building, several factors must be evaluated, including its historical significance, the social value it holds within the community, and its potential to provide new functions that could stimulate the local economy (Ng et al., 2023). The success of a conservation project depends on several aspects, including financial support, conservation management, legislative requirements, and others (Zahari et al., 2019).

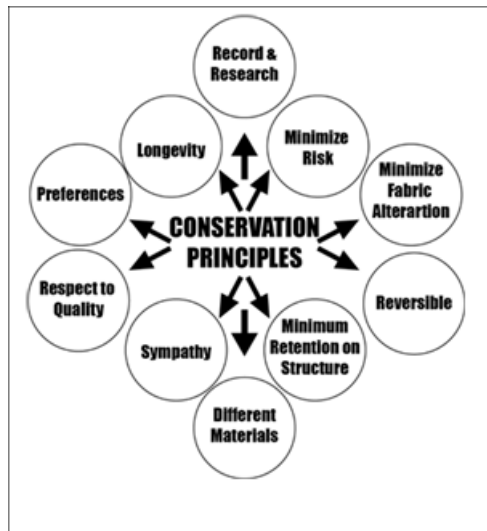


Figure 1 Conservation Principles (Harun, 2011)

## 2.1 Challenges of Material Choice

Conservation initiatives seek to safeguard cultural assets for posterity. Consequently, it is imperative to use materials that are resilient and resistant to environmental influences, including weathering, moisture, and biological degradation. Nonetheless, identifying materials that provide enduring protection without damaging the underlying structures can be challenging.

The conservation attempts also have difficulties in obtaining the original materials necessary for reconstructing the buildings. The materials, such as roof tiles and timber trusses, were abundant resources. The contractor must procure identical material to match the original. In addition to that, the obstacles include not just obtaining the original material but also requiring the contractor to be proficient in interpreting the project contract's specifications to ensure that the new material is compatible with the original. Furthermore, it must be tested for identical strength, texture, scale, and form.

Locating appropriate materials, particularly when the project necessitates certain varieties of natural or traditional materials, can be challenging. In certain instances, the original materials may be unavailable or scarce, necessitating replacement solutions that closely match the originals (Zainal Abidin et al., 2018). Acquiring sustainable resources that neither harm the environment nor contribute to unethical practices presents obstacles.

In certain instances, the utilization of specific materials derived from endangered species or culturally significant regions may contradict the conservation ideals of local traditions. Considering the cultural context and potential effects on local communities is crucial when selecting materials for conservation initiatives. Engaging with specific materials may necessitate unique expertise and competencies. For instance, traditional construction methods or artisanal craftsmanship may be requisite for the effective utilization of specific resources, which is vital for project success.

Conservation projects may be regulated by guidelines concerning the usage of specific materials, especially when they pertain to protected historical sites or objects. Ensuring adherence to regulatory mandates and acquiring requisite approvals for the procurement and utilization of resources can complicate projects.

## 2.2 Challenges in Lack of Skill Workers and Responsibility of Conservator

There is a significant shortage of labour and technical professionals in conservation approaches and procedures. The primary issue is that nearly all conservation initiatives have both repair and maintenance phases, which demand comprehension and analysis of building flaw diagnosis. The inquiry also includes the evaluation and remediation of building materials, the selection of suitable tools, and the methodologies for preserving the structure. The obligation for conservation tasks presents a significant problem for conservators. The conservator also serves as project manager and shall endeavour to achieve the highest standards in all facets of conservation, including investigation, treatment, study, and documentation (Sloggett, 2014).

In the absence of qualified labour, the quality of conservation efforts may deteriorate. Proficient artisans and craftsmen are frequently essential for executing intricate tasks, including the restoration of artwork, conservation of ancient edifices, or the repair of archaeological relics. The lack of these proficient craftsmen may result in inferior craftsmanship, potentially causing irreparable harm to cultural heritage.

Conservation initiatives necessitate rigorous attention to detail and skill to ensure the proper preservation of cultural treasures and historical structures. Novice workers may unintentionally inflict damage owing to inappropriate handling, erroneous procedures, or insufficient comprehension of the materials involved. This may lead to irrevocable damage to invaluable cultural artifacts. Conservators

are responsible for educating and enhancing the skills of personnel engaged in conservation initiatives. This entails delivering education and practical training to cultivate the requisite abilities and expertise for the designated duties. Nevertheless, constrained resources or insufficient access to training opportunities can impede the development of a proficient workforce in conservation(Lester, 2000).

An adequate monitoring and oversight of all conservation activities, particularly in the absence of proficient personnel. This entails meticulously overseeing job progress, offering direction and assistance to workers, and doing quality control assessments to guarantee adherence to conservation standards. Nonetheless, understaffing or a deficiency of trained individuals might hinder efficient oversight.

