Journal of Administrative Science
Vol.15, Issue 2, 2018, pp. 41-55
Available online at *http:jas.uitm.edu.my*

Rear Seatbelt Policy in Malaysia and the United Kingdom (UK): An Endeavour of Mitigating the Gap

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Abstract

Most developing countries are facing high rates of road fatality. This also occurs in Malaysia and the number of road fatalities and severe injuries caused by road accidents can be effectively reduced using the rear seat belt. There is an urgent need to reduce the road fatality rate as this issue offers several drawbacks to the country as well as to individuals in terms of economy, human capital, and loss of family members. The aim of this paper is to delineate the similarities and differences between Malaysia and United Kingdom (UK)'s rear seat belt policy. Methodologically, an extensive literature review was carried out by the researchers based on the policies formulated in Malaysia and UK. A content analysis was also performed to identify major themes and draw a comparison between the rear seat belt policies in these two countries. This paper concludes that in Malaysia, there are no regulations that can reduce the amount of insurance claim if the passengers were found not wearing rear seat belts in cases of road accidents. Meanwhile, in UK, the claim for insurance can be reduced by 15-50 percent (%) if the passengers were found to have not worn rear seat belts in cases of road. Besides that, in Malaysia, it is not compulsory for passengers to wear seat belts in buses, minibuses, and coaches. However, in the UK, the wearing of seat belts in the buses, minibuses, and coaches is compulsory. In order to effectively reduce the road fatality rate in Malaysia, it is suggested that the government to emulate the best practices made by the UK government in reducing its number of road fatalities, which is by making it compulsory for passengers of the buses and coaches to wear seat belts.

Keywords: *public policy, rear seat belt policy, rear seat belt wearing, road fatality*

INTRODUCTION

Received: 14 April 2018
Accepted: 29 October 2018
Published:23 December 2018

The manifestation of the road accident is inevitable and ubiquitous as it takes place everywhere. Accidents do not only occur in developed countries, but in developing countries as well. According to Kulanthayan, Raha, Law, and Radin (2004), most people around the world conceded that road accidents cannot be absolutely prevented. However, the number of road fatalities and severe injuries caused by road accident can be effectively reduced by using the rear seat belt. According to Fia Foundation (2004), many people's lives could be saved if they were cushioned by the seat belt in the event of a car accident. The use of rear seat belts not only can save the

eISSN 2600-9374

lives of the rear passengers, but also that of the front passenger, as well as the driver of the vehicle (Ng, Law, Wong, & Kulanthayan, 2013; Norlen, Noradrenalina, & Fadhli, 2011).

Previous researchers have highlighted the importance and the effectiveness of fastening the rear seat belt. However, according to Norlen et al. (2011), the magnitude in the effectiveness of fastening rear seat belts varies from one study to another. According to Norlen et al. (2010), rear seat belt wearing is proven to be beneficial not only to the rear passengers, but also to the front passenger and driver. The rear passengers who did not fasten their seat belts will be thrown forward and push the front seat passenger and/or driver causing severe injuries or fatalities to other passengers. According to Ichikawa, Nakahara, and Wakai (2002), the front passenger will be facing five times the risk of death if the rear passenger did not wear rear seat belts at the time the road accident happens.

Malaysia ranks the highest among the ASEAN countries in terms of road traffic death rate per 100 000 (Darma, Mohamed Rehan, & Sulaiman Abdullah, 2017). This is followed by Myanmar (24), Philippines (21), Thailand (18), Laos (17), Indonesia (16), Vietnam (16), Brunei (14), Cambodia (12) and Singapore (5). In fact, the countries such as Laos and Indonesia are better than Malaysia in terms of the number of people involved in the road fatalities. According to Abdul Rahmat et al. (2007), Malaysia experiences approximately 350 deaths of unbelted rear passengers. This problem is very serious to our nation as the country has lost many talented and valuable people resulting from road fatalities.

