

Safety Compliances Enhancement: Foreign Labours Behaviour in the Malaysian Construction Site

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Abstract: Foreign labours workforce has long been dominating the Malaysian construction industry at the operational level as numerous occupational safeties literatures have reflected most of construction accidents are caused by poor human behaviours. Undeniably, the existence of proper safety behaviour would influence good safety compliance among the construction foreign labours. The purpose of this study is to examine the key issues affecting the safety compliance behaviour enhancement of construction foreign labours in the Malaysian construction site. For the present research, nine case studies were conducted by using semi-structured interviews to obtain data from the informants who are mainly site safety personnel. These personnel were working very closely with the construction foreign labours. The findings of this research reveals that there are five key issues that would influence the safety compliances enhancement among the foreign labours: (1) Emotional evoke, (2) Leader as example, (3) Forerunner within the same ethnicity, (4) Supervision execution and (5) Safety prioritisation. Therefore, these key issues have proven that there is a significant relationship between the workers' behaviours and consequences of an act.

Keywords: Safety compliances, Reluctance in practising safety, Foreign labours, Construction industry, Safe workplace

INTRODUCTION

Foreign workers workforce is seen as highly important in Malaysia to achieve rapid development in the ASEAN countries. According to Najib et al. (2019), this vigorous development requires a large number of productive workforces in a safe working condition.

Nevertheless, the reluctance of local workers to work in dirty, dangerous and difficult conditions has led to high dependence on many foreign labours (Najib et al., 2019). It is undeniable that safety related issues are a complex matter in a large scope of work as non-safety compliances are considered as the main behavioural problems among construction foreign labours due to their cultural and religious diversity (Chan et al., 2017). According to Williams, Hamid and Misnan (2018), unproductive work and unsatisfactory quality of work does not only stem from the environmental factors but majorly stem from the influx of unskilled foreign workers in construction industry. Meanwhile, Zulkeflee et al. (2020) agreed that the reluctance

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of foreign workers to practise proper safety in the workplace is perceived as one of the significant factors of the increasing rate in construction accidents. Similarly, the uneducated foreign workers might have a poor understanding to safety knowledge and safety instructions which resulting in lack of understanding for risk avoidance in their scope of works (Manap, Noh and Syahrom, 2017). Zulkeflee et al. (2020) also agreed the ignorance behaviour from the construction foreign labours would trigger the increment of behavioural safety non-compliance issues in the construction site. Hence, based on the arguments, it is found that safety compliance plays an important role in creating a safe workplace. To solve these behavioural problems, which are caused by huge numbers of unskilled foreign workers, safety compliance should be adopted as one of the components that can represent the workers' behaviour in improving their personal safety and health (Chan et al., 2017).

Many researchers (Belayutham and Ibrahim, 2019; Toppazzini and Wiener, 2017; Hamid, Majid and Singh, 2008) agreed that poor safety behaviour can lead to a series of accidents at construction sites as there are a lot of literature were discussed in depth through the pattern of accidents occurrence. However, there is limited numbers of literature regarding the safety compliances and safety behaviours as compared to other industries and sectors in Malaysia (Zin and Ismail, 2012). This statement is supported by Filho and Waterson (2018) in their critical review on 2,026 publications on safety (duplicate publications were removed and a total of 135 were filtered) that were retrieved from a database. The critical review highlights that there are only six of the publications assessed on safety compliance in the construction industry, while there is only one published article in developing new approach to enhance safety compliance in construction sector and none of them were assessing safety compliance from the workers' perspective (Filho and Waterson, 2018). Hence, this study is focused on the safety compliances behaviours of construction foreign labours in the Malaysian construction site particularly from the workers' perspective towards improving their behaviours in operational, safety and health matters.

