

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES (CSR) AMONG G7 CONTRACTORS IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

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Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is one of way to encourage among the stakeholders to improve not only the society, but environment and economy of affected people. This paper aims to identify the implementation, challenges and ways to enhance Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) among G7 Contractors registered under the Malaysian Construction Industry Development Board. (CIDB in Malaysia. Quantitative and qualitative methodology were involved which involved questionnaires survey and interviews. Questionnaires were distributed to 150 respondents with 32 replied and 5 interviews were held among the respondents. The findings show that the highest level of CSR implementation is in the relationship with clients and suppliers. Most respondents agreed that the biggest challenges in implementing CSR were lack of support from top management and lack of time. It also showed that most respondents agreed that the ways to enhance the implementation of CSR were the involvement of system of governance transparency with investors and shareholders, application of policy by employees, close relationship with the clients and suppliers, concrete actions towards community and adoption of measures on the environmental impact. It is recommended for the implementation of CSR and ways to overcome the challenges needed to be enhanced to reach the highest level of implementation and every stakeholder needs to act for effective improvement to enhance the implementation.

Keywords: *Construction, Contractor, Corporate Social Responsibility, Implementation*

INTRODUCTION

In construction sector, as referred to Ofori (2015) study, the improvement of the performance of the construction industries of developing countries and duty conduct in giving efforts to lift a billion people from poverty, illiteracy, high infant mortality and other manifestations of poor socio-economic development is critical. It is stated in Ofori (2015) study that conducting a study in construction industry that relates to society, environment and economy, can improve the lives of billion people. Thus, this study will be focused on the implementation of CSR since it gives benefits to the society and a key pillar to the Malaysian economy.

In present time, the global economy requires such implementation or effort to keep the revolution of business practices expanding and increasing, at the same time beneficial. Beneficial in business is

very broad as it can be either environmental or profitability. Thus, the implementation of certain practice such as CSR helps to get the best of both to gain benefits in business. Environmental and profitability have a complex relationship. The impacts which corporations have on the environment are hard to handle when many resources are used to provide service and produce building. It is the same with the relationship of society and profitability in business. To make a profit-gained business takes one big effort, but it is not a good business if it doesn't consider the society. In relation to that, every business should give considerations to the environment, profit and society where the best implementation for this is by implementing CSR.

Problem Statement

The level of implementation of CSR for G7 Contractors in the Malaysia is still not widely applied and usually based on "profit only" business. According to Mwangi and Otieno-Mwembe (2015), "CSR is a concept that as much as it has been practiced by majorly corporate firms, it is yet to be embraced by those in the construction industry".

As stated by Meding and Social (2017), the blunt reality is that a company's foremost priority is to ensure financial security and ultimately, profitability. In order to make a company stable in gaining profit and at the same considering and taking care of the surrounding factors, is by implementing CSR. It is supported with the statement by Nasir (2015) "Generally, it can be concluded that CSR is focused beyond profit making motive which needs the companies to consider other aspects such as protecting the environment, caring for employees, being ethical in daily business activities and also improving the society's quality of life".

There are many challenges of CSR for G7 Contractors in the Malaysian Construction Industry. As stated by Mwangi and Otieno-Mwembe (2015), corruption becomes rife as business owners collude with governmental officials to engage in illegal activities. Although the construction industry continues to struggle with a poor societal image, many organizations however have adopted a positive CSR towards their surrounding environment, with the objective of improving their persona within social circles (Meding and Social, 2017).

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) improves the society. Sometimes construction firms undertake their operations without taking into account the impact that their activities and policies have on their employees as well as the society at large (Mwangi and Otieno-Mwembe, 2015). Thus, ways to enhance the implementation of CSR in the construction industry need to be encouraged among the stakeholders to improve not only the society, but the environment and economy of affected people. In addition, the number of studies on ways to enhance the implementation of CSR is still low as scholarly study of CSR is still new, as indicated by (Abdullah, 2016).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Corporate Social responsibility (CSR)

CSR is a concept that has captured the interest of the economy in the whole wide world. The attention of CSR in the current time has contributed to the worldwide scale or global growth and directly expands the variations of construction works. CSR not only increases the businesses but stimulates the demands for corporate citizenship. CSR can be described as a means for establishing an effective framework for strategic management and business relationship among various stakeholders (Mohamad et al., 2012). CSR is also relevant for a study on engaging the whole self because it is tied to one's self-concept, as Korschun et al. (2014) explain, CSR "reflects a core belief rather than an attitude about a particular social issue." Adeyunju (2012) acknowledged that, CSR is an organization's responsibility to participate in vital activities needed to protect and contribute to the welfare of the society (community); this involves the general communities, customers (Marketplace), shareholders, environment

(Environment), and employees (Workplace). In that case, the hope and efforts are relied on the mentioned elements as compared to the productions and what they offer.

