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1 **An Investigation of the Conflict Management Strategies in**  
2 **International Construction Joint Ventures of Sri Lanka**

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## 10 **An Investigation of the Conflict Management Strategies in** 11 **International Construction Joint Ventures of Sri Lanka**

12 **Purpose:** Most developing countries, like Sri Lanka (SL), are now looking for the  
13 support of foreign construction companies for large-scale infrastructure projects in  
14 return for expertise and resources. Thus, foreign companies may enter into  
15 agreements with local contractors through joint ventures (JVs). However, the  
16 priorities of construction project stakeholders may differ, which may ultimately  
17 end up in conflicts. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the most suitable  
18 conflict management strategies for international construction JVs (ICJVs)  
19 considering the SL context.

20 **Methodology:** The mixed method was used for the research choice by selecting a  
21 questionnaire survey and expert interviews. Completed questionnaires (n = 78)  
22 were analysed using statistical techniques. The expert interviews with six industry  
23 practitioners were piloted to increase the validity and credibility of survey findings  
24 through a triangulation process where the collected data was analysed through  
25 content analysis.

26 **Findings:** The findings confirm that JV parties should first seek collaborative  
27 solutions in a conflict and seek legal redress only when those efforts are  
28 unsuccessful. Collaborating and compromising were recommended as the most  
29 appropriate tactics if an informal approach to conflict management was chosen.  
30 Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and litigation were identified as formal  
31 conflict management strategies.

32 **Originality:** This study will be the first of its kind in SL, which will lead to a better  
33 understanding of conflict management in IJCVs and will encourage other  
34 researchers to extend this study through further work.

35 **Keywords:** International Construction Joint Ventures (ICJVs); Conflict  
36 Management; Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR); Collaboration; Sri Lanka  
37 (SL).

## 38 **Introduction**

39 Around the world, construction organisations are focused on growing their profits and  
40 expanding their market through entering into joint ventures (JV) with other entities  
41 (Nippa & Reuer, 2019). A JV is an arrangement for business purposes between two or

42 more parties that agree to share resources to achieve a particular task (Hargrave, 2019).  
43 A JV contract in the construction industry refers to the cooperation of two or more  
44 construction firms to achieve a mutually agreed-upon project, sharing project risk,  
45 technical knowledge, and resources (Ma & Voo, 2014). According to Mantecon *et al.*  
46 (2015), JVs can be considered international construction joint ventures (ICJVs) if at least  
47 a single party's headquarters is not within the venture's country of activity or has a  
48 sufficient level of activity in another country. Eventually, JVs provide the capacity for  
49 construction firms to achieve their goals as they allow companies to work with varying  
50 levels of experience, more resources, specialists, and good financial arrangements  
51 (Daniels, 2018; Gaughan, 2017). However, ICJV can also become complicated to manage  
52 due to the merging of organisations from various countries with differing political  
53 situations, legal structures, and cultural, technical, and economic status (Ahiaga-Dagbui  
54 *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, conflicts are inevitable in ICJVs, resulting from poor  
55 consideration of the above conditions (Rauzana & Anitab, 2016). According to Karim *et*  
56 *al.* (2014), conflicts are one of the main causes of the failure of ICJVs. Conflicts in the  
57 ICJV could result in delays in project completion, reputational damage to the project  
58 stakeholders, and losses (Atkinson, 2014; Cakmak & Cakmak, 2014). Hence, an effective  
59 conflict management mechanism is essential for ICJVs if such damage is to be prevented.

60 The construction firms in developing countries may have the ability to meet the  
61 project's requirements for most of the activities. However, there are situations where  
62 firms do not have enough finance and expertise to carry out more complex projects single-  
63 handedly. Samaratunge and Pillay (2011) stated that ICJVs between firms in developing  
64 countries like Sri Lanka and foreign firms had become a preferred means for management  
65 to achieve their objectives. Many ICJV projects were carried out in Sri Lanka during the  
66 last few years, and more are yet to be started (Moramudali, 2017; Oxford Business Group,  
67 2016). The research in the Sri Lankan context indicates many benefits derived from  
68 ICJVs. They include sharing technology, risks, and resources (Chen & Sheng, 2013),  
69 encouraging innovations (Mohamed *et al.*, 2019), enhanced commitment (Chuang &  
70 Thomson, 2016 ), and a door for entering new markets (Klijn *et al.*, 2010). However,  
71 Jayathilaka (2012) has identified a dearth of knowledge in investigating the root causes  
72 of conflicts and conflict management strategies that can be applied to ICJVs in Sri Lanka.  
73 Therefore, it is a worthy context to investigate how the conflicts in international  
74 construction joint ventures can be appropriately managed considering the Sri Lankan  
75 context.

## 76 **Literature Review**

77 The beginning of this section explains the types of ICJVs, benefits of ICJVs, drawbacks  
78 of ICJVs, the JV trend in the world construction industry, and its application in the Sri  
79 Lankan context. Next, the identification of conflicts and their management in the ICJVs  
80 are discussed.