RELUCTANCES TOWARDS SAFETY COMPLIANCES

Reluctance can be defined as an act of hesitation to perform in a process due to unwillingness behaviour of a person (Ucar, 2017). Meanwhile, according to Petitta et al. (2017), safety compliances can be described as a certain action that needs to be accomplished by the workers permitting to safety and health requirements to avoid unnecessary events. It is well aware that the act of reluctances of the workers in practising safety is a part of a poor safety behaviour. Zulkeflee et al. (2020) stated that foreign labours are often seemed to neglect safety instruction or safety duty, fail in applying personal protective equipment (PPE) and practise unsafe behaviour which are commonly associated with safety non-compliances. Therefore, to minimise the likelihood of accidents and near misses in construction site, the practice of good safety behaviours among the foreign labours needs to become a norm (Zulkeflee et al., 2020). Frederick (1982, as cited in Waribo et al., 2019) has created the ABC model of attitudes which describes the behaviour of a person is influenced by three significant features: (1) Activators, (2) Behaviours and (3) Consequences.

To understand this model, the following example is applicable (as shown in Figure 1). Safety signage should act as an activator to tell workers to wear PPE in the site and the other is an activator which influences the workers to disobey as seeing others not complying to the instructions. Confronted by these contending activators, the workers will act to a certain behaviour which may lead to consequences that they would face. Before the unnecessary consequences occur, a good safety behaviour is vital to encourage safety compliances among the workers.



Figure 1. ABC model of attitudes

FOREIGN LABOURS ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS

The Department of Statistics Malaysia indicates that in 2016, Malaysia consisted of 32 million in the population with 67.7% of labour force participation rates and about 3.4% who were unemployed. The number remained unchanged until 2018 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2018). Based on the static unemployment rates, continuous efforts have been implemented by the government to create job vacancies in Malaysia by executing more development projects (Ministry of Finance, 2018). However, a huge percentage of these job vacancies went to the foreigners. Based on the statistics, in 2016, there were only 4.5% of the created job vacancies went to the foreigners but the figures increased rapidly in 2017 as approximately 64.4% of job vacancies that were created were undertaken by the foreigners (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2018). Undeniably, most of the foreign labours tend to work in the construction industry as 135,997 foreign labours were recorded in 2017. Yet, the number of foreign labours increased to 148,025 in the following year (CIDB, 2018). Based on Nordin et al. (2019), in 2018, roughly 75% of the total construction workforce in Malaysia were foreign labours which were mainly from Indonesia, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Pakistan, Nepal and other countries. Undeniably, accidents and near misses that occur in the construction sites are mostly linked with the construction foreign labours' behaviours.

Foreign workers' bad attitudes and poor behaviour would be the major problem related to safety culture issues at the construction sites (Zulkeflee et al., 2020). Most of the construction workers did not practise safety measure at the workplace due to carelessness, over-confidence, negligence and ignorance towards safety matters (Krishnamurthy, 2006; Zulkeflee et al., 2020). Yap and Lee (2020) stated that most of the foreign construction labours have poor safety

awareness due to their nature to survive in a foreign country. For instance, the foreign labours tend to neglect construction safety because they are hurdling for progresses in order to earn more for their salary (Zulkeflee et al., 2020). They added, most foreign workers think that adhering to a proper safety practices is a burden which would slow down their physical movement. The statement is further supported by Hope et al. (2022) who stated the foreign labours are often believe that their money is worth much more than spending on safety matters. Although the workers are trained to complete a job, hazards can not necessarily be avoided due to their laziness and poor mentality towards safety (Kale, 2020).

KEY ISSUES AFFECTING THE SAFETY COMPLIANCE BEHAVIOURS OF FOREIGN LABOURS

According to Zulkeflee et al. (2020), several initiatives have been implemented to reduce the rate of accidents in the construction site as there are numerous attempts to increase the level of safety compliance of foreign labours. However, critical reviews from Zin and Ismail (2012) as well as Filho and Waterson (2018) have shown that most of safety compliance literatures only covers the views from the top management perspectives. Zulkeflee et al. (2020) believed that the initiatives to improve safety compliances by the top management are crucial, but many researchers did not consider the views from the foreign labours' perspectives. There are several key issues affecting operational safety compliance behaviours of construction foreign labours that can be articulated from the foreign labours' perspective.

