

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**AN IMPROVED PROJECT MANAGEMENT
COMPETENCY FOR INTERIOR DESIGN PRACTICE**

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ABSTRACT

The competencies of interior designers managing construction projects, particularly in project management have frequently been questioned. Central to this argument is the claim that the interior designer competencies, which was developed through education and practice tend to be very biased on design skills and knowledge at the expense of project management. To date, there has been little research to justify the validity of the argument. In seeking to address this argument, this research was undertaken to establish to what extent is project management neglected in the academic and practice of interior design, and if so, where are the gaps. A mixed method research method was employed for the research. A quantitative research method with seventy-eight respondents was first adopted to establish the validity and extent to which project management was lacking in interior design practice. This was followed with a qualitative research method to identify precisely where the gap in project management education and interior design practice exists. To identify the gaps, fourteen key respondents were selected for interviews during the data collection. This was triangulated with content analysis method, which critically analyses the interior design syllabus offered by four leading local higher institutions. Activities undertaken by the interior design professional associations were also analysed. The findings found significant gaps in learning project management in the interior design higher education and interior design practice. The most important solutions to bridge the gaps is to improve the project management competencies of interior designers through education and practice were identified and suggested. To aid a holistic conceptualization of the project management skills and knowledge for the development of their competencies which can be added to the interior design education and practice, a framework was proposed. Significant new knowledge relating to interior design competencies was identified through this research. This encompasses the identification of the actual project management skills and knowledge required to improve the current interior design education curriculum offered by higher education. The skills and knowledge required in practice which should be promoted by the interior design professional associations was also identified. Notwithstanding, more research is suggested to follow through with this framework to structure and improve interior design curriculum in higher education. Research on how the project management skills and knowledge can be incorporated into the interior design continuing professional development program (CPD) can also be introduced.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 AIMS OF THE CHAPTER

The chapter is offered to acquaint the reader with the subject and the purpose of the research. It provides the overview of the research topic, research structure, research aims and objectives. The scope of the research is deliberated and the research significance is underlined. The chapter concludes with the chapter guides to the thesis.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The job of a professional Interior design is to turn interior spaces into effective and useful setting for human activities. Interior designers are required to be competent in developing the project throughout the project lifecycle, from the conceptual stage to the project handover stage. At the same time interior designers are required to deal with many stakeholders of the project, which includes clients, consultants, contractors, suppliers and workers. While the primary task of the interior designer is often seen as designing the spaces, the task of executing the design and construction is equally important. In other words, professional interior designers must not only be creative in design and provide technical solutions to turn the project into a built interior environment to ensure that the spaces are functional and able to offer enhancement to quality of life and aesthetically attractive. To create an effective built interior environment, the interior designers must be competent to systematically coordinate the execution of the multitude of activities methodologies within the whole project process. This also includes research to integrate the client's needs with the project constraints such as location, time, cost, quality, and health and safety requirements.

A creative design is generated in the response to the building shell without neglecting the environmental issues, physical location and the social context of the project. It is crucial that every creative design must adhere to the law, codes and regulatory requirement and promote the value of sustainability. Similar to architecture,