### 81 ***International Construction Joint Ventures (ICJV)***

82 In recent years, construction organisations around the world have been focusing on  
83 expanding internationally through JV agreements (Nippa & Reuer, 2019; Khamaksorn *et*  
84 *al.*, 2020). According to Hong and Chan (2014), as cited in Chan *et al.* (2020), these ICJV  
85 agreements are typically formed between independent construction firms to carry out  
86 Architectural, Engineering, and Construction (AEC) projects. As elaborated in the  
87 Introduction section, ICJV is a formal identification if at least one headquarters of the  
88 party is situated outside of the JV operation country. While foreign firms provide  
89 technology and managerial expertise to the local firms, ICJV also provides a portal for  
90 them to enter into local markets. However, as in any agreement or contract, both parties  
91 to the ICJV share risks (Chen & Messner, 2009). Thus, ICJV can be defined as a  
92 collaborative arrangement or temporary agreement between two or more parties that are  
93 from different countries to carry out AEC projects (Rostami *et al.*, 2015). Hong & Chan  
94 (2014) argued that ICJV is a subcategory of CJV between multinational firms. Moreover,  
95 it is known as an ICJV if the IJV is project-related, as it is essential to understand the  
96 difference between IJVs and ICJVs (Ozorhon, 2007).

### 97 ***Types of ICJV***

98 As identified by Cartwright (2011), Chen (2005), and Bashir *et al.* (2019), the main two  
99 types of ICJV are "integrated" and "non-integrated." Guofeng *et al.* (2020) and Kale *et*  
100 *al.* (2013) have illustrated three more categories: combination, equity, and contractual  
101 based on the structure of ICJV.

#### 102 • **Integrated joint venture**

103 This is the most suitable type for civil engineering work (Cartwright, 2011). Furthermore,  
104 the parties can carry out their work as a single corporation (Bashir *et al.*, 2019). Thus,  
105 they are jointly responsible for whether the project is a profit or loss (Chen, 2005).

#### 106 • **Non-integrated joint venture**

107 In this type of formation, parties can share their resources more than in the Integrated JV,  
108 and the main difference is that the JV board has the power to decide the responsible party  
109 in the contract (Cartwright, 2011; Guofeng *et al.*, 2020). Hence, experts who have good  
110 experience in this field are required because it is complicated (Chen, 2005).

111 • **Combination joint venture**

112 This type of JV is used for more complex projects. Combination joint ventures are formed  
113 by the combination of integrated and non-integrated JVs. The JV agreements are stated  
114 as the parties' responsibilities, obligations, and methods of profits or losses sharing  
115 (Guofeng *et al.*, 2020; Shelar & Konnur, 2017).

116 • **Equity joint venture**

117 There is a different legal concept from other JVs in this type of JV. The project is carried  
118 out under a separate legal company which is created by two or more parties in the JV  
119 agreement. The parties provide equity capital and agree to their responsibilities and  
120 obligations such as furnishing bonds, profit sharing, staffing, and providing other  
121 resources (Guofeng *et al.*, 2020; Shelar & Konnur, 2017).

122 • **Contractual joint venture**

123 This type of JV is used for achieving the objectives of short-term construction projects  
124 by two or more parties under the JV agreement (Kale *et al.*, 2013; Shelar & Konnur,  
125 2017). The lifetime of the JV depends on the construction contract (Gale & Luo, 2004).

126 ***ICJV in the construction industry***

127 Organisations use the ICJV as a solution to the demand for bulk market requirements  
128 (Gale & Luo, 2004; Zhang & Zou, 2007). The ICJV strategy has extensively been used  
129 for large-scale and more complex construction projects such as crude oil exploration and  
130 manufacturing, real estate development, rail construction, industrial projects, and urban  
131 projects (Harrigan, 2003; Hwang *et al.*, 2016). Furthermore, Hwang *et al.* (2016) explored  
132 how the ICJV can be applied to construction management, procurement work, consulting,  
133 and engineering services for short-term objectives. For example, Hong Kong, Taiwan,  
134 and China are carrying out their complex and large capital projects, including  
135 underground, sea bridges, and skyscrapers, through the ICJV concept (Zhao *et al.*, 2013;  
136 Liang *et al.*, 2019). In recent times, the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge was developed  
137 by three parties through joint venturing successfully (Liang *et al.*, 2019). Singapore also

138 invited foreign firms to engage with local contractors by introducing preferential margin  
139 schemes (PMS) (Zhao *et al.*, 2013; Hwang *et al.*, 2014).

#### 140 ***Benefits of ICJV***

141 Many developing countries tend to form ICJVs because JV is inherently advantageous.

142 The advantages of ICJVs can be illustrated in Table 1.

143 **Table 1: Benefits of ICJVs**

Benefits	Sources
Risks sharing	[1], [2]
Encourage innovations	[3]
Sharing technology	[1], [4]
Ability to share resources	[5]
Enhanced commitment	[6], [7]
A door for entering the new market	[8], [9]

**Sources:** [1] – (Chen & Sheng, 2013); [2] - (Adnan et al., 2012); [3]- (Mohamed et al., 2019); [4]- (Gale & Luo, 2004); [5]- (Minja et al., 2013); [6]- (Chuang & Thomson, 2016); [7]- (Panico, 2016); [8]- (Jamil et al., 2008); [9]- (Klijn et al., 2010).

#### 144 ***Drawbacks of ICJVs***

145 Although organizations look for the ICJV because of its benefits, its drawbacks of them  
146 are interrupting its good performance. Following Table 2 has elaborated the drawbacks  
147 of ICJVs.