Personal Safety Characteristic

A personality of a person could have changed through the emotional outburst (Efimova et al., 2019). Barret and Russell (2014) argued that a simulation of anger, sadness and fear could allow an individual to act beyond his comfort to fulfil his sensation or desires. Therefore, to change one's personality to become more obedient could be achieved through emotional evoke (Barret, 2017). Moreover, Lado and Alonso (2017) stated that a person's feelings and emotional stability can influence their actions and behaviours in performing a task. This approach can be used to improve the level of safety compliance among the workers (Empel, 2019). Barret (2017) emphasised that dealing with workers emotions should be done prudently as an emotional evoke would create attentional lapse which might lead to safety non-compliance behaviours. However, their psychology or emotion is challenged if they are being reminded of any possible injury or death that would befall them (due to safety non-compliance behaviours) as no one will look after their family (Empel, 2019). Besides, Shaw, Roelofs and Punnett (2020) highlighted that if the element of fear is applied upon the workers' emotion, they will be more sensitive towards the safety compliances in the workplace. They added, most of the workers are fear of being assigned to undesirable duty, loss of overtime, suspended, evicted, summon, penalties or charged to disciplinary actions (Shaw, Roelofs and Punnett, 2020). Inevitably, they will obey operational safety and health procedures due to fear of negative consequences applied upon them.

Competent Safety Leadership

Based on a study by Nordin et al. (2019) most of the foreign labours do not have any basic construction safety knowledge. Undeniably, one of the key factors in every safety success depends on excellence leadership by the competent safety role model (Grill et al., 2017). The characteristic of a role model could be shown by the site supervisor who is capable to transform and convert good intentions into constructive behaviours (Wang, Wang and Xia, 2018). As agreed by Keltner et al. (2019) emotions with relevant behaviour showed by a person as a part of their role may inspire their subordinates to act and behave the same. Therefore, with such consistent practice, a strong chain of commands would exist within the organisation which could eliminate the sense of disrespect towards their leader (Nguyen et al., 2019). Nguyen et al. (2019) added that it is nearly impossible to achieve a resilient chain of commands if there are barriers between the workers and leaders. For instance, common problems within migrant workers such as language barriers, religious disparities or ignorance would scuttle the safety objective (Chan et al., 2017). Unquestionably, the language barrier has become one of the biggest problems for every organisation that hires foreign workers (Oswald et al., 2019). Therefore, Lyu et al. (2018) suggested that there are two possible solutions that can be taken by the management to this problem. The first solution is local management needs to learn intercultural communication to convey effective safety instructions towards the foreign labour. The second solution is the local management needs to hire safety supervisor from foreign labours' origin countries because based on homophily theory, people will only communicate with others who are like them (Katz et al., 2005).

Supervision Enforcement

Majority of safety researchers agreed that workers' behaviours and immediate supervision are found to be the key causal factors in construction accidents (Winge, Albrechtsen and Mostue, 2019). Whereby, according to Abas et al. (2020), supervision enforcement is one of the elements that can maintain the level of safety compliances among the foreign labours. Indubitably, each construction activities adopts site monitoring, but accident rates are still considered high due to infrequent supervision (Winge, Albrechtsen and Mostue, 2019) and mild supervision (Burton, Taylor and Barber, 2014). Grill et al. (2017) stressed that foreign labours will be more sensitive towards safety if the management practises frequent supervision and monitoring while not tolerating on act of negligent. According to Man, Chan and Wong (2017), with close and frequent supervision the foreign labours will have little opportunity to take risk. Meanwhile, Khan at al. (2018) argued that aggressive supervision like applying some physical contact and hostile safety instructions will have further impacts on the workers' behaviours. However, this attribute will have negative impact such as demoralisation or emotional discouragement if the supervisor uses this approach beyond boundaries (Martinko et al., 2017). Aggressive supervision would become more effective if there is an element of fairness (Yang et al., 2020) between the supervisor and foreign labours whereby; assertiveness only exist when the labours tend to disobey safety instructions after being briefed. It is vital to treat the foreign labours with respect and sensitivity (Yang et al., 2020) in order to keep their perception of justice and fairness even though abusive and

aggressive supervision would promise a positive outcome (Khan et al., 2018; Javed et al., 2017).

