THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BEHAVIOUR - BASED SAFETY (BBS) WITH A SAFE WORKPLACE

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BEHAVIOUR-BASED SAFETY (BBS) WITH A SAFE WORKPLACE

by

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This project is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Human Resource Development

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ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BEHAVIOUR-BASED SAFETY (BBS) WITH A SAFE WORKPLACE

SHEILLA LIM OMAR LIM

This study aims to investigate the correlation between behaviour-based safety (BBS) and chosen demographic characteristics with a safe workplace. The samples of this study involved staff at PPES Works (Sarawak) Sdn Bhd. Questionnaires were used to obtain feedback from a total of 40 respondents who were selected using the random sampling method. The information obtained includes the respondents' background, behaviour-based safety factors (person-based psychology and social psychology) as well as safe workplace. Eight hypotheses were developed and tested in this record using the descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage and mean) and inferential statistics (Independent Sample t-tests; One-Way ANOVA and Pearson Correlation Coefficient), to see whether there is any relationship between the dependent variables and the independent variables. The dependent variable in this study is a safe workplace (which includes stress, accidents and injuries) while the independent variable is behaviour-based safety. The result indicated that there is no significant relationship between behaviour-based safety with a safe workplace. The study recommended that future researchers are encouraged to conduct a more in-depth study in order to obtain more reliable result. Organisation must continue to improve and enhance its practice on safety and health by implementing BBS program apart from the already available safety and health practices at the workplace. Overall, the findings of this study will provide valuable information to the employees, safety and health officer in particular and future researchers who have the interest in Occupational Safety and Health studies.
ABSTRAK

PERHUBUNGAN DI ANTARA KESELAMATAN BERASASKAN TINGKAHLAKU (KBT) DENGAN KESELAMATAN DI TEMPAT KERJA

SHEILLA LIM OMAR LIM

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The concern for safety in the workplace is a rather recent development. In the early twentieth century, if a worker was killed or disabled at work, the company might express regret to the worker’s family.

Safety professionals, team leaders, and concerned workers today scramble to find the “best” safety approach for their workplace. Many companies have spent a lot of time and effort improving safety, usually by addressing hardware issues and installing safety management systems that include regular (e.g. monthly) line management safety audits. Over a number of years these efforts tend to produce dramatic reductions in accident rates.

Often, however, a plateau of minor accidents remains that appears to be stubbornly resistant to all efforts to remove them (Cooper, 1998). Employee accidents threaten the integrity of an organisation by the personal injuries, lost production time,
costly lawsuits, disability payments, damaged equipment, and wasted materials that often result (Hansen, 1991).

Many organisations have dealt with this problem by creating strong safety departments that have much influence in determining how the work should be carried out. In recognising that 90 percent of all accidents can be attributed to human error (McKenna, 1983), a typical concern of a safety department is to design the work so that the possibility of error is held to a minimum. Related to this function is the training of personnel in proper procedures and safety regulations (Denton, 1982).

Although many of the accidents and injuries are attributed to peoples’ carelessness or poor safety attitudes, most of these are triggered by deeply ingrained unsafe behaviours (Cooper and Phillips, 1994). Behavioural-based Safety addresses these by making use of proven techniques which almost always results in a positive step change in safety performance and safety attitudes.

Behavioural safety is the systematic application of psychological research on human behaviour to the problems of safety in the workplace. Given that 96 percent of all workplace accidents are triggered by unsafe behaviour, most people will be aware that reducing accidents and improving safety performance can only be achieved by systematically focusing upon those unsafe behaviours in the workplace (Psychol, 1999). For example, not holding the handrail when ascending/descending stairs, or not putting equipment away after completing a job, etc., are all unsafe behaviours. These
are in the direct control of the person engaging in them, and therefore can be targeted for improvement via a workforce driven behavioural safety initiative.

Since the early 1990’s behavioural safety has fast become an established weapon in the war on workplace accidents, as its use has helped many companies to dramatically slice through their accident plateau, something that hitherto could only be dreamed of. Much of the researches on psychological variables have focused on safety-related behaviours (Montgomery and Kelloway, 2002). The focus on behaviour is based on observation that 70 percent to 95 percent of workplace accidents resulting in injury are thought to be caused by unsafe behaviours (Reber, Wallin, and Chhokar, 1989).

Many companies, for example, have experienced 40-75 percent falls in their accident rates within six to twelve months as a direct consequence of implementing the techniques associated with behavioural safety (Psychol, 1999).