148 **Table 2: Drawbacks of ICJVs**

Drawbacks	Sources
The difficulty for the senior management in creating the right working philosophy throughout the ICJVs	[1], [2], [3], [4]
Difficult to control	[4], [5]
Lack of Trust	[6], [7]
Lack of clear objectives	[8]
Differences in operating procedures	[9]

**Sources:** [1] - (Adnan et al., 2012); [2] - (Huang, 2003); [3] - (Gaughan, 2017); [4] - (Shelar & Konnur, 2017); [5] - (Mantecon, et al., 2015); [6] - (Beamish & Lupton, 2009); [7] - (Bashir, et al., 2019); [8] - (Panico, 2016), [9] - (Kathawala, 2001)

149

## 150 *Application of ICJVs to Sri Lankan Context*

151 The ICJV can also be used for procurement in the Sri Lankan construction industry  
152 (Wijewardana *et al.*, 2013). However, as revealed by Joseph and Jayasena (2008), ICJVs  
153 were a rare procurement method in the Sri Lankan construction industry, with only a few  
154 ICJV projects completed in the country. Nevertheless, 1992–96 can be identified as the  
155 turning point of the ICJV in Sri Lanka, where the government first introduced this  
156 mechanism by carrying out a lot of megaprojects through the ICJV. The most common  
157 recent example is the Hambantota port, which was constructed by the ICJV between  
158 China Merchants Port Holdings Company Limited (CMPort) and the Sri Lankan  
159 government (Moramudali, 2017). For carrying out power plant projects, the National  
160 Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) of India entered into the ICJV with the Ceylon  
161 Electricity Board (CEB). The Moragahakanda power plant, expressways, Colombo port  
162 city, and most of the large-scale infrastructure are carried out by the ICJVs (Oxford  
163 Business Group, 2016). However, ICJV was not limited only to expressways, and its  
164 application was further expanded to iRoad projects around the island. Many roads in Sri  
165 Lanka that are funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) during 2017–2021 are  
166 carried out through the ICJVs (Integrated Road Investment Program (iRoad)-II, 2020).  
167 Hence, those details establish a significant growth of the ICJV application as a  
168 procurement strategy in Sri Lanka.

## 169 *Conflicts in ICJV*

170 Makino *et al.* (2017) have accepted that ICJVs are difficult to survive for a long period  
171 of time and can be terminated due to inefficiencies, differences in strategic objectives,  
172 and cultural differences among partners. Mainly, two types of conflicts in ICJVs can be  
173 identified as task-related and relationship (or emotional)-related (Tsang *et al.*, 2004). Task  
174 conflict can be defined as differences in opinions about and viewpoints on the task, while  
175 interpersonal tension or personality disorders such as frustration, anger, and other  
176 negative feelings lead to relationship conflict (Dirks & Parks, 2003). Hence, the general  
177 belief is that both task and relationship conflicts harm the ICJVs due to this dual impact  
178 (Li & Hambrick, 2005). Therefore, it is vital to identify the causes of conflicts in ICJVs  
179 to reduce their potential negative impacts (Ren, 2009). The following Table 3 illustrates  
180 the different causes of conflicts in ICJVs.

181

182



183 **Table 3: Causes of conflict in ICJVs**

Causes of Conflict	Sources
Unequal equity	[1]
Dissimilarities of goals	[2]
Relationship problems	[3]
Failure to manage the risks	[4], [5]
Distrust	[5], [6]
Culture barriers	[5], [7], [8], [9]
Uneven commitment	[3]
Communication problems	[3], [10], [11]
Lack of continuous improvement	[3]
Inefficient problem solving	[3]
Inadequate training	[3], [12]
Dishonourable relationship	[3]
<b>Sources:</b> [1] - (Barden et al. 2005); [2] - (Bashir, et al., 2019); [3] - (Adnan et al., 2012); [4] - (Mcintosh & McCabe, 2003); [5] - (Adnan et al.,2012); [6] - (Ali, 2013); [7] - (Slangen & van Tulder, 2009); [8] - (Ozorhon & Hasan, 2017); [9] - (Nguyen, 2011); [10] - (Alazemi & Mohiuddin, 2019); [11] - (Wasiu et al., 2018); [12] - (Lu et al., 2020)	

184 **Conflict management in ICJV**

185 Conflicts in ICJVs can cause unproductivity in organisations as managers must spend  
186 additional time and money to resolve such conflicts (Julian, 2008). Conflicts in any  
187 project inevitably damage the project goals and performance significantly unless there is  
188 effective management (Altuncan & Tanyer, 2018). Li and Hambrick (2005) defined  
189 conflict management as a method of developing beliefs in procedural justice among the  
190 ICJV partners. Therefore, there should be a management system for each conflict because  
191 of its unique nature and context (Rahim, 2002). Even so, management levels in  
192 organisations can propose innovative methods to solve conflicts using their professional  
193 knowledge, conflict management practice, and experience (Liu et al., 2008). Hence, there

194 is a necessity for having effective and innovative strategies for conflict management in  
 195 ICJVs (Altuncan & Tanyer, 2018).

### 196 *Conflicts Management Strategies*

197 Based on the opinions of higher management, the conflict management strategies can be  
 198 changed on every project at any time (Lin & Wang, 2002). However, Lin and Wang  
 199 (2002) also revealed that conflict management can cause critical concerns in the project  
 200 environment. Thus, it is important to identify the most appropriate conflict management  
 201 strategies depending on the context (Wong *et al.*, 2017). In Parry *et al.* (2008), five  
 202 conflict management strategies have been identified, which are mentioned below in Table  
 203 4.

204 Table 4: Conflicts management strategies

Strategy	Explanation	Sources
Collaborating	Looking for a way to simultaneously satisfy the desires of both parties	[1], [2], [3]
Compromising	Offering partial acceptance of the other party's desires in return for partial acceptance of one's desires	[1], [2], [3], [4]
Accommodating	Yielding to the desires of the other party	[1], [2], [3]
Competing	Attempting to impose one's desires on the other party	[1], [2], [3]
Avoiding	Ignoring the conflict between one's desires and those of the other party	[1], [2], [3], [4]
<b>Sources:</b> [1] - (De Church et al., 2007); [2] - (Parry et al., 2008); [3] - (Koc, 2010); [4] - (Saeed et al., 2014);		

205

206

## 207 **Methodology**

208 This section describes the methodology that **was** followed to achieve the goal of this  
209 research, including the research approach, strategy, data collection techniques, and the  
210 analysis method.