The Malaysian Construction Industry

In the former time, it is the public sector or usually known as the government to be solely responsible for the living and nature, as well as for the requirement of the society to be living in a good environment and fulfilling living conditions. In recent time, the focus has shifted to the private sector in practicing and giving benefits from the CSR implementation in contrast from the usual practices which only come from the public sector. In addition, the value of construction work done in the second quarter 2017 recorded a double-digit growth of 11.2 per cent year-on-year to record RM33.8 billion (Q1 2017: RM35.1 billion) (DOSM, 2017). The expansion in the value of construction work done was driven by positive growth in all sub-sectors: Civil engineering (19.3%), Special trade activities (11.6%), Non-residential buildings (9.7%) and Residential buildings (3.8%) sub-sector (DOSM, 2017). The private sector continued to propel the construction activity with 63.8 per cent share (RM21.6 billion) as compared to the public sector with 36.2 per cent share (RM12.2 billion) (DOSM, 2017). Thus, it is more vital for the private sectors to implement CSR as compared to public sector as it has expanded bigger than the public sector in current construction activity in recent economic state.

Grade 7 (G7) Contractors registered under the Malaysian Construction Industry Board (CIDB)

In relation to the private sector, contractors are a private sector that is closely related to construction activities. A contractor plays an important role in ensuring the good delivery of project and also the safety management of the construction work. As stated by Mat Yahya and Ismail (2015) in ensuring the project to be well completed, the contractor's performance must be analysed constantly to prevent and handle issues or hazards which likely to happen on site. A contractor is anyone who directly employs or engages construction workers or manages construction work. Contractors include sub-contractors, any self-employed individual workers or businesses that carry out, manage or control construction work. They must have skills, knowledge, experience and, where relevant, the organisational capability to carry out the work safely and without risk to health. According to CIDB (2016) for Grade 7 Contractors, the financial capacity for paid-up or net capacity must be worth of RM 750,000.00 and for technical person's qualification, he must be a 2-degree holder (at least one with 5 years of experience or A degree holder and a diploma holder (both with minimum 5 years of experience) with other requirements (degree / diploma / certificate must be related to the construction field and is recognized by the Malaysian Government / CIDB).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The information and data gathered from the survey were arranged and prepared using the frequency and percentage method and average index method in relation to the targets, objectives, scope, and extent of the study. Two statistical methods were applied, namely descriptive statistic and inferential statistic. The formula being used is:

$$\text{Percentage (\%)} = (n/N) \times 100\%$$

Where,
n = Number of respondents
N = Total number of respondents received

150 copies of questionnaires were distributed to the targeted respondents, from which twenty-one per cent (21%) were received with complete information. The respondents were director, project manager, engineer, quantity surveyor and site agents in Klang Valley, Malaysia. Forty per cent (40%) of all questionnaires copies were distributed directly through postal and another sixty per cent (60%)

were sent through electronic mail in PDF Form and Google Form. The respondents' positions from the G7 Contractors that give responses to the distributed questionnaire survey are director (3), project manager (4), engineer (7), quantity surveyor (9) and site agents (9). The responses obtained by 30 respondents were reliable and rational for the present study.

Questions based on Likert scales were analysed by using average index method, and the outcomes have been presented in the form of an average score or mean. For the Likert scales questions, respondents needed to give answers in the form of scale 1 to 5. A scale of 5 categories has been used for the average index method to show priority. The weighting scale for the analysis was based on the thirty-two (32) respondents. The Likert scale was based on 5 points, where 1 for strongly disagree or very poor, 2 for disagree or poor, 3 for neutral or average, 4 for agree or good and 5 for strongly agree or very good. The questionnaire also required the demographic profiles of the respondents.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The Respondent and Company Background

There were 5 questions related to position, gender, highest qualification, level of experience, and nature of the company asked to the respondents. The given questions were then used for the identification purpose of the respondents. It has further reflected the credibility of the respondent in providing input to the questionnaire. The respondent's profile was analysed by using frequency and percentage method.

