

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In Malaysia, construction industry can be known as major productive sector since the construction started in the early 1990s with the development of mammoth projects (Abdul Razak, B. i., Mattehew, H. R., Ahmed, Z., and Ghaffar, I. 2010). However, the qualities of the certain construction projects in Malaysia are not always meet satisfaction. Defect works can be described as work which fails to comply with the express descriptions or requirements of the contract, including very importantly any drawings or specifications, together with any implied terms as to its quality, workmanship, performance or design (Daniel, 1999). In the context of defective buildings, the major stumbling block in majority of cases is the recovery of the costs of rectification of defects, which are discovered before physical damage occurs (Rajendra, N. and Philip, J, 2004).

In addition, the lack of execution and supervision are contributed to the defects of buildings. However, a good project management team acting on behalf of the client should be able to take care of the interests of its customers, making sure that contractors do not compromise the quality of workmanship through their resident engineer.

The housing industry in Malaysia seems to move along with the requirement made by the potential house buyers. Although the housing industry has recognized customer satisfaction as a decisive business factor, but how well the industry is meeting customer expectations. Further, Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry (1990) also suggested that one of the prime causes of poor performance by service firms, for example the housing developers, is that the developers did not know the house buyers' expectations. Most organizations are keen to provide and offer product and service

quality but fall short simply because they do not have accurate and precise understanding of what customers expected from them (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1990). Hence, understanding customer expectations is important to the private developers' performance.

Traditionally, we are only concerned with the financial burden of getting the building erected and we are not made aware of the yearly maintenance cost, the operational cost and replacement cost. At times, the total cost of these three elements might surpass the construction cost. Insertion of life cycle assessment and costing during the design stage can save building owners from a lot of trouble and financial burden. Malaysians should learn from the defects in buildings/structures and include service life planning in the design process. However, this will only be successful if the relevant authorities are willing to change the current practice. (Tapsir, 2007)

1.2 Problem statement

Defects in construction are always the key concern of the construction industry. Constructed facilities difference generate different types of defects and need different levels and types of quality, depending on the functions, system types, and materials used.

Building defect is one of the major components of building that needed attention. When a building fails to perform as it should, we immediately look for answers. Is the problem is the result of someone's failure to assemble it properly? Is the problem an act of nature? Was the proper maintenance of the building not performed as it should have been? The answers often depend upon a number of factors: the age of the affected building component, the exact nature of the problem, the presence or absence of human error, or some combination of all three (3).

As stated in The Star Saturday June 29, 2013, "New doesn't mean perfect" (Appendix A). Based on this news, the house buyer's complaints about the property had many defects, ranging from minor problems to major misalignment of the walls and beams. The developer is rectifying the minor defects but is not willing to 'align' the walls or beams that have been placed improperly. How can they have the process

for rectification expedited as they have paid in full and are still unable to occupy the house?

Besides, new buildings could also have structural defects. Architect Anthony Lee Tee, who together with his team have inspected hundreds of new and old high rise buildings nationwide, said he found many unresolved defects in a majority of the new buildings they have inspected for vacant possession. He said due to the speed with which most high rise buildings were constructed, combined with a serious lack of skilled labour, attention to detail and skilled supervision, many new high rise buildings have defects from the moment of completion. This statement is stated in The Malay Mail Online Thursday July 25, 2013 (Appendix B).

Moreover, as stated in The Star Saturday September 26, 2015, the National House Buyers Association (HBA) has been inundated with numerous emails and calls seeking for avenues and possible remedies to the problem of a water leakage. Building technology has progressed over the years and we can build high-rise buildings that can withstand earthquakes with seismic engineering, be fire-resistant with comprehensive fire prevention measures and green buildings with energy and water-efficient measures. Sadly, however, we do not have any provisions in building codes to look into an issue that bothers many building owners and occupants – a water leakage.

Then, as stated from the National House Buyers Association, an example often cited is a major housing project, consisting of 1,800 low-cost flats and terrace houses at Bandar Indera Mahkota, Pahang, undertaken by the Pahang State Economic Development Corporation. The contractor for the project was a joint-venture company set up by the Pahang SEDC and a South Korean company. Soon after the housing project was completed, complaints started surfacing – cracked walls and floors, collapsing door frames, generally shoddy workmanship, sub-standard building materials, cement bags and styrofoam stuffed into walls instead of bricks, and shoddy wiring which short-circuited when rain water seeped in. The project was ultimately condemned as unsafe and the residents were resettled by the SEDC.

According to report in The Edge Monday April 10, 2017 (Appendix C), “One in five apartments in KLCC could be ‘unsafe’, says Architect Centre”. The buildings is believed to be unsafe due to certain defects caused by shoddy workmanship, apathy