### 211 ***Research approach***

212 The research approach can be defined as embodying data collection and organising  
213 research tasks (Thurairajah *et al.*, 2006). Saunders *et al.* (2019) have categorised the  
214 research approaches as deduction, induction, and abduction. In the logic of deduction, the  
215 conclusion must also be true when the premises are true, while in the inductive approach,  
216 conclusions are drawn from premises that have not been tested using known premises  
217 (Flick, 2018; Saunders *et al.*, 2019; Folger & Stein, 2016). The abduction approach is a  
218 mixture of deduction and induction approaches (Elshamly, 2013; Folger & Stein, 2016).  
219 Though this study is based on the conflict management of ICJVs, it is necessary to test  
220 the presumptions based on the interrelationships of the conflicts. Therefore, the abductive  
221 approach was selected for this study as it builds a concept, a theory, or an idea that can  
222 understand the act of representing data while explaining.

223 A methodological choice is made based on the research problem (Yoshikawa *et al.*  
224 *et al.*, 2008). Methodological choices include quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods  
225 (Gray, 2019). The quantitative method is the process of using the reports and evidence  
226 gathered to find the data, while the qualitative research method is best suited for the  
227 evaluation of social, attitudinal, and behavioural conditions (Naoum, 2007). The mixed  
228 method is a mixture of both qualitative and quantitative methods (Johnson &  
229 Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Through this study, we considered the social, attitudinal, beliefs,  
230 and behaviours by qualifying the conflicts in the ICJVs. Thus, according to Naoum (2007)  
231 and Ritchie *et al.* (2013), the qualitative method can be justified for this research to  
232 discuss the research problem. Furthermore, it has been accessed to quantify the uses and  
233 practicalities of conflict management strategies in the industry. Hence, as revealed by  
234 Naoum (2007), the qualitative method is also applicable. Based on the above justification,  
235 this study followed a mixed methodology to achieve its aim.

### 236 ***Research strategy***

237 A research strategy is used to systematically resolve the identified research problem by  
238 stating the methodology (Creswell, 2013; Saunders *et al.*, 2009). The appropriate research

239 strategy is always determined by the research approach chosen, the type of research  
 240 problem, the degree of influence of the investigator over actual behaviour and actions,  
 241 and the extent to which current situations are affected (Saunders *et al.*, 2009; Yin, 2014).  
 242 The survey strategy, which is used for social and physiological research (Singleton &  
 243 Straits, 2017), was selected for this study from strategies like archival research,  
 244 experiments, and case studies, as this study is also based on the social matter of conflict  
 245 management in ICJVs.

#### 246 ***Data collection***

247 Initially, the study required collecting data based on the ICJVs. Hence, there was a  
 248 necessity for having a large sample to collect data. Therefore, as the first stage of data  
 249 collection, a questionnaire survey was conducted. Purposive sampling was used for the  
 250 questionnaire survey as it was responded to through an online platform only by  
 251 professionals with knowledge of ICJV. However, the questionnaire was distributed to 146  
 252 professionals in the industry, considering the knowledge of ICJV projects as the  
 253 benchmark, and received valid responses from 78 of them. Interviews are most suitable  
 254 for data collection when the research question pertains to technical and process  
 255 knowledge (Litting & Pochhacker, 2014). Thus, expert interviews are ideal for examining  
 256 the impact of conflict in the ICJV project environment and its management principles.  
 257 Therefore, interviews were conducted as the second stage of data collection with the  
 258 experts in projects carried out through JV from 2015 to 2020, and it was limited to six  
 259 interviews due to the data saturation. Moreover, the snowball sampling method was used  
 260 to select interviewees as it is a non-random sampling method (Johnson, 2014). The  
 261 profiles of the questionnaire respondents and the interviewees are represented in the  
 262 following Table 5.

263 ***Table 5: Profile of questionnaire respondents and the interviewees***

<b>Questionnaire respondents</b>			
<b>Variable</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
	Project Manager	2	2.56%
	Engineer	24	30.77%
<b>Current Designation</b>	Quantity Surveyor	35	44.87%
	Architect	14	17.95%

	Facility Manager	3	3.85%
<b>Interviewees</b>			
<b>Details</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Industry Experience</b>	<b>Type of Organization</b>
<b>IA</b>	Senior QS and Claim Specialist	28 years	Consultant
<b>IB</b>	Senior QS and Claim Specialist	23 years	Consultant
<b>IC</b>	Senior QS	15 years	Consultant
<b>ID</b>	Senior Architect	20 years	Contractor
<b>IE</b>	Senior QS	10 years	Contractor
<b>IF</b>	Senior QS	11 years	Client

264 ***Data analysis: Quantitative data analysis***

265 According to Newton and Rudestam (2007), the detailed analysis was performed using  
 266 Excel functions, taking advantage of the convenience and success of quantitative  
 267 research. Therefore, the data from the questionnaire survey was analysed under this  
 268 method. Mainly, the Weighted Mean rating (WMR) value was used to analyse the  
 269 quantitative data.

$$270 \quad WMR = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^5 (xi \times fi)}{n}$$

271 WMR = Weighted Mean Rating

272  $xi$  = Response for the attributes

273  $n$  = Total number of respondents

274  $fi$  = Frequency of responses to the attribute considered (from 1 to 5)

276 ***Data analysis: Qualitative data analysis***

277 Expert interview data was analysed through qualitative data analysis methods. Under the  
 278 qualitative approach, the collected data content is firstly analysed and then encoded into  
 279 word groups (Perry, 2001). Content analysis is used to accurately process quality data so

280 that the data obtained for test purposes is well organised (Langos, 2014). The content  
281 analysis was done manually by the researcher because of the ease of organising and  
282 managing the data found through qualitative approaches and the need for a thorough data  
283 analysis.