In circumstances when specialized labour is limited, conservators may need to partner with other institutions, organizations, or specialists to obtain the requisite skills. Establishing networks and partnerships within the conservation community helps mitigate skill gaps by utilizing resources, disseminating knowledge, and enabling training opportunities for personnel.

Thus, conservators are essential in promoting the significance of skilled labour in conservation and highlighting the difficulties stemming from a shortage of professional personnel. By emphasizing the importance of safeguarding cultural assets and the necessity for investment in training and capacity development, conservators may galvanize support from stakeholders, legislators, and the public to effectively tackle this issue.

## **2.3 Challenges in Conservation Guidelines**

Appropriate conservation criteria typically serve as essential instruments for conservators and building contractors. Although the National Heritage Act 2005 emphasizes the preservation of listed buildings and the designation of National Heritage, the laws require accompanying guidelines and a technical manual for conservation efforts (Zahari, 2022).

Conservation rules established by the National Heritage Act must be accurately read and implemented to ensure legal conformity. Nevertheless, the terminology of the legislation and accompanying rules may be intricate or unclear, resulting in confusion among conservators regarding their rights, responsibilities, and allowable actions.

National heritage legislation must conform to international conservation standards and best practices to guarantee the preservation of cultural assets globally. However, attaining coherence between national legislation and international norms, such as those instituted by UNESCO, can be arduous and may necessitate frequent revisions to update recommendations accordingly.

## **3 METHODOLOGY**

This conceptual paper involves conducting a literature review on the contributing factors to a successful conservation project. In addition to literature, this preliminary survey involved doing random observations at several conservation projects. Given the worldwide nature of this issue, the material being referenced and examined begins from the year 2000. The exploration of literature is conducted by referring to scientific publications such as Emeralds and Elsevier, as well as by studying the most recent rules, guidelines, and legislation pertaining to conservation of Heritage Buildings. The terms used to search for literature on reading are categorized into three groups: Conservation project, heritage buildings and challenges.. These phrases are utilized to ascertain the direction of this study. The discovery can be comprehended and modified effectively.

## 4 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The process of conserving the heritage product such as old buildings, monuments and other artifacts is quite challenging. It is because the process takes a long time.. there should be some improvements in the legal and business aspects if we want to see this field achieve a success that can be proud of. Several problems and challenges faced in the conservation project carried out on the heritage products involved have been identified.

### i. Material Choice

Selecting materials that are compatible with the original construction materials is crucial for preserving the historical integrity of heritage buildings. Finding materials that match the appearance, texture, and performance of the original materials can be challenging. Sourcing traditional or specialized materials that were originally used in heritage buildings may be difficult, especially if those materials are no longer produced or readily available. This can lead to compromises in material selection or the need for costly and time-consuming custom fabrication. Ensuring that chosen materials are durable and able to withstand environmental factors, such as weathering and moisture, is essential for the long-term preservation of heritage buildings. Balancing durability with historical authenticity can be a complex task.

### ii. Lack of Expertise

There may be a shortage of skilled craftsmen and artisans with the expertise required to carry out conservation work on heritage buildings. Traditional building techniques and craftsmanship may be at risk of being lost over time, further exacerbating the lack of expertise. Conservation work often requires specialized knowledge in fields such as historic preservation, architectural conservation, and traditional building techniques. However, there may be a lack of professionals with this expertise, particularly in regions with limited resources or educational opportunities. Investing in training programs and capacity-building initiatives to develop a new generation of conservation professionals is essential for addressing the lack of expertise. However, funding constraints and competing priorities may hinder efforts to provide comprehensive training opportunities.

### iii. Conservation Guidelines

Conservation guidelines may be complex and open to interpretation, making it challenging for practitioners to navigate and apply them effectively. Clarifying guidelines and providing practical guidance on their implementation can help address this challenge. Conservation guidelines must be adaptable to diverse contexts, including different types of heritage buildings, cultural settings, and regulatory frameworks. Striking a balance between flexibility and consistency in guidelines is essential for accommodating varying conservation challenges. Ensuring compliance with conservation guidelines may be difficult, particularly if there is a lack of enforcement mechanisms or penalties for non-compliance. Strengthening enforcement efforts and promoting awareness of the importance of heritage conservation can help improve compliance rates.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, conserving heritage buildings poses significant challenges spanning material selection, expertise gaps, and adherence to conservation guidelines. Success hinges on collaborative efforts among government agencies, heritage organizations, professionals, and local communities to address resource limitations, enhance expertise through training initiatives, and ensure effective enforcement of preservation standards. Investing in research, clear guidance, and public awareness

campaigns fosters a shared responsibility for heritage conservation, leading to the safeguarding of these cultural treasures for future generations.

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## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

We affirm that all contributions were made collaboratively and that each author has played a significant role in the research process.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest in this research.

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