However, the rate for Malaysia is still low. Observational studies report that the use of seat belts in rear seating positions was at least 10 percent (%) points lower than front seat belt use, every year from 2009 to 2012 (Pickrell, 2014). MIROS had carried out research on the rate of rear passengers fastening rear seat belts and it was found that only 7.7% of rear passengers fastened their seat belts (Wahida Ameer Batcha et al., 2014). Besides that, the general treasurer for the Road Safety Council, Ahmed Ismail Amin contends that rear seat belt wearing in Penang is almost non-existent (The Star, 2017, January 24). He further argued that based on observation carried out during the Chinese New Year Road Safety Advocacy Campaign, none of the rear passengers were found to have fastened their seat belts. Hence, this study is beneficial as it highlights the main similarities and differences in terms of rear seat belt policy between Malaysia and the United Kingdom (UK). The UK's rear seat belt policy was chosen in this study as a benchmark for the Malaysian policy makers to use as reference, since its policy is effectively reducing the rate of road fatalities in the country.

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Effectiveness of Rear Seat Belt Wearing

A study conducted by Broughton (2004) in the UK found that the risk of a front passenger being killed increased by 75% if the rear passengers did not wear their rear seat belts. Meanwhile, according to Shimamura, Mainaro, and Fujiti (2005) and Mizuno, Ikari, Tomita, and Matsui (2007), when the rear passenger wears the rear seat belt, the number of road fatalities or severe injuries can be reduced by 45%. In the United States (US), the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has highlighted that if the rear seat belt wearing rate increases to 90%, the number of road fatalities can be reduced, saving $ 8.8 billion. This is because increase in the number of road fatalities and severe injuries will also lead to the increase of medicare expenditures, and insurance compensation for the dead person's inheritors while at the same time reducing the national productivity level. In Malaysia, the economic cost of the road fatalities was estimated at USD 430,000; which is about 1.6% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (IRTAD, 2011).

Meanwhile, according to McCarthy (1989), eight studies comparing the injuries of belted and unbelted vehicle occupants had found that wearing the rear seat belt can reduce serious injuries of around 60%. In addition, Rohayu et al. (2013) and Kulanthayan et al. (2004) found that it about 20% of peoples' lives can be saved if the rear passengers wear the rear seat belt in the motor vehicles. Morgan (1999) highlighted that rear seat belt wearing had effectively reduced the number of fatalities among rear passengers by 4%. Among rear seat occupants, seat belt use can reduce the risk of death by 60% (Zhu, Cummings, & Chu, 2007). Additionally, multiple studies have documented the increased risk of death (Bose, Arregui-Dalmases, Sanchez-Molina, Velazquez-Ameijide, & Crandall, 2013; Mayrose et al., 2005) or serious injury (Ichikawa, Nakahara, &Wakai, 2002) for restrained occupants when unrestrained rear seat occupants are also in the vehicle.

Often in a crash, unbelted rear seat occupants are ejected from their seats and propelled into other areas of the vehicle cabin. Even in low-speed crashes, unbelted rear seat occupants exert thousands of pounds of force. In ahead on crash at 30 mph, an unbelted passenger weighing 60lb. exerts approximately 2700lb. of force into the driver's seat (Mayrose et al., 2005). An analysis of crashes in Japan found drivers and front seat passengers wearing seat belts experienced a five-fold increase in risk of death when rear seat passengers were unbelted (Ichikawa, Nakahara, & Wakai, 2002).

From the above explanations, it is believed that wearing the rear seat belt among the rear passengers in a motor vehicle is very important as it is able to curtail the number of road fatalities and severe injuries caused by road crashes. However, the

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number of road fatalities and severe injuries' reduction rate varies as different studies may have different methodologies and tools to measure the effectiveness of rear seat belt wearing. In addition, the effectiveness of wearing rear seat belts among the studies varies from study to study as they have examined the road accidents and road fatalities in different situations (as each country has a different number of vehicles on roads and different speed limits).