## 284 **Research Findings and Discussion**

### 285 *Suitability of ICJVs in Sri Lanka*

286 As per the findings of the expert interviews, it is evident that the unanimous opinion of  
287 all participants was that ICJV projects were suitable for Sri Lanka. The questionnaire  
288 survey confirmed this idea with 93.5% of responses. Moreover, in literature findings,  
289 Wijewardana *et al.* (2013) revealed that the ICJV could be used as a procurement method  
290 in the Sri Lankan construction industry. As revealed by the empirical evidence, the  
291 disadvantages of ICJV projects that start with gaining foreign knowledge, technology,  
292 and many other can be prevented by a proper agreement. Though there are shortcomings  
293 in the ICJV agreement, the foreign party is keen to take advantage of those gaps, and it is  
294 the responsibility of the local party to ensure that they do not. In addition, the content of  
295 the parties' agreement is critical as it is the key to finding a legal remedy for a problem.  
296 Thus, projects that are carried out on a proper contract basis are suitable for Sri Lanka.

### 297 *Most favourable project type for ICJVs in Sri Lanka*

298 When summarising the findings of the interviews related to this matter, ICJV projects  
299 were found to be best suited for large-scale building construction that requires a high level  
300 of knowledge and technology with returns. Further verifying this, 66.67% of the  
301 questionnaire survey respondents found that the ICJV concept was suitable for large-scale  
302 complex projects. Visible examples of this have been found in previous studies, such as  
303 the Hambantota Port project, which was constructed through the JV between CMPort and  
304 the Sri Lankan Government (Moramudali, 2017). NTPC of India entered into a JV with  
305 CEB to carry out power plant projects. In addition to those, expressways, Colombo port  
306 city, and most of the large-scale infrastructure are carried out by the IJVs (Oxford  
307 Business Group, 2016). Today, the ICJV concept is used not only for large-scale complex  
308 projects but also for rural projects. Hence, through literature, the Integrated Road  
309 Investment Program (iRoad)-II (2020) has explored that the majority of iRoad in Sri  
310 Lanka, which is funded by the ADB during 2017–2021, is carried out through the IJVs.

### 311 *Benefits and the drawbacks of ICJVs*

312 Six benefits and five drawbacks of IICVVs have been identified in the literature (refer to  
313 Table 1 and Table 2). Additionally, by analysing the questionnaire and interview findings,  
314 four main benefits and two main drawbacks of ICJVs emerged. The ranking of the  
315 benefits and the drawbacks is illustrated in Table 6 with the literature references. As per  
316 the analysis, when choosing a foreign company for a JV, local companies can gain more  
317 benefits by selecting a company with a high reputation.

318 *Table 6: Ranking of benefits and the drawbacks of the ICJVs*

<b>Benefit</b>	<b>WMR Value</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Literature Source</b>
Sharing technology	4.78	1	[1], [4]
Risks sharing	4.69	2	[1], [2]
Ability to share resources	4.63	3	[5]
A door for entering the new market	4.60	4	[8], [9]
Encourage innovations	3.29	5	[3]
Enhanced commitment	3.09	6	[6], [7]
<b>Sources:</b> [1] – (Chen & Sheng, 2013); [2] - (Adnan et al., 2012); [3]- (Mohamed et al., 2019); [4]- (Gale & Luo, 2004); [5]- (Minja et al., 2013); [6]- (Chuang & Thomson, 2016); [7]- (Panico, 2016); [8]- (Jamil et al., 2008); [9]- (Klijn et al., 2010).			
<b>Drawbacks</b>	<b>WMR Value</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Literature Source</b>
The difficulty for the senior management in creating the right working philosophy throughout the ICJVs	4.26	1	[1], [2], [3], [4]
Difficult to control	4.10	2	[4], [5]
Lack of Trust	3.35	3	[6], [7]
Differences in operating procedures	3.24	4	[9]
Lack of clear objectives	3.10	5	[8]
<b>Sources:</b> [1] - (Adnan et al., 2012); [2] - (Huang, 2003); [3] - (Gaughan, 2017); [4] - (Shelar & Konnur, 2017); [5] - (Mantecon, et al., 2015); [6] - (Beamish & Lupton, 2009); [7] - (Bashir, et al., 2019); [8] - (Panico, 2016), [9] - (Kathawala, 2001)			

### 319 *Factors affecting conflicts in ICJVs*

320 The literature review identified twelve causes of conflict in ICJVs (refer to Table  
321 3). In the questionnaire survey, seven of them emerged as the leading causes, as ranked  
322 in Table 7 and further explained in the interviews. In addition, two other causes were  
323 found in the questionnaire survey, which were "different approaches in the application  
324 used by specific professionals" and "financial and economic difficulties in the local  
325 venture". The common occurrence is that there is a big cultural difference between Sri

326 Lanka and foreign countries, which was confirmed in interviews. In the literature  
 327 findings, Adnan et al. (2012) state that although the higher management tries to reduce  
 328 this cultural gap, the majority of members are reluctant to change, and they may protest  
 329 strongly. According to Ozorhon and Hasan (2017), ultimately, the high cultural gap may  
 330 increase conflicts and misunderstandings between the partners. The interviewees  
 331 suggested that to deal with this situation, all parties should make an extra effort and show  
 332 flexibility.

