

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND BANK FINANCING IN MALAYSIA: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW INCORPORATING INTERNATIONAL STUDIES



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ABSTRACT

Abandoned housing projects remain a long-standing issue in Malaysia, affecting buyers, developers, and financial institutions. Although various studies have examined their legal, financial, and administrative dimensions, the research landscape remains fragmented, and the role of Islamic finance in addressing these problems remains insufficiently explored. This study addresses this gap through a systematic review of peer-reviewed research to map the main areas of discussion, patterns of methodologies, and emerging issues related to abandoned housing projects. The purpose of this study is to identify emerging issues and proposed solutions highlighted in Islamic finance research on abandoned housing projects from 2023 to 2025; determine the frequency and percentage distribution of the major research areas discussed between 2015 and 2022; and examine the most commonly used research methodologies in previous studies. This review analyses 30 peer-reviewed journal articles retrieved from Google Scholar. The data, although qualitative, were quantified into frequencies and percentages to classify the thematic areas and methodological choices of existing studies. The results show that 40% of the articles discuss causes of abandonment, 16.7% examine impacts on stakeholders, and 20% focus on potential solutions. Qualitative approaches dominate the literature, with 56.7% using document analysis predominantly. 30% of the articles use quantitative methods with descriptive statistical Analysis or the analytical hierarchy process and only 13.3% use mixed methods. Between 2023 and 2025, none of the reviewed studies link Islamic finance to abandoned housing projects. The significant findings further show that research remain concentrated on economic, legal, and managerial factors, with Islamic finance perspectives largely absent despite their conceptual relevance to risk mitigation and consumer protection.

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INTRODUCTION

According to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHLG, 2024), a total of 505 delayed or “sick” projects have affected around 31,000 consumers, while 117 housing projects have been officially classified as abandoned since 2023. As of September 2025, the government has taken measures to resolve the issue. However, the number of abandoned housing projects recorded at 107 affected more than 15,000 homebuyers and involved 29,587 housing units (Kaur, 2025). The majority of those impacted belong to the low- and middle-income groups. This issue remains unsolved and requires further research to provide a practical solution framework.

Malaysia has played a significant role in championing Islamic finance since 1983 with the establishment of its first Islamic bank, Bank Islam Malaysia Berhad (Hassan, 2006). With Government support, the banking system has progressed and expanded steadily. Islamic Finance (IF) is a system that adheres to Islamic law (*sharia*) and Islamic jurisprudence (Moisseron, Moschetto & Teulon, 2015). In Malaysia, many mainstream financial institutions have embraced Islamic finance by offering a wide range of Shariah-compliant products and services, as reflected in recent reports from Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM, 2024). In recent years, Islamic finance has experienced substantial growth in the financial sector, primarily driven by the household segment, which accounts for 63.5% of total Islamic financing. This household financing growth is attributed mainly to Islamic home financing and motor vehicle financing (Ministry of Finance Malaysia, 2025). This highlights the importance of home financing in driving Islamic financing growth. Thus, it underscores the need to assess how Islamic finance can contribute to a solution framework in addressing housing project abandonment.

Previous research has examined the interplay between Islamic Finance and abandoned housing projects. Project abandonment has negatively impacted market prices and property values (Bayuo et al., 2024). In recent years, scholars in

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Islamic finance have increasingly examined issues related to the housing finance system, particularly abandoned projects and consumer behavior (Thaker, 2025; Syed Noh & Nazri, 2024; binti Abarahan et al., 2021). As highlighted by Salami et al. (2022), research in Islamic finance can be classified into four main categories based on the stakeholders addressed in the methodology:

Islamic scholars who draw upon the Qur'an, Hadith, and Fiqh; research methodologists; market investors who make informed investment decisions; and reviewers who evaluate and promote standardized practices.

Using a systematic literature review, this study consolidates fragmented research on housing abandonment and Islamic Finance, identifies research gaps, and offers comprehensive insights toward more sustainable, practical solutions (Mengist et al., 2020). The research focuses on the trend of research in abandoned housing projects in light of Islamic finance. Therefore, conducting a systematic review is essential to examine past research trends and derive informed conclusions from the analyses.

This paper aims to identify research trends in abandoned housing projects in Malaysia, primarily in light of Islamic Finance, from 2015 to 2025. In addition, relevant international studies are incorporated to provide a broader context and strengthen critical understanding. The reviews of the articles were based on identifying the areas of research, the most frequently employed methodologies, and the research instruments. Finally, the researcher examined the key findings of the selected articles, focusing on the causes and impacts of abandoned housing projects, particularly on the stakeholders involved, with an emphasis on homebuyers.

In addition, the solution and efforts to address the issue were identified and discussed as the main themes of the Analysis. Given the study's focus, this research aims to address the following questions.