Effective Safety Awareness

Safety awareness is one of the vital safety elements. As highlighted by Gunduz and Ahsan (2018), every member in a team is required to set their mentality that safety is the main priority and every one of them are responsible to their safety and others'. Additionally, to achieve this goal, every foreign labour should have a decent amount of safety awareness on site (Buniya et al., 2021). However, safety awareness is not only about persuading the workers to wear PPE through the practice of safety briefing and safety campaign, but it has far more to do with the workers' behaviours and beliefs (Tanko, Low and Idiake, 2020). Undeniably, most of the foreign labours are reluctant to perceive safety as their main priority due to shortage of funds and resources (Zulkeflee et al., 2020). They added that the reason for the foreign labours to neglect the safety at workplace is due to their payments. Since their payments are based on the amount of completed work, they tend to prioritise project progress instead of other things to earn more. Therefore, in order to overtake this issue, the management has to play their roles to invest their resources towards safety (Han et al., 2019). According to Rahman (2015), safety has become a priority as some specific safety clauses are mentioned in a standard form of a contract. This approach is one of the initiatives by the authority to ensure that every operational safety and health matter should be mentioned in the project contract for the contractor to price them (Hamid, Majid and Singh, 2008).

METHODOLOGY

All data pertaining to the safety compliances behaviour of the construction foreign labours in the industry has been collected mainly from primary sources (semi-structured interviews). As for this study, nine case studies were conducted by using qualitative method. The qualitative method involves semi-structured interviews in collecting a more in-depth and extensive feedback from the informants that could not be completed through other mediums. The necessity of the experts' opinion in relation to the area of study would be a useful exploration due to their industry experiences and from a professional perspective. The semi-structured interview consists of two sections. The first section relates to the informants' demographic information and the second section consists of questions that relate to the foreign labour compliances towards safety, their safety practices at the workplace and the construction workers' perceptions and behaviours towards safety. Brief screening approach was implemented by conducting screening questions (Slaton, Hanley and Rafferty, 2017) on the random selected construction participants in order to eliminate unqualified informants. Therefore, nine informants were selected based on their professional background and experiences in order to gather operative and reliable feedback that is relevant to the research problems and research objectives.

Table 1. Nine construction site personnel profiles

Informants	Current Roles	Type of Organisation	Years of Experiences
A	Site supervisor	Main contractor	14
B	Deputy project manager	Main contractor	16
C	Site supervisor	Main contractor	12
D	Site supervisor	Main contractor	15
E	Safety site personnel	Main contractor	12
F	Safety site personnel	Main contractor	9
G	Site supervisor	Main contractor	8
H	Safety site personnel	Main contractor	8
I	Site supervisor	Main contractor	8

This study comprises with construction site personnel of nine different main contractors and they were selected due to the role they play in the construction site. They often deal with the construction site workers at the operational level when it regards to safety matters. Interviews were conducted through online platforms (Maybin, 2021) and opinions from the informants were recorded with their consent. The time taken for each interview ranged from 40 min to 1 h and the informants were free to express their opinions on any issues regarding safety compliance behaviours. Based on the semi-structured interviews, the themes were defined from the elements that have been discussed by the informants and the key words and concepts were identified from the data coding which was used to form sub-themes. Thus, the themes were generated from the patterns of sub-themes such as the conversation topics and vocabulary. Therefore, the sub-themes would then become the foundation for establishing the main themes.

FINDINGS

Based on the data collected from the semi-structured interviews, five themes were identified based on the key issues for safety compliances behaviours enhancement. Table 2 shows the key issues of safety compliance from the foreign labours' perspective. The possible strategies in improving the safety compliance behaviours of the foreign labours are laid in Figure 2.