333 According to Alazemi and Mohiuddin (2019), communication is the life rope in  
 334 projects, as all projects begin and end with communication. Furthermore, Alazemi and  
 335 Mohiuddin (2019) identified poor communication as a cause of conflict. Like that, several  
 336 other unfortunate aspects of poor communication were highlighted in the interviews as  
 337 well. The adverse effects of claims and EIs commonly used in the construction industry  
 338 were further explained by the interviewees. As per the further discussion, communication  
 339 problems could be avoided by using a common language and common law that all parties  
 340 could handle well and by having the agreement in that form.

341 During the interviews, several factors were identified to consider when selecting  
 342 a foreign party for a JV. Interviewees emphasised that it is more important to choose the  
 343 right party first than to choose the wrong party and then get into conflicts. Interviewees  
 344 revealed that many problems that may arise in future projects could be prevented by a  
 345 proper agreement. Therefore, all parties should pay attention to the contents of the  
 346 agreement and how it should be implemented. The other issue discussed in the interviews  
 347 was the contribution of top management. The common suggestion was that when a  
 348 dispute arises, immediate solutions should be sought, and it should be prevented from  
 349 exuberating into a conflict. Interviewers further elaborated that the use of a dispute  
 350 resolution mechanism is very much appropriate for this. Besides, there must be a mutual  
 351 agreement on that mechanism because, according to Karim and Danuri (2014), a lack of  
 352 mutual understanding of conflict management mechanisms is also a major challenge for  
 353 JV.

354 **Table 7: Ranking of the factors affecting conflicts in ICJVs**

Causes of Conflict	WMR Value	Rank	Literature Source
Unequal equity- unequally resources sharing	4.56	1	[1]
Culture barriers	4.50	2	[5], [7], [8], [9]
Uneven commitment	4.46	3	[3]
Failure to manage the risks	4.21	4	[4], [5]



Relationship problems - Lack of good relationships	4.14	5	[3]
Communication problems	4.14	5	[3], [10], [11]
Inefficient problem solving	3.72	7	[3]
Dissimilarities of goals	3.69	8	[2]
Lack of continuous improvement	3.64	9	[3]
Distrust	3.42	10	[5], [6]
Dishonourable relationship	3.26	11	[3]
Inadequate training	3.18	12	[3], [12]
<b>Sources:</b> [1] - (Barden et al. 2005); [2] - (Bashir, et al., 2019); [3] - (Adnan et al., 2012); [4] - (Mcintosh & McCabe, 2003); [5] - (Adnan et al.,2012); [6] - (Ali, 2013); [7] - (Slangen & van Tulder, 2009); [8] - (Ozorhon & Hasan, 2017); [9] - (Nguyen, 2011); [10] - (Alazemi & Mohiuddin, 2019); [11] - (Wasiu et al., 2018); [12] - (Lu et al., 2020)			

### 355 ***Favourable conflicts management strategies in ICJVs***

356 In this study, five conflict management strategies were identified (refer to Table 4) and  
357 investigated for their suitability for the SL context through the questionnaire survey. Here,  
358 it was concluded that collaborating and compromising were more appropriate and  
359 accommodating while competing and avoiding were unfavourable to use for conflict  
360 management in ICJVs. Accordingly, identified conflict management strategies are  
361 described as follows:

#### 362 • **Collaborating - Looking for a way to satisfy the desires of both parties** 363 **simultaneously**

364 According to IC, "*this is the most effective method. When there is a problem between the*  
365 *two parties, decisions should be made flexibly. Arbitrary decisions can cause additional*  
366 *issues, or they can complicate matters.*" Furthermore, the IB emphasised that "*since the*  
367 *parties enter into agreements for a common purpose, it should be given priority.*  
368 *Therefore, it is crucial to solve problems collaboratively. Otherwise, the main goal of*  
369 *ICJV may be damaged.*" Explaining the responsibility of the local party, ID emphasised,  
370 "*when selecting a company for a project, it is the responsibility of the local party to*  
371 *choose the appropriate company. However, it is not brilliant to expect a collaborative*  
372 *response from a foreign company that does not fit into the project. Thus, if a party hopes*  
373 *to solve problems collaboratively, it is crucial to choose a suitable company.*" Further,  
374 respondents also highlighted that reputation is essential to managing conflicts  
375 collaboratively.

376 • **Compromising- Offering partial acceptance of the other party's desires in**  
 377 **return for partial endorsement of one's desires**

378 All the interviewees agreed that compromising was the best strategy if strategy  
 379 collaboration could not be implemented. According to IC, "*collaborating tactics are the*  
 380 *best, but it is not always practical. Solutions that meet 100% of the needs of both parties*  
 381 *are rare. Often, even when agreements are for a common purpose, the personal*  
 382 *aspirations of the parties vary.*" Pointing out the value of this strategy instead of  
 383 competing, IE emphasized, "*it is unbelievable that a project flows smoothly that meets*  
 384 *everyone's needs. Then it's best to shift from collaborating to strategy compromising.*"

385 ID explained this strategy further as "*if the foreign party cannot stay in Sri Lanka,*  
 386 *they can go to another country. Thus, local companies are increasingly using this tactic*  
 387 *as they must survive in Sri Lanka. Foreign companies also use these tactics when they*  
 388 *intend to continue to be involved in projects in Sri Lanka. Then, they strategically use*  
 389 *these strategies to protect the reputation of the company".* Therefore, companies  
 390 strategically use these strategies for conflict management with prospects in mind.