What are the emerging issues and proposed solutions highlighted in Islamic finance research on abandoned housing projects from 2023 to 2025? What is the frequency and percentage distribution of the main areas of discussion related to abandoned housing projects from 2015 to 2022? What are the most commonly used research methodologies and instruments applied in the previous research?

The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 reviews extant literature; Section 3 outlines the methodology; Section 4 presents results and discussion; and Section 5 concludes with implications for researchers, practitioners, and regulators.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of the housing abandonment project remains critical in Malaysia. It not only impacts homebuyers but also other stakeholders, including banks, developers, and the government. Efforts have been made to address the issue, yet the issue remains significant in the current housing development system. Islamic banks, as financial intermediaries for developers and homebuyers, may play a significant role in addressing the issue through their unique products and facilities. The discussion opens the door to highlighting the role of Islamic banks in addressing the issue. This literature review discusses abandoned housing projects with particular attention to the role of Islamic finance.

Definition of Abandoned Housing Projects

The issue of abandoned housing projects is widespread in Malaysia. Mac-Barango (2017) defines an abandoned project as one that is completely abandoned or delayed relative to project schedules. Additionally, Abdul-Rahman et al. (2018) define an abandoned project as one in which the house units are not ready for occupation. As stated in Kunasekaran (2024), the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHLG) defines an abandoned project as one that has failed to be completed within the period stipulated in the Sales and Purchase Agreement (SPA) and where construction has ceased for at least six consecutive months, or when other serious financial or legal issues arise on the developer's part such as a winding-up petition or a written admission by the developer, indicating their inability to complete the project. As of October 2024, the number of abandoned projects remains high at 113, with more than 300 sick housing projects (MHLG, 2024). This indicates that the issue requires a practical framework that involves stakeholders at multiple levels.

Role of Islamic Banks in Addressing Abandonment

Islamic home financing is governed by Shariah principles that prohibit *riba* (interest) and promote risk-sharing, ethical transparency, and asset-backed transactions. Rather than lending money, Islamic banks use trade- or lease-based contracts, such as *Bai' Bithaman Ajil* (BBA), *Musharakah Mutanaqisah* (MM), or *Tawarruq*, to facilitate home purchases. Thus, exploring the potential of Islamic financing products is crucial to the home financing market. When a housing project is abandoned, financial institutions, including Islamic banks, often continue to demand repayment from homebuyers under the terms of the original financing agreement, such as BBA (Md Dahlan & Aljunid, 2011). This practice is rooted in the legal structure of Islamic financing, in which the contractual obligation to repay is triggered upon execution of the agreement, rather than upon physical delivery of the financed property. For example, in contracts such as BBA or *Tawarruq*, once the bank disburses funds and the sale transaction is completed, the homebuyer is legally bound to begin repayments even if the property remains incomplete or undelivered.

A significant challenge arises when the property remains abandoned and thus unmarketable. In such cases, banks are unable to recover the disbursed funds through foreclosure or auction, as the asset lacks both market value and legal transferability. Moreover, Islamic financing arrangements often involve the purchase and sale of Shariah-compliant commodities to facilitate the financing process (Abdull Manaf et al., 2017), rather than directly linking the house itself as the underlying asset. This structural feature limits the bank's ability to enforce collateral recovery, further complicating matters in the case of project failure (Mohamad, 2020; Md Dahlan, 2019). Given these compounded risks, efficient risk assessment mechanisms are critical to safeguard the interests of banks and their stakeholders.

One potential risk mitigation measure is the adoption of takaful (Islamic insurance) or project-based insurance schemes to protect both financial institutions and homebuyers against construction-related risks (Md Dahlan & Aljunid, 2011). However, the current implementation of such mechanisms in Malaysia remains underdeveloped and is not mandated by law. In addition to insurance solutions, there is a pressing need to reevaluate the structure and terms of Islamic home financing agreements to better protect customers in cases of project abandonment or non-delivery of homes.

Previous Research on Abandoned Housing Projects

In recent years, research on abandoned housing projects has focused more on the causes and impacts of abandonment on the parties involved. Factors such as financial, management, and regulation issues are often highlighted as the main contributors to housing abandonment (Aldhamad & Rezouki, 2020; Md Zabri & Haron, 2019; Ariffin et al., 2018a; Al-Ageeli & Alzobaee, 2016; Lukonga, 2015). Additionally, the impact of housing abandonment affects various stakeholders in housing development, including the developer (Zuhairi et al., 2024), the buyer, the government, and the financial institution involved (Salami et al., 2022).

Additionally, Ariffin et al. (2018b) and Amoa-Abban (2017) discuss the significant socio-economic and environmental repercussions for the country. The socio-economic consequences include unemployment, decline in property values, land underutilisation, community displacement, and financial burdens shifting between the private and public sectors. Meanwhile, the environmental impacts include visual degradation, landscape disruption, soil erosion, biodiversity loss, and increased pollution.