Because the behavioural approach differs considerably from traditional ways of improving safety, a question commonly asked is 'Do these ideas work in practice?' Usually, this approach does work. Psychologists from around the globe have consistently reported positive changes in both safety behaviour and accident rates, regardless of the industrial sector or company size (Psychol, 1999). Thus behavioural safety has a lot to offer to the world of work, although it must be stressed that it is not a panacea to cure all ills.
1.1 **Background of the Study**

Historically, it seems that organisations have focused on improving safety by addressing the work environment surrounding employees. Providing hazard-free facilities and providing better tools and equipment have, understandably, worked well to improve safety.

But many organisations have reached a plateau; continuing to rely solely on these approaches will produce only marginal gains (Gilmore, Perdue and Wu, 2002). Despite having a workplace ‘designed’ to reduce hazards, incidents and injuries still occur with alarming regularity (Gilmore, Perdue and Wu, 2002). Researcher have come to realise or be reminded that people are not perfect and will make mistakes despite their best intentions and working in the best of surroundings, and the work culture often allows or encourages at-risk behaviours to be performed. In addition, employee behaviour changes constantly in reaction to external factors such as new facilities, new equipment and new workgroups (Goodrum and Gangwar, 2004).

That is why the behavioural approach to safety performance improvement was developed in the last decades of 20th century, which focuses on reducing hazards by understanding employee behaviours in the context of their work culture. Organisations need to be aware of the factors that affect a safe workplace and build as well as improve on these factors.
Behaviour-based Safety (BBS) refers to a broad category of interventions (e.g. processes, programs, strategies, tactics) in which behavioural psychology principles are applied to change specific behaviours. Behaviour-based Safety (BBS) principles have been used, often in the form of a behavioural observation and feedback process, with considerable success to reduce the occurrence of incidents and injuries, primarily by increasing the frequency of safe behaviours and decreasing the number of at-risk behaviours (Gilmore, Perdue and Wu, 2002).

However, as effective as behaviour-based approaches can be, a true step change in safety performance will require more than simply ensuring that individuals perform their own job safely. It will also require that individuals work together, going “beyond the call of duty” for safety of one another. That is, people must actively care for the safety of their co-workers by performing behaviours which directly or indirectly influence the safety of others.

Actively caring may be demonstrated through a variety of behaviours such as offering to assist co-worker lift a heavy load, performing housekeeping duties beyond personal territories, participating in formal safety improvement activities, or performing informal activities like cautioning a co-worker about a potentially risky behaviour, or recognising co-workers for their safe work practices.

Therefore, it is critical that behavioural change interventions be introduced in a way that will have a positive impact on the organisation's overall safety culture. In fact,
well designed and implemented behavioural safety processes can help move the organisation toward the achievement of a total safety culture (Gilmore, Perdue and Wu, 2002). A total safety culture is defined as a culture in which individuals hold safety as a value, feel a sense of responsibility for the safety of their co-workers as well as themselves, and are willing as well as able to ‘go beyond the call of duty’ for the safety of the others (Geller, 2000). That is, individuals have the skills and tools necessary and are supported by the culture to intervene on behalf of the safety of the others.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The challenge to improve safety at work remain a key concern to many organisations, especially as traditional approaches to safety in organisations have not had the anticipated impact of reducing accident rates.

The existing methods of attempting to enhance safety performance have very limited efficacy (Sutherland, Makin, and Cox, 2000). So, no matter how safely workplace is designed, how thoroughly employees are trained, or how stringently compliance is enforced, organisations must still deal with the uncertainty of human behaviour.

Even if we assume perfect compliance, good intentions, and a clear understanding of job-related risks, people will make mistakes. That is when we have come to realise (or be reminded) that people are not perfect and will make mistakes despite their best
intentions and working in the best of surroundings, and the work culture often allow or encourage at-risk behaviours to be performed.

Therefore, it is time to conduct a study in an organisation in Kuching which have implemented occupational safety and health management system to determine the Behavioural-based Safety (BBS) factors. We may also know how Behavioural-based Safety (BBS) factors affect the success of implementing occupational safety and health management system.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study explain the purpose of the study conducted in the selected organisation.

1.3.1 General Objectives

The main purpose of this study is to recognise the relationship between Behavioural-based Safety (BBS) and safety in making an organisation a safe workplace.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

(a) Recognising the Behavioural-based Safety (BBS) factors that is

(i) Person-based psychology