391

392 • **Appoint a team to provide immediate solutions**

393 According to IC, "*highly trained, competent, and experienced staff from a local JV*  
 394 *partner should be involved in the day-to-day conflicts' management at the site. They*  
 395 *should be individuals with good communication skills and authorized/empowered*  
 396 *individuals who can bring a sense of ownership of the project from the local JV partner's*  
 397 *side".* IC further stated that "*if the local party does not participate in this, the foreign*  
 398 *company team may try to act selfishly.*"

399 • **Dispute Adjudication Board (DAB)/ Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)**

400 IA and IB identified DAB and ADR as conflict management strategies. According to  
 401 them, following the contractual procedure is the best way to resolve conflicts.  
 402 Furthermore, IA stated, "*often when entering into commercial agreements, the parties*  
 403 *include conflict management mechanisms. DAB and ADR occupy a prominent place*  
 404 *among them. The agreement clearly and explicitly states each other's rights. Then, there*  
 405 *will be no injustice to either party. The charges against the answer may be minimised as*  
 406 *a result.*" IB also stated that "*professionals with specialised knowledge are involved in*  
 407 *resolving conflicts based on DAB and ADR. These professionals work independently and,*  
 408 *therefore, can manage conflicts fairly.*"

409 • **Litigation**

410 IA stated, "*conflicts are often caused by a breach of contract. In such a case, the innocent*  
 411 *party can seek a legal remedy. In addition, this action can be used to challenge a solution*  
 412 *provided by another route. Due to the judicial process, the answer is fair and*  
 413 *independent, and the parties must agree to it". "The parties should try to resolve a conflict*  
 414 *amicably," IB said, while highlighting the unsuitability of legal remedies as the first step.*  
 415 *If that is not possible, "they can only find legal solutions because this takes a lot of time*  
 416 *and money. Also, good relationships between partners can be damaged. Therefore, the*  
 417 *parties should be cautious about the consequences before going to court."*

418 ***Unfavourable conflicts management strategies in ICJVs***

419 The questionnaire findings have analysed three of the identified strategies that are  
 420 unfavourable to the ICJVs' conflict management. Hence, those were further discussed as  
 421 below in the interviews.

422 • **Accommodating (Yielding to the desires of the other party)**

423 All the interviewees highlighted that the accommodating approach has many  
 424 disadvantages. According to IF, "*often volatile local companies engage with a foreign*  
 425 *company to stabilize. Then the local company has to bow down to all the decisions of the*  
 426 *foreign company". Explaining a similar sad situation, IC stated, "Because they are not in*  
 427 *a position to make suggestions, the views of the local side can be better. Thus, they are*  
 428 *overwhelmed by the authority of the foreign party. Perhaps, this will make the local*  
 429 *company worse off than it is now". Completing the gap here, IA stated, "a reputable*  
 430 *company often does not use this approach. They always listen to the other side. Therefore,*  
 431 *caution should be exercised in selecting a foreign party. The local party needs to look at*  
 432 *the conflict management strategies they have previously used." According to IB,*  
 433 *"frequent use of this approach by the foreign party can cause a loss of the local party's*  
 434 *confidence. As a result, the productivity of that staff can be very low."*

435 • **Competing (Attempting to impose one's desires on the other party)**

436 IC and IF identified competing as the worst conflict management strategy. The other  
 437 interviewees also did not agree that this method was suitable for the ICJVs. IC mentioned  
 438 that "*it is never good to use this approach as this method is used for personal purposes."*  
 439 *Competing is not good for the common goal. As a result, in the end, the common purpose*  
 440 *is destroyed." IF also stated that "this can happen when agreements are made without a*

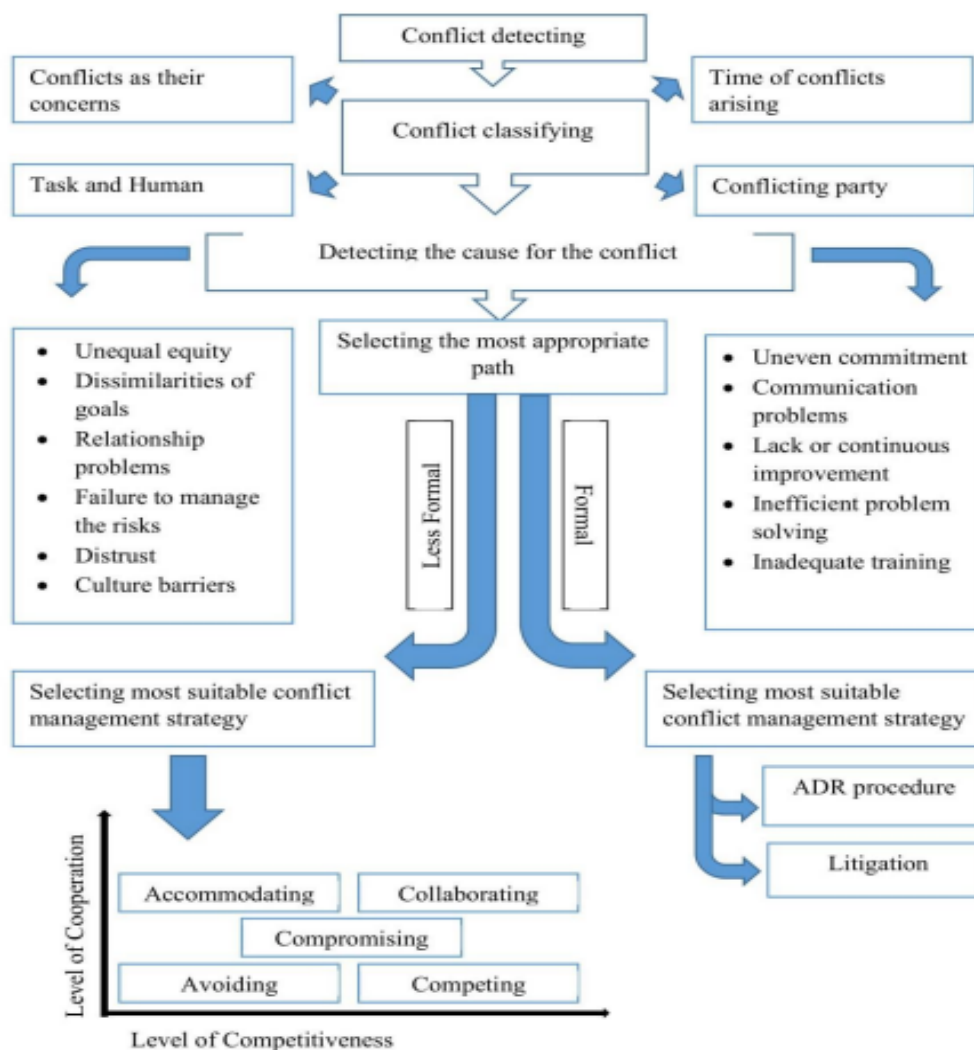
441 *basic understanding. In a way, this is like an act in the animal world. That is, the strongest*  
 442 *person wins, and the weakest person becomes helpless. Therefore, this approach is not*  
 443 *suitable for a civilised society."*