Table 2. Analysis on the key issues of safety compliance through the informants' responses

Informants	Code	Category	Key Issues
A, C, D, E, F and I	Use sentiment and sensitive issues to evoke emotion.	Workers comply when they are touched.	Emotional evoke
A, C, D, E, G and I	Being reminded of their families back home.		
A, C, D, E, F, G, H and I	Workers comply when tragedy struck.		
All informants	Afraid if their money gets taken away for doing mistakes.	Workers comply with regulations due to threats.	
All informants	Fear of summons, penalty or disciplinary action.		
All informants	Fear of being suspended or chased back.		
B, C, D, E, F, G, H and I	Supervisor needs to show an exemplary to the workers.	Workers comply when the management complies to safety.	Leader as example
B, C, F, G and H	Supervisor needs to respect them as they will respect the supervisor.		
A, D, E and F	Learning the workers' language helps the management to communicate and convey safety instructions.	Convey effective safety instructions.	Forerunner from the same ethnicity
All informants	Hard to understand instruction due to language barrier.		
A, D, E, F, H and I	Supervisor uses a translator to convey safety instruction.	Workers comply to leaders of their own race and nationality.	
A, D, E, F, H and I	Workers will obey their leader who have the same nationality.		
A, D, E, F, H and I	Instruction must be given by their leader who have the same nationality.		
All informants	Workers can only understand their native language.		

(Continued on next page)

Table 2. *Continued*

Informants	Code	Category	Key Issues
All informants	Supervision enforcement due to frequent safety inspection.	Workers comply with a close and frequent supervision.	Supervision execution
A, C, D, E, F, G, H and I	The workers will only behave in front of the site personnel.		
A, C, D, E, F, G, H and I	The workers will only comply if the supervisor is with them.		
A, C, D, E, F, H and I	The workers need to be scolded to make them listen.	Workers comply with an aggressive supervision.	
C, E, F and H	The supervisor needs to scold and shout or even slap them.		
C, E and F	The workers need to be scolded on the first day of working (requires an action rather than a polite way).		
All informants	Safety matter is neglected due to the focus on the project progress.	Workers need to prioritise safety than others.	Safety prioritisation
A, C, D, E, F, G, H and I	The workers have no money to spend on safety matters.		
A, C, D, E, F, H and I	Time allocation for safety matters.		

Each response was analysed and the key words were extracted in establishing the codes. Informants' responses that have similar meaning were grouped in the table to indicate the frequency of the stated issues. Then, each code was characterised into their category according to the appropriate pattern without diverting from the actual context of safety compliance enhancement. From the category, the key issues were established as the main elements in enhancing the safety compliance based on the foreign workers' perspective. To deliver a clearer picture, Figure 2 is drawn based on Table 2 after the description of the codes and categories have been simplified.

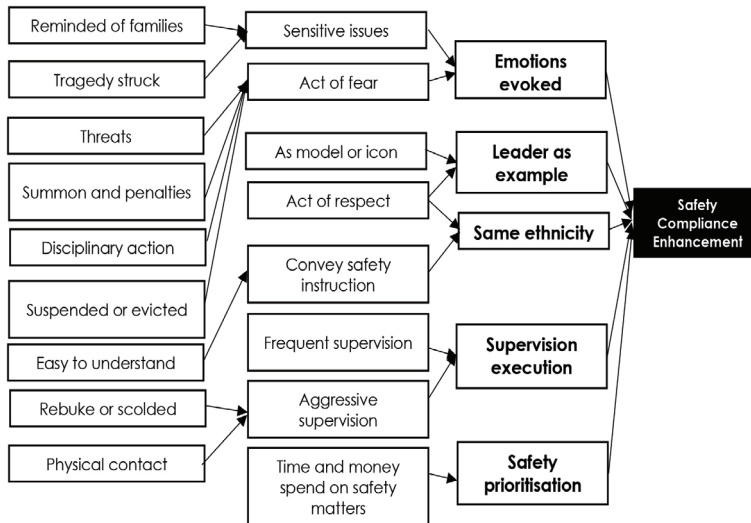


Figure 2. Safety compliance possible enhancement through the foreign workers' perspective