A few solutions have been recommended by previous research. Thaker (2025) proposes the Integrated Abandoned Housing Project Crowdfunding Model (IAHPCM), and Ariffin et al. (2024) suggest using developer community cooperation funds as a viable alternative financing solution to address developers' financial constraints. Sirau et al. (2024) emphasize the developers' critical success factors in addressing management issues. Chen et al. (2022) explore the viability of rescue mechanisms in the Companies Act 2016 to facilitate the rehabilitation of abandoned housing projects in Peninsular Malaysia. Moreover, Razak et al. (2015) proposed the 'Diminishing Partnership' model as a potential solution to the issue of housing project abandonment.

Md Dahlan (2024) finds that Islamic urban development planning and construction legal principles grounded in Islamic values can effectively protect public rights, especially those of homebuyers. These are the theoretical frameworks discussed in previous research that require practical implementation to address the issue.

The current housing development landscape faces several persistent challenges, including the Sell-then-Build delivery system, which allows developers to sell units prior to project completion (Mustapha, 2025), the absence of comprehensive housing development insurance (Mohamad, 2020), and insufficient regulatory safeguards to protect homebuyer rights (Md Dahlan, 2023; Rajoo, 2017). In addition, Md Dahlan (2013) highlights critical gaps in insolvency laws that affect developers, particularly when projects are abandoned. Collectively, these issues demonstrate that the problem remains unresolved and warrants further scholarly investigation.

The goal of this research is to identify, analyse, and synthesise relevant literature on this topic; provide a comprehensive, holistic view of current research; and highlight gaps. This will help future researchers to understand the topic and further the research to provide a practical framework for this issue.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study used open-access journals available on Google Scholar as the primary source of literature from 2015 to 2025. Google Scholar was utilised, as it offers broad access to scholarly publications and rapid indexing capabilities without subscription restrictions (Delgado López-Cózar et al., 2019). However, given that Google Scholar may index materials from predatory publishers, the researcher carefully screened all sources and excluded those identified in Beall's list of potential predatory journals (Richtig et al., 2018; Beall, 2016), ensuring the reliability of the references used.

This study aims to determine the directions of research on abandoned housing projects and Islamic finance by analyzing articles on the topic. Thus, a systematic review is discovered as a suitable design for this research. Systematic reviews involve a detailed, extensive plan and search strategy, using a deductive approach. It aims to reduce bias through identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing all related studies on a particular topic. Additionally, systematic reviews can include a meta-analysis component, which comprises statistical techniques to integrate data from multiple quantitative evaluations or to summarize effect sizes (Petticrew & Roberts, 2008). Other than that, systematic reviews involve identifying a research question and addressing it by summarising evidence that meets predetermined criteria.

Analysis Procedure

The data gathered from the reviewed articles were analysed based on thematic Analysis. The data were classified into several themes, including common themes in publications, research methods, and summary findings from the reviewed articles. The qualitative data were quantified and presented using frequencies and percentages for descriptive Analysis. Based on the research done by Hassan and Ibrahim (2018), the criteria considered to analyse the articles are: (i) Publication year, (ii) Authors, (iii) Research titles, (iv) Research objective, (v) Research methods, and (vi) Summary of the significant findings of the study. The primary method followed the following steps.

- To find the keywords and refine the search to 10 years or below 2025.
- Compile the search in tables and analyse the research methods and findings.
- Quantify the qualitative research method into quantitative.
- Determine the solutions or findings through illustrations.

RESULTS

Research on Islamic Finance in Abandoned Projects 2023-2025

The researcher utilised the Google Boolean symbol of (+) to narrow down the search ‘and’. Firstly, the researcher keyed in ‘Islamic Finance+abandoned projects+Malaysia 2023-2025’; and secondly, ‘Islamic Finance+abandoned projects’. The research summary is listed in Table 1. Figure 1 illustrates themes based on issues and the recommended solutions derived from the research. In general, national economic stability and financial considerations remain the central themes of discussion. However, project management and effective communication are also critical factors in ensuring the successful completion of housing projects. Most importantly, homebuyers must be well-equipped with adequate knowledge and awareness.