Table 1: Respondent and Company Background

Background	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Position		
<i>Engineer</i>	7	22
<i>Others</i>	9	28
<i>Project Director</i>	3	9
<i>Project Manager</i>	4	13
<i>Quantity Surveyor</i>	9	28
Gender		
<i>Female</i>	8	25
<i>Male</i>	24	75
Highest Qualification		
<i>Degree</i>	16	50
<i>Diploma</i>	3	9
<i>Master</i>	13	41
Level of Experience		
<i>2 - 5 years</i>	14	44
<i>6 - 10 years</i>	7	22
<i>Less than 2 years</i>	7	22
<i>More than 10 years</i>	4	12

Table 1 shows the position of the respondents from G7 Contractors that gave responses to the distributed questionnaire survey. The highest percentage of respondents' positions are from Quantity Surveyors and other positions with both having 28%. The third highest percentage is engineer with 22% from 32 respondents. The fourth in ranking is project manager with the percentage of 13% and lastly in the fifth ranking is Project Director with the percentage of 9%. Results in Table 1 also shows that 75% of respondents are males and the rest are females. Fifty percent (50%) of the respondents are degree

holders followed by master holders and diploma qualification while their highest qualification with 44% of the respondents have between 2 - 5 years of experience followed by the second and third highest respondents with between 6 - 10 years of experience and less than 2 years involved in the construction works. While, the lowest percentage is 12% of respondents who have experience in the construction for more than 10 years.

Lastly, it also shows the percentage of respondent's company nature where Building Works conquers the majority percentage compared to other works' nature followed by the second highest is Civil Engineering Works with 38% percentage. The third place is shared by four different company's natures, that are Electrical Works, Facilities Management Services, Interior Design Contractor and Architectural and Interior Design with 3% each.

The Level of Implementation of CSR Among G7 Contractors in the Malaysian Construction Industry

The purpose of this section is to identify the level of Implementation of CSR among G7 Contractors where there were four questions in this section, which are the implementation of CSR Policy, the practice of CSR programs, the importance level of CSR in the construction industry and lastly, the implementation of various stakeholders in the company/ organization. There were five criteria questions which include the shareholders' initiatives, among employees, relationship with clients and suppliers, towards the community and towards the environment.

The first three questions were analysed by using frequency and percentage method. The fourth question was provided with the list of scale by using the Likert Type Scale where 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 stand for very poor, poor, average, good and very good respectively. The data generated in this section, was analysed by using SPSS to identify mean. A summary of the analysis is reported in the form of Average Index. The result of average index by 32 responses will be presented in Table 2.

Table 2: The Level of Implementation CSR Policy, Programs and Importance

	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Implementation of CSR Policy		
<i>Maybe</i>	4	12
<i>No</i>	4	13
<i>Yes</i>	24	75
Practice of CSR Programs		
<i>Maybe</i>	11	34
<i>No</i>	5	16
<i>Yes</i>	16	50
Level of Importance of CSR		
<i>Yes</i>	32	100
<i>No</i>	0	0

According to Table 2, a majority of 75% of the respondents implement CSR Policy in their company while the 4% of respondents were not sure if they implement CSR Policy in their company. It shows the percentage of respondents who practice CSR Programs, either organizing or attending the programs in their company, 50% of the respondents, which is a majority, practice CSR Programs while the other 34% of respondents are not sure if they practice CSR Programs in their company while the 16% do not practice CSR Programs in their company.

It also shows the percentage of respondents that agree CSR is important in the construction industry is 100%. It can be concluded that G7 Contractors are well exposed to CSR implementation and realized the importance of CSR in the construction industry, thus the level of implementation of CSR can be increased.

Table 3: The Level of Implementation of CSR based on every stakeholder

Stakeholders	Ranking					Average Index	Classification
	1 Very Poor	2 Poor	3 Average	4 Good	5 Very Good		
The shareholders initiatives	0	0	11	13	8	3.79	Good
Among employees	0	2	4	11	5	3.53	Good
Relationship with clients and suppliers	1	0	5	13	13	4.00	Good
Towards the community	0	1	10	13	8	3.68	Good
Towards environment	0	2	10	11	9	3.63	Good

From Table 3, it shows that all levels of stakeholders are classified as good in the implementation of CSR, in which the highest average index of 4.00 is the relationship with clients and suppliers, followed by the second highest average index of 3.79 is the shareholders' initiatives, the third highest average index of 3.68 is towards the community, the fourth-place average index of 3.63 is towards the environment and the last one is among employees with average index of 3.53.

The Challenges of implementing CSR among G7 Contractors in the Malaysian Construction Industry

The questions in this section are asked to determine the challenges of implementing CSR among G7 Contractors in the Malaysian Construction Industry. There are eight (8) factors that must be dealt with by the respondents, which are lack of awareness, lack of knowledge, lack of human resources, lack of employee's motivation, lack of support from top management, lack of time, lack of funds and unavailability of technology and equipment. All of the factors will be analysed in the following explanations.