Rear Seat Belt Policy in Malaysia

In June 2008, the National Advocacy Campaign in Malaysia was launched purposely to elevate public awareness and knowledge about the importance of rear seat belt wearing (Norlen at al., 2011). Different mediums have been utilized by the Malaysian government in order to increase people's awareness about the importance of rear seat belt wearing through advertising on television, radio, banners, stickers, and community-based programs. The element of stern advice and warning has also been utilized by the enforcement officers during the second year of the national advocacy campaign to ensure that people fastened their rear seat belts. Besides that, during the national advocacy campaign, the government not only promoted the use of rear seat belts among rear passengers, but they also re-promoted the use of the front seat belts (Norlen et al., 2009).

On 1st January 2009, the government of Malaysia enforced the rear seat belt policy. According to Norlen et al. (2009), the rear seat belt policy in Malaysia was enforced after 30 years of the law for front passengers being enforced. Starting in January 2009, rear passengers who are found unbelted in the motor vehicles will be fined Ringgit Malaysia (RM) 300. However, in July 2009, the fine has been increased to RM2000 and/or imprisonment of up to 1 year. Vehicles which were manufactured after 1st January 1995 but was not equipped with rear seat belts, were given a grace period until 31st December 2011 to retrofit their vehicles with rear seat belts (Road Transport Department, 2014). The idea of the policy is to regulate the behaviour of the passengers in wearing the rear seat belt so that the number of road fatalities and severe injuries resulting from road accidents can be reduced significantly.

However, there are several types of vehicles that were exempted from the rear seat belt ruling and policy. Passengers in busses, taxis, rental cars, vehicles that can accommodate more than 8 passengers, vehicles manufactured before 1995 and haulers are exempted from wearing rear seat belts (The Star, 2008, December 28). Vehicles manufactured before 1995 are exempted from the ruling because the vehicles have no anchorage to mount the rear seat belts.

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Rear Seat Belt Policy in the UK

Table 1 shows a comparison of fatalities among belted and unbelted rear passengers in the UK from 1984 until 1988. From the table, it can be seen that rear passengers not wearing the rear seat belt during the occurrence of road crashes, has resulted in drivers' death amounting to 365 people. However, when the rear passengers wore their rear seat belts, the death rate amounted to only 15 drivers. Meanwhile, when the rear passengers did not wear the rear seat belt, the front passenger's death amounted to 329 as compared to only 12, when the rear passengers belted their rear seat belts.

As mentioned previously, when the rear passengers did not wear their seat belts, the tendency for them to plunge forward and pushed the front passenger and driver is high. This is because according to a study done by Fia foundation, when a car is travelling at 50 km/h, a person's body weight will be increased approximately by 30 times and significantly forced the front passenger and driver to be pushed forwards. According to McCarthy (1989), there were significantly fewer killed and seriously injured drivers and front seat passengers, but no change for rear seat passengers. It shows that rear seat belt passengers who did not wear rear seat belts still contributed to the number of road fatalities in the UK.

In the UK, the rear seat belt policy was implemented in stages. In 1983, the government of the UK made it compulsory for the front passenger and driver to wear seat belts (ROSPA, 2014). As the government found that the program (front seat belt law) was successfully implemented, in 1987, the government made it mandatory for all new cars to be fitted with rear seat belts. In 1989, the government introduced the rear seat belt policy for children. It was made compulsory for children who are 14 years old and below to fasten their rear seat belts when the car is moving (ROSPA, 2014). Prior to 1989, the number of children involved in road fatalities was very high and was in fact higher as compared to other road users hence the reason the government of the UK introduced the rear seat belt policy for children in 1989. In the UK, there are approximately 37,000 fatal or serious injuries every year on the roads (BBC News, 2008, January 31).