Table 1. List of Articles from Open-Source Web (2023-2025)

No	Author/Journal/Objectives	Topic and method	Findings	Gap in study
1	Thaker (2025) Journal Global Review of Islamic Economics and Business. Objectives Proposes the "Integrated Abandoned Housing Project Crowdfunding Model (IAHPCM)" as a viable alternative financing solution for developers.	Topic A Discourse on Abandoned Housing Projects (AHPs) and the Potential of Evidence. Qualitative Literature reviews Data Analysis Document Analysis	1. Key driver: Developers’ financial constraint. 2. Recommend a framework to mitigate financial barriers.	- Theory based on literature reviews. No previous evidence indicates the model's success rate in embedding. - Various crowdfunding platforms exist in Malaysia; however, no data or evidence is stated in this article. - Financial assistance from the banks is not discussed.
2	Md Dahlan (2024) Journal Journal of Law and Governance Objectives Demonstrate how the principles of Islamic urban development planning and construction can effectively deal with and meaningfully mitigate the negative consequences of such projects.	Topic Exploring the Issues of Abandoned Housing Projects in Malaysia: Investigating Islamic Urban Development Planning and Construction Legal Principles Qualitative Doctrinal legal research Data Analysis Legal Doctrinal Analysis	Islamic urban development , planning, and construction legal principles can effectively protect the rights of the public, including homebuyers.	- An extensive study on Islamic urban development focusing on homebuyers' rights not developers - The practicality of the The theory remains unresolved - No mention of the financing framework
3	Ariffin, Salam, Ali, Ramli, and Jamaludin (2024) Journal The Open Civil Engineering Objectives To identify and analyse the Various factors that contribute to the prevalence of abandoned housing projects in Malaysia. To propose a comprehensive set of solutions and strategies	Topic Prioritizing Solutions to Mitigate Abandoned Housing Projects: Insights from AHP Analysis in Malaysia Qualitative Extensive LR Interview Quantitative Questionnaire Data Analysis Content Analysis, Thematic Analysis, Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) Analysis	1. The primary factors identified are financial, (challenges related to funding), project participant factors, project management factors, market signals, procurement factors, and external factors. 2. The suitable solution: Should proactively seek alternative funding solutions to address their financial challenges. 3. One suggested approach is the utilisation of developer community cooperation funds.	- The concept of the alternative funding solutions remains unclear. - Theoretical-based view and lack of empirical evidence.
4	Sirau, Abidin, Yacob, and Ramli (2024) Journal Planning Malaysia Objectives Explores the challenges and critical success factors (CSFs) throughout the AHP rehabilitation life cycle	Topic Project Management Challenges and Critical Success Factors in the Rehabilitation of Abandoned Housing Projects Qualitative semi-structured interviews Data Analysis Thematic Analysis	1. Key Drive: Identified challenges include communication gaps, inadequate planning, deficient risk management, competency issues, documentation problems, and lack of accountability. 2. Key CSFs are effective decision-making, time management, team management, and the The role of project managers.	- Data drawn from interviews with project managers and the managing director. - The data needs to include metrics related to project objectives, scope, budget, and timeline, and be used to understand the root causes of failure, and not just the management of human factors.

5	Obakin, Afolami, and Akande (2024) Journal Journal of Contemporary Urban Affairs Objectives Identify the causes of abandoned housing projects in Ibadan.	Topic Causative factors of Abandoned Urban Housing Projects and Strategies for Revitalization in Ibadan, Nigeria Quantitative Questionnaire Survey Data Analysis Descriptive statistical analysis	1. Key Drive: Inflation, the death of a client, or sponsor, and bankruptcy or insolvency. 2. Key Impact: Building dilapidation, environmental decline, and urban visual displeasure. 3. Recommend effective project management for professionals and the establishment of functioning policy A stable framework and supportive for the industry.	▪ Solutions to financial issues faced by developers remain unclear ▪ Less emphasis on challenges related to the legal framework
6	Zuhairi, Zainal, Redzuan, Shamsudin, and Musa (2024) Journal International Journal of Sustainable Construction Engineering and Technology Objectives Studies contributing factors, and their impacts, and assesses their correlation relationship before developing a relationship framework.	Topic Factors and Impacts to Abandoned Housing Projects in Malaysia Quantitative Distributed questionnaire Data Analysis Descriptive statistical analysis	1. Key Drive: Financial problem, Economic condition, unfavourable government policies, inefficiency of housing delivery system and inefficiency of project management (mismanagement) 2. Impacts of the abandoned scenario in the housing provision: self-impact, economic and social effects, and environmental impact.	▪ Covered the issues caused by developers, but the challenges faced by developers remain unclear. ▪ No solutions explained ▪ Less emphasis on impact on other stakeholders
7	Md Dahlan (2023) In: Land, Property and Good Governance. Rajawali Pers Divisi Buku Perguruan Tinggi PT Raja Grafindo Persada, Depok, Indonesia Objectives Discusses the divergent principles of law decided by caselaw in Malaysia concerning the damages and remedies for the aggrieved purchasers in abandoned housing projects	Topic Claim For Damages by Aggrieved Victim Purchasers in Abandoned Housing Projects in Peninsular Malaysia Qualitative Legal research methodology Data Analysis Document Analysis	1. The aggrieved victim purchasers are entitled to specific legal and equitable remedies in respect of damages in abandoned housing projects. 2. It follows that the curative rights and interests of the aggrieved Victim purchasers are, to a certain extent, protected and secured	▪ Extensive legal study on homebuyers, but not developers and financial institutions involved ▪ The challenges in implementing the solutions are unclear
8	Ashikin and Ali (2023) Journal International Journal of Business and Technology Management Objectives Educate prospective home buyers on the impacts of abandoned housing projects.	Topic Impacts of Abandoned Housing Projects to the Home Buyers Quantitative Survey Data Analysis Descriptive statistical analysis	Home buyers were aware of the impacts of abandoned housing projects to the homebuyers	▪ No interview with homebuyers to observe their behavior and experience ▪ No measuring of the impacts on the homebuyers ▪ Less discussion of the buyers' rights in the legal framework ▪ Less discussion on the involvement of financial institutions

