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COMMUNICATION BARRIERS BETWEEN LOCAL CONTRACTORS AND FOREIGN UNSKILLED LABOUR.

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Abstract:

Over the past few years, the number of foreign labour has increased tremendously due to vast development of the country's economy. However leads to a new problem which is in aspects of communication barriers between local contractors and foreign unskilled labour. Hence, this issue comes out with an aim of the research which is to identify the method of local contractor in order to manage the communications barrier towards foreign unskilled labour. The objectives are to identify the factors of communication barriers, to investigate the effects from communication barriers and to explore the approach of the local contractors that can be used to solve the communication barrier. A quantitative approach was used in this research and a questionnaire was used as the instrument which was distributed to the local contractors from G5. The outcomes of this research found that the highest factor was due to insufficient knowledge of the local language as foreign labours' fluency level depends mostly on years of experience living in the country. This is regarded as a huge problem as total miscommunication could even cause accidents to happen in the construction site. Therefore, the best solution to overcome this problem is by conducting local language training classes for foreign unskilled labour by Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB). The result of this research will help the local contractors in order to overcome the communication barriers towards foreign unskilled labour.

Keywords: Communication Barriers; Foreign Unskilled Labours; Local Contractors

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is the one of country the developing countries in need of development to achieve the government's aspiration to make Malaysia as a developed country. In order to achieve that, the construction industry needs more Malaysian youths to work within the field. However, many refuse to do so and therefore this is the reason why most contractors employ foreign unskilled labours to work with them (Wei & Yazdanifard, 2015). With the number of foreign unskilled labour are increase, it will give impact towards local worker are did not have opportunities to working in field of construction. The other effect is ccommunication barrier is anything that prevents us from receiving and understanding the messages. They can interfere with or block the message you are trying to send (Rani, 2016). Communication barrier can happen whether verbal or written, when presenting information to foreign unskilled labour. The effects are the foreigner difficult to understand of work order by employer (Salleh et al., 2012).

The aim of research is to identify the method that ~~the~~ contractors use in order to manage the communications barrier. The objectives of this research are to identify the factor of communication barriers between local contractors and foreign unskilled labour. Besides, this research also wants to determine the effects from communication barriers between local contractors and foreign unskilled labour. The other objective is to explore the approach of the contractors that can be used to solve the communication barriers.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition of Communication

Communication is important in all activities including construction industry. It is because, communication enables the organization becomes well and is an essential component for the process of construction. Beyond the argument, any improvement in communication between local contractors and foreign unskilled labours can be improved an organization's operating effectiveness (Valithern,2014).

2.2 Factor of Communication Barrier between Contractors and Foreign Unskilled Labour

According to Affare (2012), poor listeners, poor leadership, unclear communication objectives, unclear channels of communication, ineffective reporting system, limited resources, information filtering, lack necessary skills, lack of trust, stereotyping and language difficulties are the factors of communication barriers. Lack of feedback - Feedback is the reflection of communication. Feedback or input that gets from the receiver is a mirrors what the sender has sent. Input is the collector sending back to the sender the message as saw. Without feedback, communication is one-way. Feedback occurs in an assortment of ways. Feedback might be as inconspicuous as a gaze, an astounded look, a gesture, or inability to ask any inquiries after entangled guidelines have been given. Both sender and recipient can assume a dynamic part in utilizing criticism to make communication genuinely two-way (Erven, 2002)

2.3 Effects of Communication Barriers between Contractors and Foreign Unskilled Labour.

Poor communication in the construction industry has a significant detrimental effect on project quality, cost, schedule, and worker safety (Maslej, 2006). Construction schedules can be significantly delayed as a direct result of poor communication. Miss-communicated information leads to work being redone or corrected. Lack of proper project supervision can lead to schedule delays and can significantly increase the cost of any given project. Besides, poor communication and inefficiencies between companies is responsible for 30% of design and construction costs, excluding material costs such as concrete, brick and mortar. Maslej (2006) also noted that language barrier was a strong contributor to poor communication practices on the jobsite and had a tremendous impact on worker safety.

2.4 Method of Contractors to Solve the Communication Barriers

Overcoming communication barriers require a vigilant observation and thoughts of potential barriers in a particular instance of communication. Strategies to overcome barriers will be different in different situations depending upon the type of barriers present. The method that can use by contractors to solve the communication barriers are training classes for foreign unskilled labour to learn local languages, use of translating device and language training classes for supervisors to learn foreign languages. Besides, the contractors also can apply the language training classes for local supervisors to learn foreign languages. (Valithern, 2014).