In 1991, another policy was introduced by the government, which compels the adult passengers to wear the rear seat belt. In addition, in 2006, the government enacted a law which makes it compulsory for the passengers who are 14 years old and above to wear seat belts in buses, minibuses, and coaches (ROSPA, 2014). It is contrary to the situation in Malaysia whereby passengers of buses, minibuses, and coaches are exempted from such ruling of the rear seat belt policy. In other words, in Malaysia, it is

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not compulsory for bus passengers to fasten their seat belts while in the UK, it is compulsory for the passengers of buses to do so.

However, vehicles used for police, fire, and rescue services, trading and goods vehicle on deliveries that are travelling no more than 50 meters between stops, a licensed taxi driver who is 'plying for hire' or carrying passengers are exempted the rear seat belt policy. If the vehicle is made without the rear seat belt, for example a classic car; children under 3 years old are not allowed to be in the vehicle (Gov. UK, 2014).

Comparison between Malaysia and the UK

Similarities in the Rear Seat Belt Policy between Malaysia and the UK

There are several similarities in the rear seat belt policy in Malaysia and the UK. The first similarity is in terms of both countries' research institutions for road safety. Both countries have research institutions for road safety. In Malaysia, the Malaysian Institute of Road Safety Research (MIROS) is responsible in conducting research and providing information pertaining to road safety for the government and the society. This institution acts as a source of information for the policy makers to delineate a sound public policy. For instance, after conducting several researches, MIROS projected that if 20% of road users in Malaysia were to use rear seat belts, 21 lives could be saved per year, while the compliance rate of 80% had the potential of saving 84 lives per year (MIROS, 2014). This finding can act as a basis for the Malaysian Policy Makers to formulate a rear seat belt policy. Besides that, MIROS had also conducted a study in order to identify the rate of rear seat belt use among Malaysians. Likewise, the Transport and Road Research Laboratory (TRL) acts as a research institution for road safety in the UK. For instance, a study carried out by TRL in 1979 found that fastening seat belts saves lives and reduces injuries (McCarthy, 1989). Hence, policy makers in both countries have always referred to these institutions (MIROS and TRL) as these institutions provide necessary information for the respective governments.

Besides that, both countries experience incremental stages in the implementation of the rear seat belt policy. In Malaysia, the Malaysian government started with the introduction of the National Advocacy Campaign in June 2008, with a purpose to elevate public awareness on rear seat belt policy. After six months of campaign, the rear seat belt policy was enforced on 1st January 2009 and those who refused to fasten their rear seat belt shall be subjected to a fine of RM300. Besides that, the car owners have been given 3 years to retrofit their rear seat belt. Likewise, in the UK, the implementation of rear seat belt also was done in an incremental stage. In 1987, the government requested all new cars to be fitted with rear seat belts. Later in 1989, the

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government introduced the rear seat belt policy for children in order to reduce the number of road fatalities among children. Further to that, in 1991, the government started to enforce the rear seat belt policy for adults with the hope that the number of road fatalities among adults will be reduced. In 2006, the government makes a compulsion whereby it is compulsory for passengers aged 16 and above to wear the seat belt in buses, minibuses as well as coaches (ROSPA, 2014). Hence, both of these countries have experienced the incremental stage in the implementation of rear seat belt policy.

In addition, both countries share a similar objective in the rear seat belt policy which is to reduce the number of road fatalities among road users. Both countries have came out with this objective because prior to the enforcement of the rear seat belt policy, the number of road fatalities caused by road accidents in each country was high. For example, in Malaysia, in 2008 (a year before the rear seat belt policy enforcement), Malaysia was ranked highest among the ASEAN countries in terms of the number of road fatalities, which was about 25 people per 100,000 populations (WHO GSRRS, 2009). Likewise, in the UK, before the rear seat belt policy for children was enforced, the number of children involved in road fatalities was higher than other types of road users (Adams, 2005). By looking at such numbers, it becomes a priority for the government to reduce the number of road fatalities in the irrespective countries.