Main Areas of Discussion in Abandoned Housing Projects

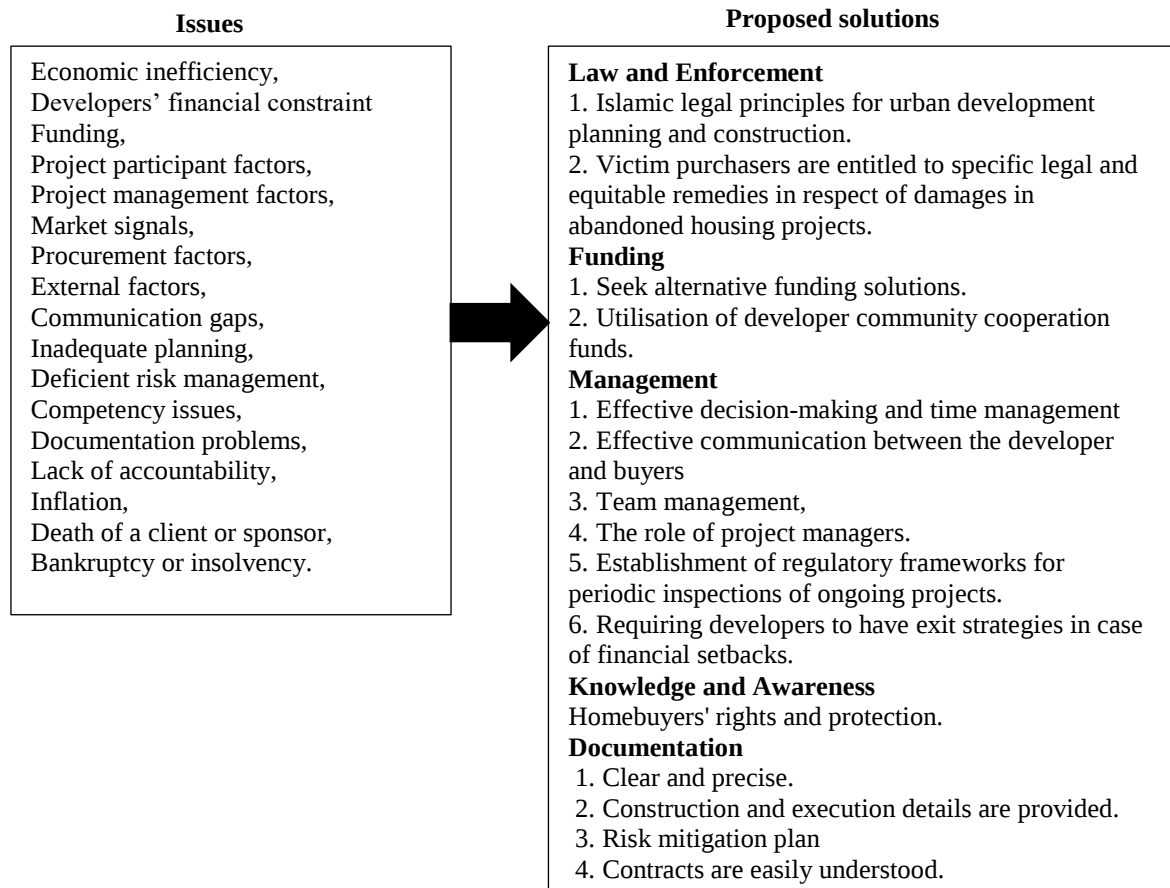


Figure 1. Themes derived from the Research of 2023-2025

Research trend of AHP 2015-2025

This study focused on 'Abandoned Housing Projects (AHP) and Islamic finance' as the primary search keywords, referencing articles published between 2015 and 2025. Based on the stated focus of study or findings, the data show that the causes and factors leading to housing project abandonment are the primary focus of the research articles (40%), with 12 of 30 articles. The subsequent category addresses the legal dimension of the issue, comprising seven articles, which represent 23.3% of the total publications. Following this, an equivalent proportion of research (six articles, or 20%) focuses on proposed solutions to housing abandonment and on challenges related to Islamic financing facilities. Finally, another significant strand of the literature (five articles, or 16.7%) examines the impact of housing abandonment on key stakeholders, including homebuyers, financial institutions, developers, government authorities, and the wider public. Table 2 provides a summary of publication frequency and percentages.