According to Valithern (2014), majority as they might think by using translating device and language classes for supervisors to learn foreign languages choices are not so practical as compared to the other two others method. Besides, most of the contractors have never actually seen a translating device and do not even know the existence of such a technology. A translating device is a device that acts just like a translator where verbal and texts messages can be translated to another language.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Method

Quantitative method refers to data which come in the form of numbering and mathematical presentation. It is believed that this quantitative method enables a simpler way in data collection Labaree (2009). The respondents will not feel burdened when they are requested to answer the questions. Besides, the questionnaires are believed to be the most suitable method in gathering valid data information from respondents for this study. One advantage of using this method is it is respondent-friendly since the questions are simple. The answers are also provided in a friendly manner where a Likert scale is given based on the level of agreement of respondents.

A questionnaire is developed and distributed to contractor in Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur. According to the research conducted by Buntat et al. (2014) at 10 construction sites around Kuala Lumpur and Selangor shows that foreign unskilled labour are able to monopolize almost all concerns over local workforce. The scope of the study is limited to the contractors G5. According to Ismail (2012), there are had an issue on unsuccessful contractors obtaining any tender. From this issue, the selection of contractor G5 is looking at the factor of cumulative capital which affects the sources of income they earn to sustain life and on how contractors G5 manage their workers after getting a big tender cause the maximum rate of tendering capacity for contractor G5 is only RM 5,000,000.00. Thus, these questions covered the issue on communication barrier between local contractors and foreign unskilled labour.

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, the questionnaire was divided into four (4) sections. The sections in this questionnaire are Section A, Section B, Section C and Section D. Section A used to identify the Background of Respondent and Company that consists of six (6) questions. The purpose of section B is to identify the factors of communication barriers between local contractors and foreign unskilled labour. Section C used to investigate the effects from communication barriers between local contractors and foreign unskilled labour. Section D is to explore the approach of the local contractors that can be used to solve the communication barriers.

3.2 Data Analysis

The data was collected from the respondent and it was analysed to come out with the finding of this research study. The data obtained is analysed by using Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) version 22 as it is the most suitable method to be used in this study. Descriptive analysis is being used in order to analyse the data obtained from all 316 respondents. The variables are represented using the scale in order to make it easier for them to choose the answer. After the analysis is made using the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) version 22, it is then transferred into tables and pie charts so that the data is presented in a more organized and systematic manner.

4.0 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result obtained from data collection where questionnaires were distributed among local contractors in construction industry. The results from the questionnaires survey are used to achieve the objectives of this research. The type of data in section A is nominal scale where the respondents needed to state their ages, location of company, how many foreign unskilled labour that they have and which country foreign unskilled labour come from. In section B, C and D, the data is collected by using Likert scale. This is to ensure the similarities of range answer by respondents and as an instrument to get the results. The Likert scale is categorised in five (5) different levels that show their agreement for each question given. The Likert scale symbolized 1 as “Strongly Disagree”, 2 as “Disagree”, 3 as “Moderate”, 4 as “Agree” and 5 as “Strongly Agree”. All these scales were used to show the level of agreement on the questions provided to the respondents.

4.1 Data Analysis for Section B: To identify factors of communication barriers.

From Table 1, the highest ranking from the respondents' survey towards the factor which is working experience of foreign unskilled labour that affects the fluency of local language. From the overall perspectives, the mean is 3.86 and the highest percentage for voting this factor is “Strongly agree” equals to fifty two percent (52%). It is agreed that respondents think the working experience of foreign unskilled labour that affecting the fluent of local language is the most factors of communication barriers. From the previous study, they also stated that that the workers with longer working experience are more fluent as compared to the workers with lesser working experience (Valithern, 2014).

Table 1: Factors of communication barriers between local contractors and foreign unskilled labour

Description	Scale of Agreement (Percentage)					Average Index	Rank
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Moderate	Agree	Strongly Agree		
Working experience of foreign unskilled labour that affecting the fluent of local language.	3	17	67	163	66	3.86	1
Foreign unskilled labours do not have skill to write, read and count.	5	23	72	144	72	3.81	2
Unclear communication objectives	9	26	69	146	66	3.74	3
The age of the foreign unskilled labour causing them difficult to learn the local language.	2	27	83	148	56	3.72	4
Foreign unskilled labour do not understand the dialect used by contractors	8	41	65	136	66	3.67	5
Foreign unskilled labour did not understand the local language.	4	39	81	133	59	3.65	6
Lack of feedback (One-way communication)	11	31	82	129	63	3.64	7
Foreign unskilled labour are difficult to accept instruction from contractor	15	32	80	134	55	3.58	8
Exchange of information and interaction from contractor	3	26	118	126	43	3.57	9
Lack of standardized communication methods	15	41	86	106	68	3.54	10
Do not receive training on a formal either in the home country or in Malaysia	16	35	84	126	55	3.53	11
Limited access for foreign unskilled labour to learn Malay and English language	14	36	94	141	31	3.44	12

