

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research tries to understand project management in the Malaysian construction industry. Having been involved in project management in Malaysia for almost nine years, I believe that the management styles applied for project management here made little or no reference to contemporary management theories although the various steps in management are applied. It was also found that no previous research has been carried out on project management in the Malaysian construction industry and this has resulted in the lack of orderly development of the management skills employed in this industry.

This is an exploratory research. The purpose of this exploratory research is to find out pertinent issues and problems related to project management in the Malaysian construction industry. There are four methods of carrying out exploratory research as follows;

- **Secondary Data** - Reviewing data that have been collected for some other research. This is not available in this case because no previous research on project management has been done in the Malaysian construction industry. A related literature review has been carried out in Section 2.
- **Experience Survey** - This is carried out by having informal discussions with knowledgeable people in the industry. This method of research is used in this study, where senior project management practitioners have been approached to discuss the current and future project management practices in the Malaysian construction industry.

- **Pilot Studies** - Any small scale exploratory research technique that uses sampling but does not apply rigorous standards. In this case, the data collection methods are informal and the findings may lack precision but they give some idea of representation or reaction to the questions. This method has not been used in this research.
- **Case Study** - This is an informal study of some cases relevant to the exploratory research. This method is used in this study, to determine the current situation and identify problematic issues. A large project management company and its projects are used as the case study in this research. The main criteria for the selection of this company include, its years of involvement in project management in Malaysia, exceeding 15 years, and the variety of projects handled i.e., industrial, commercial, hospitality, healthcare, etc.

There is no standard design for exploratory research (Zikmund 1994). Considerable creativity and flexibility are needed in exploratory research and, depending on the situation, data and information are collected using any or all of the above exploratory research methods. Information collected is analysed using a strategic thinking process to arrive at some conclusions and recommendations.

The first stage in this research is a situation analysis, where information on the current situation of project management in the Malaysian construction industry is gathered and organised in a structured manner. The situation analysis is carried out by experience survey and case studies. The next stage involves a review of the situation to identify managerial problems. Following this, a study focusing on the pertinent issues is carried out to draw conclusions and make recommendations. The ideas from the literature review, experience survey and case study are used.