

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**THE POOR INVOLVEMENT
OF LOCAL YOUTH IN THE
CONSTRUCTION WORKFORCE
IN MALAYSIA**

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of the requirements for the degree of
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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi Mara. It is original and is the result of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledge as referenced work. This thesis has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any degree of qualification.

I, hereby, acknowledge that I have been supplied with the Academic Rules and Regulations for Post Graduate, Universiti Teknologi MARA, regulating the conduct of my study and research.


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ABSTRACT

The construction industry in Malaysia is heavily dependent on foreign workers. This has resulted in money outflow from this country of about 2.5 million Ringgit Malaysia every year. Unfortunately, it seems that the local youth would prefer to be unemployed rather than be employed in construction sites. Efforts made by the industry and the government to increase youth participation in the construction workforce have been futile. However, positive changes in the construction industry call for a re-assessment of this situation. This study looked into the evolution of the construction industry and the strategies that have been adopted to increase youth participation in the construction workforce. Archival data from the Labor Force Survey Report was compiled to determine the trend of youth participation in the construction workforce. The findings indicate that local youth participation has never exceeded 25% of the total construction workforce. An extensive survey was also carried out on youth at vocational training centers to determine their current perception of a career in the construction industry especially in construction sites. Surprisingly, the findings of the survey found that 3'D (difficult, dangerous and dirty) image is no longer a main factor in distracting local youth from pursuing career in the construction workforce. The main reasons however was found to be lack of encouragement from parents, the abundant presence of foreign workers at construction sites and unattractive wages. The survey also showed that youth are more attracted to the training centers providing non-construction related training programs which provide better facilities and allowances. Construction industry experts were also interviewed to obtain an insight on what went wrong with the previous and current initiatives to attract youth into the construction industry and how things can be done better. Industry experts claimed there was a serious lacking in promotion of career prospects and developments in the construction industry. This shortcoming has perpetuated the negative perception among local youth of the industry being dirty, dangerous and difficult as well as paying low salary. This study has attempted to produce more effective and sustainable strategies that can transform the construction industry into a preferred sector of employment for local youth.

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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Studies indicate that Malaysia is still heavily dependent on foreign and unskilled workers especially in the construction industry. Unfortunately, the Malaysian construction industry has traditionally suffered from a poor image and being not attractive to young people as a career option. This is so even with the government having invested substantially in a proper planning; and initiating various programmes and courses in order to attract and to train the new potential workforce through local youths for various trades of the construction industry. The government has appointed the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) to train more workers in the construction industry by establishing the Malaysian Building Academy (Abdul-Aziz et al. 2008). This academy provides construction skills training namely the Youth Skill Training Programme (Abdul-Aziz et al. 2008). Then, CIDB introduced another new approach by the establishment of the Construction Club at the secondary school level (CIDB, 2010b). Furthermore, Program Belia Tempatan Mahir (BERTAM) was held as a training skill programme under the Malaysian Building Academy (MBA) in collaboration with the Iskandar Regional Development Authority (CIDB, 2010b).

Even so, the development of various programmes and training courses related to the construction industry has not received the expected response from local youths, where overall the involvement of young workers has still not achieved the government's target as to change the employment pattern of youths working in this sector. Statistics show that for those working at the construction sites in Malaysia, only 15.9%, 18.8%, 19.3%, 23.2% and 16.6% of the total number of workers are local young workers for the year 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005 and 2010 respectively (Department of Statistic Malaysia, 2011). Hence, the Malaysian construction industry needs to review the strategies that have been implemented as to increase the participation of local youths in the construction sector in Malaysia and ensure strategies made are well structured and centralized as parallel to the establishment of the Construction Industry Master Plan Malaysia 2006-2015 (CIDB, 2007).