Emotions Evoked

The findings revealed that human emotions would influence the safety compliances among the foreign labours, whereby two of the most significant emotions involved are sadness and fear. As concerned, most of the contractors are using the foreign labours as their workforce in construction site and undeniably, the foreign labours would have to leave their blood relatives and spouse back at their hometown. Therefore, these foreign labours would not neglect their social responsibilities to support their families. In other words, they will comply with the operational safety and health practices if they are being reminded of sensitive issues such as religion restriction, permanent disabilities or family sentiment. This approach is considered to be effective because the foreign labours come to immigrate and work here is to improve their life as their families face financial difficulties at home. Logically, their intention to help their families cannot be fulfilled if they are involved in severe accidents such as permanent disability or fatality at the workplace. Moreover, they will be more sensitive towards safety if there is an accident or near misses happen in the construction site, particularly when any unnecessary tragedy happens to one of their friends or acquaintances. Thus, they will be more aware about the possible risks involved and hazards that they might face.

Based on data collected, fear is found to dominate the workers' perceptions. As a result, most of the workers would comply with operational safety and health at all times in the workplace. Undeniably, any threats against them by imposing summonses or fines are seen as an effective way to maintain their safety compliance. Furthermore, they are afraid of being subjected to disciplinary action such as being suspended or evicted from the construction site if they do not practice safety in the first place. This will disrupt their work as they are eager to increase their work progress.

Leader as Example

The findings of the study also emphasised that each of the supervisor's actions would influence the behaviour and attitudes of the foreign workers. The supervisors are responsible to inspire the workers to always obey to safety. To achieve the set objective, supervisors must show the workers the work procedure and technique by involving themselves in the safety process as an icon or role model. This organisational structure would act as the chain of command as it will be much beneficial to the workers when there are challenges in the construction site. If the supervisors do not respect the chain of command, there will be a confusion among the foreign workers and they will be demoralised. Respectively, if the supervisors are practising proper safety in the workplace, indirectly the workers would do the same as well. The informants also suggested that the foreign labours are deserved to be respected and trusted by the supervisors as this action will make the workers return the same respects towards them. Ultimately, this would help the supervisors to convey the effective safety instructions towards the foreign labours.

Forerunner from the Same Ethnicity

The prior literatures indicate that challenges relating to effective communication is one of the massive constraints in the issues of safety in workplace. Since most of the workers in the construction sites comprise of foreign labours and their supervisors are among the locals, problems regarding communication tend to arise. Although this issue can be very sensitive among the locals, it is undeniable that foreign labours in the construction site will be more obedient to safety instructions from the personnel of their own race. This is supported by statements given by three of the informants that revealed most of the foreign labours would obey their leader with the same nationality as compared to a local supervisor. To them, the safety instructions are easier to understand and to comply if the instructions are given in their mother tongue. Nowadays, most of the supervisors are having communication difficulties with the foreign labours in conveying the safety instructions due to the language barriers among them. Foreign labours need to learn and familiarise themselves with the local language which probably take months or years to acquire. Few informants stated that some of foreign labours can only understand their own language and require the supervisor to hire other personnel to become the translator. The approach is very detrimental to time and energy, even though, it is relatively acceptable to convey safety instructions.

Supervision Execution

Based on the data collected, one of the most effective strategies to improve safety compliances is to enhance the supervision enforcement among the foreign labours. This argument was viewed in two different approaches: a frequent supervising and aggressive supervising. All of the informants suggested that higher frequency of supervising would enhance the safety compliances among the foreign labours in the workplace. This is because the foreign labours will behave themselves and comply with the safety instructions if the supervisors are always with them. If there are frequent inspections from the higher authority towards the site, they would trigger higher compliance rate from the management and the foreign labours.