Table 2. Frequency and percentage of publications from open sources

Year 20xx	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	Freq	%
The causes of housing abandonment	-	1	2	3	-	2	-	1	1	2	-	12	40
The impacts of housing abandonment	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	2	-	-	5	16.7
Proposed solutions to the issue	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	3	1	6	20
The legal dimension of the issue	-	2	-	-	2	1	1	-	1	-	-	7	23.3

Previous research on the causes of housing abandonment has remained significant over the years. In addition, legal issues, particularly those related to homebuyer protection and project rehabilitation, continue to demand greater attention.

Research Methodologies and Instruments Employed in the Articles

This section aims to explore the most commonly used data-collection instruments across the reviewed articles. Research instruments are tools used to gather, measure, and analyse data related to the research topic. Some examples of research instruments include questionnaires, interviews, document analysis, and observations.

Research methods are techniques used to conduct research. There are three research methodologies: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods. In qualitative research methods, it is categorised in ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, and case study (Laws & McLeod, 2004).

Ethnographic relates to nationalistic, where the researcher observes and attempts to explain what is happening. Phenomenology concerns life experiences from participants' perspectives. Grounded theory requires the researcher to collect

data without any assumptions or a theory-driven approach. Based on empirical data, theory is built inductively (Partington, 2000). In contrast, explanatory research seeks to explain why and how, and to gain insight into the issue (Saunders et al., 2009). Exploratory research is based on narrative research, which highlights what is happening rather than offering solutions or a framework for practical importance. A case study involves data collected from a setting, people, program, or social group to understand a process rather than its outcome. In a case study, it can be exploratory, explanatory, phenomenological, descriptive, or grounded theory.

A manual check on Google Scholar shows that searching “housing development + banking + qualitative” produces 601,000 articles. The keyword 'qualitative' was identified from the algorithm, either in the topic or the abstract. Under the keyword “housing development+banking+quantitative”, the results show a frequency of 577,000. Thus, the qualitative research method remains popular in housing development and banking.

In qualitative research, case studies account for 363,000. The exploratory method is narrowed down to the search, and the result is approximately 68,300 papers. On the other hand, 59,700 papers are found to employ grounded theory.

From the data derived from 30 articles published between 2015 and 2025 (Table 3), the most common research method used in housing abandonment research is qualitative, accounting for 56.7% (17 out of 30 articles). This is followed by quantitative methods at 30% (9 articles), while mixed methods cover only 13.3% (4 articles).

Table 3. Frequency and Percentage of Research Methods from Scholar Open-Source Publications

Year 20xx		15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	Freq.	%
Method	Qualitative	1	1	1	5	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	17	56.7
	Quantitative	-	2	1	2	-	1	-	-	2	1	-	9	30
	Mixed-Methods	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	4	13.3

Table 4 indicates that 41% of the articles (16) employed document analysis as their primary data analysis method, focusing primarily on government reports and written publications. Eleven articles (28%) use descriptive statistical Analysis to analyse questionnaire data. 20.5% (eight articles) use thematic Analysis mainly to analyse interview data. The least used data analysis methods are content Analysis (three articles) and analytical hierarchy process analysis (one article). This shows that previous research primarily relies on documents and interviews as data instruments.

Table 4. Summary of Techniques Used for Data Analysis and Instrument from the Reviewed Articles

Data analysis and Instrument	Year 20xx	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	Freq.	%
Document Analysis: structured or written, printed, or online documents		-	1	2	5	1	2	1	2	1	1	-	16	41
Descriptive Statistical Analysis /questionnaire		-	2	2	2	-	2	-	-	2	1	-	11	28
Thematic Analysis - interview		-	1	1	2	-	1	-	-	-	2	1	8	20.5
Content Analysis: unstructured text or visual materials. Example: explore literature reviews		1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	3	7.7
Analytical Hierarchy Process Analysis (AHP): expert quality judgement and quantitative calculation.		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	2.6

DISCUSSIONS

This section provides a discussion based on four primary areas defined in this section: (i) causes of abandonment, (ii) the impact of abandonment, (iii) the proposed solutions to address the issues, and (iv) challenges in the abandonment issues.