Differences in Rear Seat Belt Policy between Malaysia and the UK

Both countries also have differences in the implementation of Rear Seat Belt Policy. It is entirely different in terms of coverage of rear seat belt policy for vehicles. In Malaysia, there is no law that compels the passengers of the buses, minibuses, or coaches to wear seat belts in such vehicles. However, some of the buses are equipped with safety belts and it depends on the voluntary use of the passengers. Conversely, the UK government has enforced a law which makes it mandatory for passengers who are 16 years old and above to wear seat belts in the buses, minibuses, and coaches (ROSPA, 2014). It is suggested that the Malaysian government emulate the UK practices by introducing a law to compel passengers in the buses, minibuses, and coaches to wear the rear seat belt as it can save many lives in these vehicles.

Lately, Malaysians were shocked with so many bus tragedies/accidents which involved fatalities among passengers. On the 21st August of 2013, around 37 passengers were killed after a bus carrying around 53 passengers plunged into the ravine in Genting Highland (Cheng, Avineshwaran, & Suganya, 2013). In an effort to reduce the number of fatalities in road accidents, especially those involving buses, it was proposed that all buses on Malaysian roads be-fitted with seat belts (Nurazlina, Siti Zubaidah, & Farah,

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2012). The passengers of buses need to wear the seat belt as the risk of bus passengers being thrown out during a crash was higher if they did not wear it.

Furthermore, in terms of year of enforcement of the policy, the UK has already introduced and enforced the rear seat belt policy in 1989 for children and 1991 for adults. The government introduced the rear seat belt policy after 6 years the enforcement of rear policy for driver and passenger of a car. Meanwhile, in Malaysia, the government started to enforce the rear seat belt policy in 2009, which is 31 years after the enforcement of the front seat belt policy in 1978 (IRTAD, 2013). It shows that although the front seat belt policy can be considered as successful (wearing rate is 85% in 2013), Malaysia is among the later countries to enforce the rear seat belt policy. The rear seat belt policy in Malaysia should have been enforced very much earlier as it could have saved many lives in the country.

In terms of the fine imposed in Malaysia, any violators caught for not wearing the rear seat belt in the vehicle will be fined RM300. However, the amount of fine can increase up to RM2000 and or imprisonment of up to one year if the rear passengers failed to wear the rear seat belt starting 1st July 2009. The government will impose imprisonment of up to one year to the passengers who refused to wear the rear seat belt. This shows that it is pertinent for the passengers of the vehicle to wear the rear seat belt. Meanwhile, the amount of fine imposed to the UK citizens who refused to wear the rear seat belt is from £30 and up to £500. However, there is no legislation in this policy for violators to be imprisoned. As for the political acceptability, in Malaysia, there are relatively few arguments among the parties about the enforcement of this policy as compared to the UK. In the UK, there is a strong conflict between two groups of people, which are the defender of life and defender of liberty. Defender of life is a group of people in the UK that supports the implementation of the rear seat belt. They viewed that the rear seat belt policy is very good and important as it could save people's lives in the event of road accidents. They contend that the government should interfere (law must be enforced) to ensure people wear the rear seat belt. Conversely, the defender of liberty opposed the compulsory wearing of rear seat belts.

As for the obligations to install rear seat belts, in Malaysia, it is compulsory whereby all car owners had been given three years' grace period to have them installed. Car manufacturers had already signed an agreement with the government to provide free installations of rear seat belts for car owners. However, for cars which do not have the anchorage to mount seat belts, they were exempted from such ruling and the law does not prohibit the driver to bring children in the cars. In contrary, in the UK, if the vehicle does not have the rear seat belt, the driver is not allowed to bring children under 3 years old in it. This rule is only applied if the vehicle was originally made without seat

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belts (Gov. UK, 2014). The UK government is really concerned about the safety of the children in the vehicle hence the reason children are prohibited to ride in the cars without any rear seat belts.