Similarly, all of the informants also agreed that to increase the effectiveness of safety compliances among the foreign labours, the supervisors must use the aggressive supervision method occasionally. Safety compliance rates among the foreign labours would increase drastically if there were elements of fear from getting hit, slapped or scolded. Even though this method seems quite inappropriate and would lead to anxious and anxiety, the informants stressed that if the method is done prudently, it would enhance their discipline and the capability to pay attention to the safety instructions.

Safety Prioritisation

It is agreeable by all informants that safety is everybody's responsibility and it should be the main priority in the workplace. Unfortunately, based on the data collected, most of the foreign labours do not take safety matters seriously as they tend to focus on the work progress. For instance, the foreign labours perceive their "work done" as the main priority to earn more for their progress payment. From their perspective, practising a proper safety would be such a burden to them as it would decelerate their physical movement. The foreign labours also feel that much time will be spent to impose safety measures as compared to the time taken to carry out the work. Accidents at workplace still exist and each one of them varies from one another. Nevertheless, if safety matter is prioritised, the probability of an accident to occur can be reduced.

DISCUSSION

This study exploits the significance of qualitative research by portraying the true representation of the current safety compliance practises and foreign workers behaviours at the operational level. It demonstrates the true beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviours of the construction foreign workers in obeying operational safety and health instructions.

Safety Compliances Enhancement Strategies

The finding reveals that there are five possible strategies to enhance safety compliances among the foreign labours in the construction sites. This study suggested that one of the effective methods in improving the level of safety compliance behaviours is to evoke the feelings of the foreign labours through two elements of emotions namely sadness and fear. All informants believed that their safety awareness and behaviour can be influenced by these two emotions. Barret (2017) stated that any emotions experienced by the workers would stimulus their behaviour and attitudes while performing a particular task. Their safety behaviour would increase drastically if they were reminded of sensitive issues such as religion restriction, permanent disabilities and family sentiment which would produce pity and empathy to their relatives and spouse. The influence of sad emotions through words or statements will show feeling of sadness on others, but also may contribute to produce compassion, pity and empathy (Yang and Hung, 2017).

The findings of the study also suggest that most of the organisations prefer to evoke fear emotions among the foreign labours. Reser and Bradley (2017) stated

that by evoking fear among the workers would influence their working standards if it were done prudently. Obviously, there will be some adverse effects if it is done regularly without increasing the workers' motivation as it can encourage other emotions such as confusion, anger and anxiety (Shaw, Roelofs and Punnett, 2020). Moreover, evoking fear methods seems to be a norm in construction sites as they are often imposing summons and fine to the foreign labours who are responsible for safety offences. Foreign labours will feel threatened and afraid if their payment is being deducted as a result of committing a safety offense. The element of fear seems to be much more effective if the offenders are subject to disciplinary action such as dismissal or deportation. Foreign workers believed that this will disrupt their work progress entirely. Thus, they will be more sensitive towards safety issues and more ethical while completing the task. Buica et al. (2017) stressed that most companies still practise the traditional approach by issuing penalties, summons or fines on offenders even though this method seems to demotivate the workers. This statement is supported by Wong, Man and Chan (2020) who argued the "fine system" that is enforced at the construction site is seen to be very effective towards offenders to improve safety compliances and reduce accidents at construction sites.

Leading by example is not a completely new idea as there are numerous past literatures on leadership that discuss about this constantly (Grill et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2018; Wu et al., 2016). This study suggested that proper safety behaviours displayed by a supervisor may influence the foreign labours to obey the operational safety and health while completing their work. Ismail and Fathi (2018) stated that safety leadership demonstrated by the supervisor plays an important role in determining the organisation behaviours that relatively may influence the workers' personality and behaviour. Therefore, with such consistent practice, a strong chain of commands should be generated and henceforth the workers will create a sense of respect to the supervisor. A weak chain of commands at the management level, that is mainly due to poor communication within an organisation, can diminish the workers' respect to their superior (Nguyen et al., 2019). Grill et al. (2017) agreed that workers within the organisation who respect their supervisor would encourage themselves to mediate the influence of fair treatments between them. Therefore, there are higher possibilities for them to comply with the operational safety and health in the workplace.