Causes of Abandonment

The factors contributing to housing project abandonment are diverse. Abandonment typically occurs when developers are unable to complete the construction of residential projects. Among the most frequently cited causes in prior research is the financial dimension, particularly insufficient funding (Ariffin et al., 2024).

It is followed by human factors such as poor financial management by developers and unskilled laborers, and project management factors such as poor scheduling and weak supervision of the project (Zuhairi et al., 2024; Mahomed et al., 2022; Salam et al, 2020; Atamewan, 2020; Adebisi et al., 2018; Ariffin et al., 2018; Mac-Barango, 2017; Amoa-Abban, 2017). Additionally, the contributing factors for abandonment include market signals. For example, when the market is down, there would be less demand from homebuyers to purchase houses. This leads to unsold housing projects, which in turn create cash flow problems for developers. In addition, procurement-related factors such as labor shortages and rising raw material costs, along with external influences like economic recessions and changes in government construction policies, are among the key contributing factors (Ariffin et al., 2024).

Zuhairi et al. (2024) and Mikail et al. (2018) found that inefficiencies within the current housing system, particularly the ‘Sell-then-Build’ policy model, are the primary causes of project abandonment. Obakin et al. (2024) find that inflation, the death of a client or sponsor, and developers' bankruptcy are causes of abandonment. Abdul-Razak (2016) adds determinants of abandoned projects as lack of justice in the distribution of risks between banks and customers, methods of computing and pricing of Islamic banking facilities, nature of contract in which it is heavily debt-based, and lack of legal and governance from the bank's part to monitor the housing projects.

Impacts of Abandonment

The key stakeholders affected by housing abandonment include homebuyers, banks, developers, the government, and the general public. Zuhairi et al. (2024) have categorised the impacts into self-impact, including a bad reputation and significant financial losses; social and economic impacts, such as depreciation in surrounding property values and an increase in the unemployment rate; and environmental impacts, such as stagnant water and illegal garbage dumps. Ashikin and Ali (2023) examine the impacts of housing abandonment, particularly on homebuyers, and found that homebuyers are generally aware of the risks and consequences associated with such transactions.

Furthermore, Atamewan (2020) elaborates on the environmental consequences of housing abandonment, noting that it can degrade the urban landscape, leave behind unsafe and unsightly structures, and contribute to environmental pollution and health hazards. Mac-Barango (2017) further explains the economic impact of abandonment. He notes that housing abandonment results in significant losses to the national economy, as it involves substantial financial resources and represents a misuse of funds that could otherwise be allocated to more productive and profitable investments. Additionally, he states that abandonment lowers the public's standard of living by creating a scarcity of accommodation, leaving the public with limited choices at unreasonable prices.

Proposed Solutions to Abandonment

Previous researchers have proposed several solutions to address abandonment issues. Thaker (2025) has proposed the Integrated Abandoned Housing Project Crowdfunding Model (IAHPCM) as a viable financing solution for developers to address financial constraints. Md Dahlan (2024) finds that Islamic urban development planning and construction legal principles grounded in Islamic values can effectively protect the rights of the public, especially homebuyers. Ariffin et al. (2024) suggest using developer community cooperation funds to address developers' financial issues.

On the other hand, Sirau et al. (2024) emphasize the developers' critical success factors for addressing housing abandonment issues, including effective decision-making, efficient time management, strong team coordination, and the active involvement of project managers. Chen et al. (2022) have explored the viability of rescue mechanisms under the Companies Act 2016, such as corporate voluntary arrangement (CVA), judicial management (JM), and schemes of arrangement (SOA), to facilitate the rehabilitation of abandoned housing projects in Peninsular Malaysia. Finally, Razak et al. (2015) proposed the 'Diminishing Partnership' model, which involves a joint ownership structure of the asset, as a potential solution to the issue of housing project abandonment.

Challenges in Abandonment Issues

Although the problem of housing abandonment has been examined for decades, it remains a pressing concern, mainly due to persistent challenges in regulatory frameworks and financing practices. According to Md Dahlan (2024), homebuyers affected by abandoned housing projects are entitled to specific legal remedies and forms of compensation, and their rights and interests are acknowledged and safeguarded under the law. However, Md Dahlan (2021) explains in another study that the current law is insufficient to address abandonment and needs improvement and amendment. Mohamad (2020), Ariffin et al. (2019), and Haron et al. (2016) concur with Md Dahlan (2021)'s findings and emphasize greater protection of homebuyers' rights.

Furthermore, Md Dahlan (2019) notes that, despite existing laws, some irresponsible housing developers continue to engage in dishonest practices, causing irreversible harm to homebuyers. Mohd Yusof et al. (2016) examine the legal documentation involved in housing projects and found that the use of multiple agreements within a single transaction often leads to significant confusion among homebuyers. Additionally, the legal documentation does not include a remedy for homebuyers in the event the developer abandons the project and does not protect their rights.