In addition, the individual liable to pay for the summons also varies in both countries. In Malaysia, passenger of the age of 17 years and above would be liable to be issued (and subsequently is responsible to pay for) summons. However, it is the driver who needs to pay for the summons if the passengers caught not wearing the rear seat belts are aged 16 years and below. Hence, it is the responsibility of the driver to ensure that the passengers wear the rear seat belts in the vehicle. It should not be a burden for the passengers to wear rear seat belts as doing so can save their lives. However, in the United Kingdom, adult passengers aged 14 years and above are responsible to pay for the summons (ROSPA, 2014).

It is interesting to note that there are differences in both countries in terms of the relationship between reduction of insurance compensation and not wearing the rear seat belt. In the UK, the insurance compensation (insurance claims) can be reduced significantly from 15 to 50% if the passengers were found not wearing rear seat belts in the event of road accidents. Hitchens v Berkshire CC (2000) set a precedent by reducing the claimant's compensation by 50% after it was found that they were not wearing seat belts(Krug, Pearce, Ward, & Bliss, 2009). This approach allows stakeholders to incorporate a road safety levy into insurance premiums that will also be allocated to the central collision prevention fund (Krug et al., 2009). Some amount of compensation reduction will be channelled to a collision prevention fund and that fund will be used to finance road safety campaigns and initiatives. The court may decide to reduce the amount of insurance compensation in the name of 'contributory negligence' by the party who failed to wear the rear seat belt (Krug et al., 2009). However, in the context of Malaysia, there is no legislation and policy that can reduce the amount of compensation claims if the passengers were found not wearing rear seat belts in the event of road accidents. Malaysian insurance companies only give discounts on the following year's premium if a driver has no accidents or claims on their insurance. This is to encourage the drivers to drive safely on the road.

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Table 1: *Similarities in the rear seat belt policy between Malaysia and the UK*

Policy	**Malaysia**	**UK**
Both countries have research institutions for road safety programs.	Malaysian Institute of Road Safety Research (MIROS).	Department for Transport-Transport Road Research Laboratory (TRL).
Both countries experienced incremental stages in the implementation of Rear Seat Belt Policy.	• The advocacy campaign to promote rear seat belt wearing was launched by the government of Malaysia in June 2008. • 2009- Enforcement of RSBP.	• In 1987, rear seat belts are required to be installed in new cars. • In 1989, wearing rear seat belts becomes compulsory for children under 14. • In 1991, it becomes compulsory for adults to belt up in the back (ROSPA, 2014).
Both countries have similar objectives in the policy.	Reduce the number of fatalities rate caused by road accidents.	Reduce the number of fatalities rate caused by road accidents.

Table 2: *Differences in rear seat belt policy between Malaysia and the UK*

Policy	**Malaysia**	**UK**
Coverage of Rear Seat Belt Policy for vehicles	It is not compulsory for passengers to wear seat belts in the buses, minibuses and coaches.	It is compulsory for passengers to wear seat belts in the buses, minibuses and coaches (ROSPA, 2014).
Year of Enforcement	In January 2009.	• 1989 (for children) • 1991 (for adults)
Fine Imposed (if not wearing rear seat belt)	RM 300 up to RM 2000 or/an imprisonment of up to 1 year.	GBP 30 and up to GBP 500.
Political Acceptability	Fewer arguments among political parties.	Strong arguments between 'defender of life' and 'defender of liberty' (Adams, 2005).
Obligation to install the rear seat belt	Compulsory. Free installation offered by car manufacturers.	• If the vehicle is not installed with seat belts, any children under 3 years old are prohibited to ride in it. • These rules only apply if the vehicle was originally made without seat belts (Gov. UK, 2014).
Responsible person to pay summons	Issued to passengers age 17 years and above (MASU, 2014).	Issued to passengers age 14 years and above (ROSPA, 2014).
Reduction in insurance claims	No regulations that can reduce the amount of insurance claim if the passengers were found not wearing rear seat belts in case of road accident.	• Claim for insurance can be reduced by 15-50 per cent if the passengers were found not wearing rear seat belts in case of road accident. • In the case of Hitchens v Berkshire (2000)

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RECOMMENDATIONS

The Malaysian insurance companies need to participate in the rear seat belt policy. They need to revise their contract and make a new legislation that can reduce the amount of compensation to those passengers who are caught not wearing the rear seat belt in the event of a road accident. In the UK, insurance companies would reduce the amount of compensation if it is discovered that the insured person did not wear the rear seat belt in the event of a road accident. It is suggested that the Malaysian insurance companies emulate the steps taken by the insurance companies in the UK to emphasize on the importance of wearing rear seat belts.