The questions were provided with a list of factors by using the Likert Type Scale where 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 stand for strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree. The data generated in this section, was analysed by using SPSS to identify mean. A summary of the analysis is reported in the form of Average Index. In this section, Average Index was analysed against all of the factors. The result of average index by 32 responses will be presented in a table.

Table 4 reveals that the lack of support from top management is 3.79 in average index and placed as the highest and biggest challenge for the implementation of CSR among G7 Contractors in Malaysia. The second highest is lack of time with 3.68 of average index followed on the lack of funds with 3.42. Next is lack of awareness with 3.32 of average index, the same as the unavailability of technology and equipment with 3.32, followed by lack of human resources with average index of 3.21. Lack of knowledge and lack of employee's motivation with the average index of 3.00 is in the last place of which G7 Contractors regarded as a challenge in the company.

Table 4: The Challenges of implementing CSR

Factors	Ranking					Average Index	Classification
	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree		
Lack of awareness	2	6	9	10	5	3.32	Neutral
Lack of knowledge	1	11	6	10	4	3.11	Neutral
Lack of human resources	0	11	12	5	4	3.21	Neutral
Lack of employee's motivation	1	10	9	5	7	3.00	Neutral
Lack of support from top management	3	11	6	9	3	3.79	Agree
Lack of time	1	2	7	12	10	3.68	Agree
Lack of funds	0	6	5	10	11	3.42	Neutral
Unavailability of technology and equipment	1	7	9	10	5	3.32	Neutral

The ways of enhancing the Implementation of CSR among G7 Contractors in the Malaysian Construction Industry

The questions were designed to analyse the ways of enhancing the Implementation of CSR among G7 Contractors in the Malaysian Construction Industry. The questions focused on governance transparency system with investors and shareholders, application of policy by employees, close relationship with clients and suppliers, concrete actions towards community and adoption of measures on the environmental impact. All of the factors will be analysed in the following explanations.

The questions were already provided with a list of factors by using the Likert Type Scale where 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 stand for strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree. The data generated in this section, was analysed by using SPSS to identify mean. A summary of the analysis is reported in the form of Average Index. In this section, Average Index was analysed against all of the factors. The result of average index by 32 responses will be presented in a table.

Table 5: The ways of enhancing the Implementation of CSR

Description	Ranking					Average Index	Classification
	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree		
System of governance transparency with investors and shareholders	0	2	7	7	16	4.00	Agree
Application of policy by employees	0	3	3	6	20	4.21	Agree

Close relationship with the clients and suppliers	0	1	6	7	18	4.16	Agree
Concrete actions towards community	0	0	5	7	20	4.32	Agree
Adoption of measures on the environmental impact	0	2	3	7	20	4.21	Agree

Table 5 shows the average index for every way stated in this study and in the questionnaire survey. The highest average index of 4.32 is recorded for concrete actions towards community. There are two ways ranked as the second highest, which are application of policy by employees and adoption of measures on the environmental impact with 4.21 in the average index. The third highest is close relationship with clients and suppliers with the average index of 4.16. The way which is ranked last is governance transparency system with investors and shareholders with the average index of 4.00. Overall of the classification average index, all ways are classified as agreed by the respondents.

Discussion

From the results obtained, it can be observed that the positions of respondents participated in this study are mostly Quantity Surveyors and other positions which consisted of Company Secretary, Project Coordinator, Project Executive, Senior Executive Corporate Communication and Site Supervisor. It can be seen that Quantity Surveyors and other positions than Engineer, Project Manager and Director of organizations or company, are more interested and exposed to CSR implementation compared to others. On the part of the respondents' gender, it can be observed that, in the Malaysian Construction Industry, the majority who worked and involved in this sector are males. Other than that reason, CSR could be more exposed to Male in the Construction Industry as compared to Female. As an assumption, CSR may be an implementation which caught the interest of male compared to female.

From the results of respondents' highest qualification, it can be observed that the data acquired is quite reliable that the respondents who have a high education level are more exposed to CSR implementation and are more likely to be involved in the Malaysian Construction Industry. For the respondents who have diploma as the highest qualification, they might need more time in the university and exposure to CSR. In the part of working experience, it can be observed that the respondents with 2 – 5 years of experience are more aware of CSR compared to respondents with 6 – 10 years of experience and more than 10 years of experience in the Malaysian Construction Industry. Another assumption that can be made is people that are new to the construction industry are more active and have higher interest to participate and contribute to beneficial activities such as CSR. Respondents with 2 – 5 years of experience are more willing to be responsible to the surrounding people in the workplace, community and environment. As stated in the results, it is observed that G7 Contractors are mostly doing Building Works as compared to other works, even Civil Engineering Works is ranked in the second place. It can also be assumed that G7 Contractors with main business of Building Works are more exposed to CSR implementation and are more interested in implementing CSR.