From the perspective of financing practices, Md Dahlan (2018a) explains that the 'Musharakah Al-Mutanaqisah' Islamic home financing facility, as implemented by Islamic banks, contains inequitable contractual terms and fails to safeguard the interests of homebuyers adequately. In separate research, Md Dahlan (2018b), Md Dahlan (2018c), and Md Dahlan (2019) also conclude similar findings for *Ijarah Mausufah Fi Zimmah*, *Commodity Murabahah*, and *Bay' Bithaman Al-Ajil* facilities. Abarahan (2018) further argues that, regardless of the contract, there are no clauses, terms, or conditions that protect homebuyers, as most clauses seem to protect the bank in the event the project is abandoned. These financing products are structured in a way that transfers risks and liabilities disproportionately to homebuyers. Ultimately, these challenges need to be addressed to solve the issue.

CONCLUSIONS

This research aims to identify the areas of research, the most frequently employed methodologies, and the research instruments. Additionally, the researcher examined the key findings of the selected articles. The finding reveals that the causes and factors leading to housing project abandonment are significant areas of previous research. The most common methodology used in previous studies is qualitative, with the most frequently employed instruments being document analysis and content analysis. Prior studies have primarily focused on the causes and consequences of project abandonment, with emphasis on its economic, legal, and financial dimensions. Overall, this study has highlighted systematic categories in identifying the causes, impacts, and potential solutions to housing abandonment.

This study presents several key contributions to methodological, practical, and future research perspectives, thereby identifying apparent research gaps for further investigation. Despite efforts by relevant authorities, housing abandonment in Malaysia remains a persistent challenge that warrants further attention. This review shows that most studies have focused on the causes and impacts of abandonment, with financial constraints faced by developers emerging as the dominant factor. However, limited attention has been given to the financing mechanisms and governance structures that could prevent such

occurrences. However, the focus is on evaluating how specific Islamic finance products (e.g., Musharakah Mutanaqisah) perform in practice and protect buyers. A systematic evaluation of the contracts between banks and developers would provide valuable insights for scholars and stakeholders, helping to improve and strengthen the existing system.

From a methodological perspective, there is a shortage of empirical evidence from the viewpoints of developers, contractors, and banks. It is important to note that much of the existing literature does not adequately emphasise the challenges housing developers face in completing projects. In practice, developers often operate under strict completion timelines that do not always account for unforeseen circumstances such as prolonged rainy seasons, shortages of skilled foreign labour, and disruptions in the supply of construction materials (Halimin & Roshdi, 2024). These factors can significantly delay project progress and increase financial burdens, thereby heightening the risk of project abandonment. Furthermore, limited institutional or government support mechanisms to assist developers in completing distressed projects or rehabilitating abandoned ones remain an overlooked issue in the literature. Consequently, the current body of research provides limited insights into the operational, financial, and regulatory constraints developers face, despite their critical role in ensuring project delivery. To address these issues, a stronger emphasis on preventive strategies is required, including sustainable financing models, stricter regulatory oversight, and more balanced risk-sharing among stakeholders.

The most common instruments employed in earlier studies are document analysis and content analysis. However, these methods are often used interchangeably, despite having distinct definitions and implications. Document analysis focuses on structured and written records, whereas content analysis extends to unstructured documents and visual data. The lack of distinction in prior research reduces methodological clarity and weakens analytical rigor. Case study research is another frequently adopted approach and can be categorised as exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory. However, many studies do not clearly specify the type of case study design used, leading to ambiguity in interpreting their findings. Furthermore, most existing research does not explicitly identify or apply a theoretical framework to guide the Analysis. This absence highlights the need to establish a robust theoretical foundation to understand better the complexities of abandoned housing projects within the context of housing development and banking.

From a practical perspective, this study highlights that the findings are primarily derived from qualitative research rather than quantitative Analysis. Consequently, the scope of the results is limited, making generalisation difficult. Any future research needs to adopt a proper research methodology, specifically for assessing documents from banks and developers. Qualitative research can be enhanced by incorporating quantitative elements, such as statistical data from secondary resources that estimate homebuyer losses and the effects on each stakeholder.

For policymakers, strengthening developer monitoring, enhancing transparency in project approvals, and introducing early-warning mechanisms are essential. For practitioners, particularly banks and developers, adopting innovative financing models and fostering closer collaboration is critical. In this regard, Islamic banking instruments such as risk-sharing contracts and Shariah-compliant financing mechanisms offer promising alternatives that could reduce abandonment risks while safeguarding the interests of both financiers and homebuyers. In conclusion, resolving this persistent issue requires coordinated efforts from policymakers, practitioners, and researchers to shift from problem identification to the implementation of sustainable solutions.

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