Furthermore, the Malaysian government needs to make a new regulation that compels all passengers in buses and coaches to wear rear seat belts. Recently, there are many road fatalities involving passengers of buses and coaches. In the UK, wearing the rear seat belts is made compulsory for the passengers on the buses and coaches. Hence, the Malaysian government also needs to emulate the steps taken by the UK government to enforce the rear seat belt policy for all passengers of buses and coaches. This can significantly reduce the number of road fatalities and severe injuries and the tendency for them to be thrown forward is lower in cases of road accidents. In addition, the policy makers should also include the car rental services in this ruling as they might experience a similar situation like any other ordinary cars when involved in road accidents. In other words, if the unbelted rear passengers in the rented car are involved in road accidents, the possibility of them to be fatalities is also high (a similar risk with other ordinary cars).

Last but not least, everyone needs to work hand in hand in reducing the number of road fatalities and severe injuries by ensuring all passengers in the vehicle wear rear seat belts. It is also recommended for parents to provide their toddlers with suitable car restrain seats as regular rear seat belts are unsuitable and ineffective. Besides that, car owners need to ensure all rear seat belts are free from defects. In addition, everyone needs to wear the rear seat belt and make it a habit while travelling.

eISSN 2600-9374

CONCLUSION

Rear seat belt wearing is found to be effective in reducing the number of road fatalities and severe injuries among the car passengers. Several countries, including Malaysia and the UK, have enacted laws that compel their citizens to fasten the rear seat belt. However, the rear seat belt wearing rates differ between both countries. In Malaysia, the rear seat belt wearing rate is lower as compared to the UK. Not surprisingly, the number of road fatalities is higher than the UK.

One of the reasons the wearing rate is low in Malaysia is due to the lack of enforcement by the police and the Road Transport Department. They prefer to use a softer approach such as advising and reminding the car occupants rather than issuing summonses. The car passengers refuse to wear the rear seat belt as they believe that they will not be given summonses if they do not wear the rear seat belts. Besides that, although the car passengers do have knowledge on the importance of wearing rear seat belt, they however choose not to due to sheer laziness.

In Malaysia, the number of road fatalities has increased in a steady manner and the fatality indexes are still far from the benchmarks set, which are to reduce the fatality index to 2.0 deaths per 10,000 vehicles, 10 deaths per 100,000 population and 10 deaths per billion vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT) by 2010 (Ministry of Transport, 2006). Hence, the government needs to strengthen their enforcement and issue summonses to those who do not wear rear seat belts. This is because by having a stringent enforcement, people are encouraged to fasten the rear seat belt. However, before the government strengthens their enforcement efforts, they need to ensure that people are fully aware of the legislation, the enforcement date of the policy, and the importance of rear seat belt wearing. In addition, the government needs to monitor the implementation of the policy by updating the rear seat belt instalment process.

Besides that, it is suggested that the government emulate some of the best practices made by the government of UK in reducing the number of road fatalities by making it compulsory for passengers of the buses and coaches to wear seat belts. One of the reasons why the Malaysian government needs to emulate the UK government efforts in reducing the number of road fatalities is because according to Whitelegg and Haq (2006), the UK currently has an excellent record in reducing road traffic accident fatalities and serious injuries. Since the responsibility to reduce the number of road fatalities cannot be solely relied upon the government, the NGOs, society, and the road users also need to work hand in hand to reduce the fatality rate. All parties need to participate in the effort to reduce the number of road fatalities so that many talented lives and money can be saved in the country.

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