The Level of Implementation of CSR Among G7 Contractors in the Malaysian Construction Industry

From the results that showed the percentage of respondents' implementation of CSR Policy, it can be observed that most G7 Contractors are implementing CSR Policy and the level of implementation of CSR is high. It can also be assumed that G7 Contractors are exposed to CSR implementation, specifically on CSR Policy in their company. Policies are beneficial in business especially policies that cover social, economic and environment such as CSR. Referring to the study of Cedillo Torres (2012), that is related to Apple's CSR Policies, it mentioned the business conduct policy of Apple: "Apple

conducts business ethically, honestly and in full compliance with all laws and regulations” (Cedillo Torres, 2012), in which it is applied to every business decision in every area of the company worldwide. The discussed implementation of CSR is an application of policy by employees.

As observed from the results, most G7 Contractors practice CSR Programs and the level of implementation of CSR is high. As mentioned by Senawi (2016), this positive development shows that property organizations in Malaysia are heading towards enhancing their CSR measures. It shows that there is a significant increase on the level of CSR disclosure since its implementation in 2006 (Senawi, 2016). All the respondents agreed that CSR is important in the construction industry, so it can be assumed that G7 Contractors are well exposed to CSR implementation and realized the importance of CSR in the construction industry, thus the level of implementation of CSR can be increased. As stated in the results for the level of implementation for every stakeholder, it can be observed that most G7 Contractors implemented CSR, focusing on taking care of their relationship with clients and suppliers. It can be assumed that any business organizations will likely to be focusing on the source of income and making profits.

The Challenges of Implementing CSR among G7 Contractors in the Malaysian Construction Industry

As stated by Mwangi and Otieno-Mwembe (2015), there is a portion of the challenges in practicing CSR which had to be faced, for example, deficient assets to do CSR exercises and absence of an unmistakable authoritative and institutional structure to manage CSR exercises. What can be observed from the results, the biggest challenge faced by G7 contractors is the lack of support from top management that could be due to some unavoidable reasons faced by the top management. As stated by Abdullah (2016) “low implementation of CSR among construction companies in Malaysia may indicate barriers of implementing CSR such as lack of awareness, lack of knowledge, lack of human resources, lack of employee’s motivation, no support of top management, lack of time, lack of funds, unavailability of technology, too much duplication and over emphasis on inspection and cheating”. In this case, there are still ways to improve and prevent these challenges faced by the G7 contractors.

The Ways of Enhancing the Implementation of CSR among G7 Contractors in the Malaysian Construction Industry

As stated by Zainal (2014), “firms are expected to take into consideration the social and environmental implications of their business activities through the implementation of CSR-related activities in their journey to maximise profit”. According to The CSR Digest (2008) when the company helps to improve the conditions of the community it operates in, the community becomes more prosperous and this ensures the company survival. It can be observed from the results that by evaluating measures which include governance transparency system with investors and shareholders, application of policy by employees, close relationship with the clients and suppliers, concrete actions towards community and adoption of measures on the environmental impact. The results show that these measures need to be practiced as CSR covers the whole area of social, economic and environment. The best implementation is to cover all measures rather than focusing on one measure or few measures only. Thus, all measures shall be encouraged more in their practice to increase the implementation of CSR among G7 Contractors in Malaysia.

CONCLUSION

It was found that the level of implementation by every stakeholder from the findings obtained is good and therefore, the implementation of CSR needs to be enhanced to reach the level of very good. This can be made by having one responsible body or organization to lead in advertising and giving advice regarding the benefits and advantages of doing CSR among them. It is important that they will get the right understanding related to CSR benefits and advantages, thus will increase the level of implementation of CSR among the G7 contractors. It was also found that the challenges of CSR

implementation were lack of support from top management and lack of time. Therefore, all respondents agreed that measures which include governance transparency system with investors and shareholders, application of policy by employees, close relationship with the clients and suppliers, concrete actions towards community and adoption of measures on the environmental impact will contribute in enhancing the implementation of CSR. What can be concluded is, to enhance the implementation of CSR, measures involving all stakeholders need to be taken for effective improvement. As an example, seminar, exhibition and conference regarding joint venture need to be expanded to the maximum range. Thus, general issues related to the CSR application could be minimized to a lower level and this may improve the CSR application in the construction industry generally and G7 contractor sector specifically. The implementation of CSR offers great benefits to the construction industry and with that, the promotions of CSR implementation need to be expanded to encourage the implementation of CSR to reach and achieve the same level as the international.

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