444 • **Avoiding (Ignoring the conflict between one's desires and those of the other**  
 445 **party)**

446 All interviewees agreed that avoiding tactics is inappropriate for resolving ICJV conflicts.  
 447 According to IA, "these types of strategies are used by inexperienced companies." Further  
 448 to IA, "*Experienced companies know the consequences of avoiding problems. This often*  
 449 *happens the first time a foreign company is doing a project in Sri Lanka through a JV*".  
 450 As a supplement, IF stated, "*conflict in an ICJV project is like cancer. Healing is easy at*  
 451 *first but becomes very complicated later. Eventually, these could end up in lawsuits.*  
 452 *Therefore, the solution should be without hesitation.*" Citing one appropriate occasion,  
 453 IB stated, "*This method may work in some conflicts. For example, conflicts are solved by*  
 454 *time. It is practically impossible to find answers to every question. So, this is not 100%*  
 455 *inappropriate. The important thing here is to identify the conflict. This requires a lot of*  
 456 *JV-related experience."*

#### 457 ***The guideline to select suitable conflict management strategies for ICJVs***

458 The guideline in Figure 1 demonstrates the path for selecting the most appropriate conflict  
 459 management strategy in ICJVs, which was achieved through the literature review and  
 460 analysis. Thus, before applying strategies, conflict identification, conflict classification,  
 461 and conflict causes must be identified. The types of conflicts and causes of conflicts  
 462 identified in literary findings are used for this guideline. Here, the strategy travels along  
 463 two main paths, with the informal route being the one that saves time and money.  
 464 Collaboration and compromising have been identified as strategies to be trained along  
 465 that path. These solutions are difficult to enforce under the law. Conflicts that cannot be  
 466 resolved through the informal route can be resolved through the formal route. In the  
 467 formal route, the ADR should be chosen first and then the litigation. However, those  
 468 solutions are legally enforceable, even if they cost a lot of money and time. Thus, the  
 469 nature of the conflict should determine the path to take.



470

471 *Figure 1: Guideline to select suitable conflict management strategy in ICJVs*472 **Conclusions and Way forward**

473 The current literature has recognised that recognising disputes early on and executing  
 474 appropriate conflict management methods are critical for both domestic and foreign  
 475 enterprises to thrive in a JV collaboration. Therefore, this study is intended to fill a  
 476 knowledge vacuum in the Sri Lankan context by examining acceptable conflict  
 477 management tactics for ICJVs in Sri Lanka. Other than that, this study contributed to  
 478 knowledge by identifying the concepts of ICJVs, conflicts in ICJVs, and conflict  
 479 management strategies. Additionally, the study intends to investigate the importance of  
 480 ICJVs in general and with reference to Sri Lanka, while exploring the causes of conflicts  
 481 and their impact on the ICJVs. As a result, this study suggested formal and informal  
 482 conflict management solutions for ICJV projects, which will aid in the selection of  
 483 appropriate conflict management strategies for ICJVs. Collaboration and compromise

484 were recognised as the best options for informal remedial action. However, if adequate  
 485 resources are available and the conflict is complicated, the ADR path and, finally,  
 486 litigation were recognised as suitable. This study also indicated that when engaging in  
 487 ICJVs, parties must have a formal written agreement and a shared dispute management  
 488 process in place since it is vital to pursue legal remedies when any condition is violated.  
 489 As the final output, a guideline for selecting appropriate conflict management strategies  
 490 for ICJVs in Sri Lanka (Figure 1) was developed, to provide basic guidance for  
 491 construction professionals to manage possible conflicts in IJCVs. This study recommends  
 492 prioritise collaborative conflict management as it will give solutions that are suited for all  
 493 parties during the shortest period of time with the use of the minimum amount of  
 494 resources. This study, like any empirical research, has limitations. As a result, this  
 495 analysis was restricted to joint venture projects in the Sri Lankan construction industry.  
 496 However, the conclusions of this study can be extrapolated to other emerging economies  
 497 with similar socioeconomic, demographic, or cultural characteristics.

498

499

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