Apart from that the results also show that the supervisors are having difficulties in communicating with the foreign workers due to language barriers or lack of understanding in technical terms. Unfortunately, these are only a few of the identified problems as there are other significant factors that contribute to safety compliance enhancement. Boateng, Davis and Pillay (2020) stated that effective safety instruction has a significant influence to improve the safety behaviour of the workers. To resolve the issues, the findings highlighted that safety instructions can be conveyed effectively through leaders or supervisors who have the same ethnicity as the foreign labours.

Based on the data collected, most of the foreign labours would comply with safety if there is a strict supervision enforcement in the workplace. Abas et al. (2020) stated that operational safety and health objectives can be achieved through the quality and consistency of supervision by the organisation. However, the data showed the safety compliance enhancement are possible through two significant supervising approaches, which are frequent and aggressive supervision. Winge, Albrechtsen and Mostue (2019) stressed that frequent and aggressive supervision

are found to be linked to workers' behaviours which capable to govern construction accidents occurrence.

The study also found that foreign labours are more concerned with project progress than their own personal safety as they do not see safety as their main priority. For instance, foreign labours do not perceive safety as an obligation as they are more concerned with their work progress (Zulkeflee et al., 2020). The argument is further supported by Gunduz and Ahsan (2018) who believe every worker should realise that safety must be a priority to reduce and eliminate the common safety error. In contemplation of achieving the above objective, every individual in the construction site plays an important role in providing safety allocation such as time and money that are spent on safety. Hope et al. (2022) stated that in the attempt to increase the workers' safety performance, it is vital for the practitioners in the construction industry to spend a fair amount of time and resources on safety matters. For instance, Hasmori, Akhir and Said (2020) stressed that workers should spend a reasonable amount of time in applying safety hardness while working in heights to avoid accidents, near misses and injuries. One of the most vital safety measures to risk reduction is to encourage health and safety investment which is believed may help to enhance the safety compliance among the industry practitioners (Pandit et al., 2019).

CONCLUSION

Significant approach in enhancing the safety compliance level among the foreign construction labours are being discussed and it is rather possible to appraise from the workers' perspective. Foreign labours will be more aware to safety matters if the emotion elements, namely fear or sadness, are engaged. For instance, sensitive sentiment such as being reminded of their families back at home or a tragedy happens at the workplace would express a sense of awareness while working. Meanwhile, conveying fear to the foreign labours will make them feel afraid of committing any safety misconduct. Daunting threats as summon and penalties or imposing disciplinary actions like getting suspended or evicted are found as the most effective way to enhance safety compliances. Moreover, a sense of respect towards one another is needed as the workers would be able to perceive their site supervisor as a safety model or icon. The present study also found that the foreign workers would be more obedient to safety instructions if they were given instruction from the leaders of the same ethnicity due to the inexistence of language barriers. In addition, the results also reveal that a frequent supervision enforcement would be one of the key factors in improving the safety compliance among the foreign labours. A prudent aggressive supervision such as rebuke, scolded or imposing physical contact is also found to be effective in ensuring the foreign labours to practise safety measures in their workplace. In short, foreign labours need to invest their resources such as time and money to practise appropriate safety measures to ensure every individual in the construction site is bound to perceive safety as their main priority.

LIMITATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Most of the past literatures on safety compliance are perceived from the top management perspectives, while there are only few studies that were conducted based on the labours' views and standpoints. The present study was conducted during a movement control order (MCO) by the authorities to curb the transmission of COVID-19 pandemic. Based on the current report from the government, it is shown that there is a drastic increase in the COVID-19 infections among the foreign workers in Malaysia. Therefore, the data were retrieved through online interviews with the construction practitioners who worked closely with the foreign workers at the construction site. This study suggests that the data will be more accurate if the interviews can be conducted with the construction foreign labours to unravel the actual reasons of safety non-compliance. Thus, the level of safety compliances among the foreign labours can be enhanced based on the workers' perspective.

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