4.2. Data Analysis for Section C: To investigate the effects of communication barriers

Table 2 shows the highest ranking from the respondents' survey towards the effect of accident risk of foreign unskilled labour where the mean is 3.92 and the highest voting for this factor is "Agree" which is forty one percent (41%). Foreign unskilled labour may face accidental risk due to language insecurity or for the foreign unskilled labour face of communication barriers. Most of researcher agreed with this statement which said that the communication barriers may face the accident risk towards foreign unskilled labour. According to Haryati cited in Salleh et al. (2012) based on the respondent's perception 50% of the local contractors agreed and 41% of them are agreed strongly that the accident risks at construction site exists from the communication problem language amongst foreign unskilled labour in this country.

Table 2: Effects from communication barriers between local contractors and foreign unskilled labour

Description	Scale of Agreement (Percentage)					Average Index	Rank
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Moderate	Agree	Strongly Agree		
Accident risk	4	21	65	131	95	3.92	1
Delaying progress of works	4	17	64	151	80	3.91	2
Disability towards foreign unskilled labour	10	16	67	125	98	3.9	3
Injury towards foreign unskilled labour	8	19	63	141	85	3.87	4
Death towards foreign unskilled labour	2	25	72	129	88	3.87	5
Disturbance on quality of project	7	24	60	139	86	3.86	6
Disrupting project costs	5	35	56	144	76	3.79	7
The information did not reachable to other workers	6	33	65	131	81	3.78	8
Leads to work that need to be corrected	6	32	84	116	78	3.72	9
Lead to design problems that cause design errors	6	22	93	132	63	3.71	10
Breakdown in team cohesion	12	37	92	124	51	3.52	11

4.3. Data Analysis for Section D: To explore the approach of the local contractors that can be used to solve the communication barriers.

Table 3 shows the approach of the local contractors that can be used to solve the communication barriers which is language training classes for foreign unskilled labour to learn local language where the mean is 4.19. The highest voting for this approach is “Agree” which is fifty two percent (52%) from the total respondent. Most of local contractors agreed with this approach on how to manage the communication barriers between local contractors and foreign unskilled labour. This is because, maybe from this approach, foreign unskilled labour will understand the language use from contactors. According to Valitherm (2014) based on his research, the majority of the local contractors positioned for language training classes for foreign unskilled labour to learn local languages as the first choice, trailed by assigning a translator as the second decision.

Table 3: Approach of the local contractors that can be used to solve the communication barriers.

Descripti	Scale of Agreement (Percentage)					Average Index	Rank
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Moderate	Agree	Strongly Agree		
Language training classes for foreign unskilled labour to learn local language	-	8	34	164	110	4.19	1
Safety signage on site	-	2	54	181	79	4.07	2
Using visuals (Photographs, drawings, diagrams)	-	18	43	165	90	4.03	3
Only takes the foreign unskilled labour that understand local language	-	17	57	174	68	3.93	4
Using technology medium (Radio, television)	-	13	66	169	68	3.92	5

Using im-smartsafety	-	11	72	171	62	3.9	6
By assign a translator	-	21	117	123	55	3.67	7
Language training classes for contractors to learn foreign unskilled labour language	2	88	153	70	3	2.95	8

5.0 CONCLUSION

In conclusion this research will explain the factor of communication barriers among local contractor and foreign unskilled labour. The researcher found that the language barrier in the construction industry in Malaysia is still very serious. The objectives of the research have been achieved by the researcher through the primary study and questionnaire survey. The common way to solve the communication barriers is language training classes for foreign unskilled labour to learn local language where make the class before they join in the construction industry. Local contractors or the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) Malaysia should classify foreign unskilled labour who understands Bahasa Malaysia before allowing them to work in construction. The most ordinarily best dialect by both the local contractors and foreign unskilled labour is Bahasa Malaysia. It is hoped that this study will help local contractors in gaining more knowledge as well as having a better understanding in figuring out ways to solve communication barriers

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