



The Relationship between Management Practices and Safety

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ABSTRACT

Work-related accidents is a controversial topic in Malaysia as evidenced by the increased number of occupational accidents throughout the years. The purpose of this research is to examine the relationship between management practices and safety performance in an organization. The four management practices investigated are (a) training, (b) management commitment, (c) communication and feedback, and (d) employee involvement. The most effective safety practice is also identified. The data was collected at a manufacturing company located in Shah Alam, Malaysia using closed-ended questionnaire. 95 respondents from the production line were involved in this study. The result found that training had a very weak relationship to the safety performance while the management commitment, as well as the communication and feedback, revealed to have a weak impact on safety performance. On the other hand, the analysis showed that employee involvement is the most effective safety practice to the safety performance, as it had a moderate impact on safety performance.

Keywords: Workplace health and safety; accidents; injuries; safety performance

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INTRODUCTION

Work-related accidents in the workplace as of now still remains a controversial topic in Malaysia over the past ten years. Ranging from human error to machinery failure, structural and process design failure, harm-

ful materials and substances, improper safety procedure in handling equipment and storage, unsafe working environment, which will lead to accidents and incur fatal, injury or illness (Makin & Winder, 2008). A successful implementation of organization practices is able to facilitate safety culture and working environment, at the same time, reduce the injury and illness occurrence (Ali, Chew Abdullah & Subramaniam, 2009).

Workplace hazards derived from management issues and internal risk management

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processes are likely to be overlooked (Makin & Winder, 2008). In a research conducted by Chandraseker (2011), unsafe and unhealthy working environment led to work-related accidents and illnesses. Meanwhile, working environment is said to influence employees' attitude, behavior and satisfaction towards the company, which by default indicate that working environment indirectly affects an employee's performance.

According to Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) (2017) among ten sectors, manufacturing sector recorded the highest figure of accidents and numbers of victims. In the latest report of Occupational Accidents Statistics by Sector until October 2017 (DOSH, 2017), the manufacturing sector is reported to have the highest number of victims - 1691. While Occupational Disease and Poisoning by sector until 2016 mentioned in the report provided by the DOSH (2017) had revealed that manufacturing sector made up the most number of work-related diseases and poisoning cases, with a total of 3298 cases (85.4%).

There were a lot of previous research studied on the workplace health and safety in construction, mining and oil and gas industry. However, only a small number of empirical studies were conducted in Malaysia, specifically the safety management of manufacturing sector. Previous research for the past ten years in Malaysia focused on safety issues in construction industry (Ali et al., 2009; Zakaria et al., 2010; Said et al., 2012). Some research were conducted in different countries (Unnikrishnan, Iqbal, Singh, & Nimkar, 2015) and can only be used as references. They are not fully applicable in

Malaysia. Differences of culture and socio-economic background between western and eastern country contributed to the generalizability issue. The purpose of this research is to examine the relationship between management practices and safety performance within the organization.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Workplace Health and Safety

Every job virtually carried the potential risk of injuries or diseases (Leigh, 2011) and each accident, injury or disease developed from multi-linear interactions of the contributory factors and causes (Toft et. al., 2012). Workplace hazards are generated from three main components which included management decision, people, and physical workplace or environment which showed an interdependent relationship as each of the elements can interconnect and influence each other. According to Reason's Swiss Cheese Theory, the incident will happen when the combination of weaknesses which related to these three components in the defenses barriers, which contributes to damage and workplace accident (Reason, 2000).

Some researchers claimed that people who lack of awareness, inadequate knowledge, and attitude result in unsafe behaviour that causes injuries in the workplace (Eakin, 1992; DeRoo et al., 2000; Said et. al. 2012; Taufek, et. al., 2016). Reason (1997) contended that the occupational accidents were as a result of fail to recognize the potential hazards in the systems as there was lack of defenses used to prevent unwanted outcomes. On the other hand, Health and Safe-