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# A SURVEY ON WAYS TO IMPROVE ON THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE LOCALS IN THE 3D JOB SECTOR

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## **Abstract:**

Construction industry has not only been one of the major sources of income in Malaysian economy, but also a platform for employment opportunities to the locals. 3D, an acronym for Dirty, Dangerous and Difficult is very much related to the construction industry. Nowadays, locals are reluctant to be involved in construction industry despite the high demands for job opportunities which lead to the recent import of 1.5 million Bangladeshi to fulfill the job vacancies in various 3D sectors. This research aims to gain a better understanding on how to improve the involvement of locals in 3D job sectors. The research focuses on the construction industry players within the Selangor area through a survey and reviews on various past researches. Although there are some known reasons for employing foreign workers such as low wages, willingness to engage in difficulties etc., however, there are some identified socio-economical issues arising from this arrangement. Multiple initiatives are identified to be the key programme in promoting this professionalism into something that would attract locals. Despite numerous efforts, they are still lack of interest from fastidious youth.

**Keywords:** 3D; Foreign labours; Professionalism, CITP

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Construction industry has become one of the major sources of income and a platform providing employments to the locals in Malaysia. It has been supported by Foulkes & Ruddock (2003), that the Construction Industry plays significant role to the economy of the country. In another point of view, Generic (2005) categorised the scope of Construction Industry into three. They are the construction of building, any construction that related to infrastructure and work that involved the 3D specialist which is represented by an acronym of Dirty, Dangerous and Difficult. It is often related to the sector that needs working in high risk places which requires physical strength such as cleaning services, automotive including constructions or any other similar works in 3D category which also involve outdoor works (Balakrishnan, 2016).

Nowadays, the locals have their own perceptions on the 3D job sectors. Most of the locals are reluctant to work in this sector despite high demands for the job opportunities because they prefer to work in comfortable spaces rather than working hands-on under the scorching hot weather. Hence, in the mid of June 2015, the government announced to recruit approximately 1.5 million Bangladeshi to fulfill the job vacancy in various 3D sectors. Besides, there are many initiatives taken by the government to attract locals to be involved in 3D job sectors. One of them is through the Construction Industry Transformation Programme (CITP), a collaboration of Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) with Ministry of Works and, several stakeholders and the entire industry as a whole through a five year duration transformation programme from 2016 to 2020. It aims to transform the construction industry through four strategic thrusts known as Quality, Safety and Professionalism; Environmental Sustainability; Productivity; and Internationalisation. The CITP is the continuation of Construction Industry Master Plan (2006-2015) aimed at empowering and strengthening the construction industry.



In-line with that, this research aims to gain better understanding on how to improve the involvement of locals in 3D job sectors through studying the common 3D scope of works that poorly involved by the locals in Construction Industry, investigating factors contributing to the involvement of locals, and identifying ways to improve the involvement of locals in 3D job sectors

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 *The 3D Job Sector***

The 3D job sectors are described as commonly hands-on works and can potentially be dirty, dangerous and difficult such as construction industry and automotive maintenance (Balakrishnan, 2016). Chan (2009) had enlisted categorisation of 3D works according to various countries, which can conclusively be classified as manufacturing of machineries, agriculture including farming and fishing, and construction. It is noted by Lee (2016) that various countries such as the Philippines, Egypt, Japan, Italy and Canada regarded the 3D related jobs as being low-class with low minimal wages job sectors, which repelled locals from getting involved. Thus, this has opened-up doors for imported workers to fill in vacancies left by locals. In support to that, there were approximately half million foreign workers who involved in 3D job sectors in Korea nations, which might have also being the case elsewhere.

### **2.2 *Poor Involvement of Locals***

Shiadri (2008) found that the shortage on the involvement of the locals in the construction industry has resulted in the need of recruiting the foreign workers to work here in Malaysia. Surprisingly, it is said that Malaysians are reluctant to work in 3D job sectors just because they rather work indoors than work outdoors is far from true. Because of the low wages offered, it is not enough to earn a living nowadays. In fact, most Malaysians are now currently working in 3D job sectors in other countries. The fact that Malaysians are now working in 3D job sectors in Singapore earning almost RM3015 per month doing the same job in Malaysia at the price of RM900 per month is quite a revelation.

In addition, few factors that contribute to the poor involvement of locals in 3D job sectors other than low wages. They include poor images of construction jobs, poor working conditions, poor site accommodation and services, unattractive job environment, in possession of high education level, lack of training and skills, and personal preference to working overseas. Mohd Rahim et.al, (2016) summarised that factors contributing to lack of local involvement in Construction Industry based on the results from the past researches includes age of workforce, changes in skills requirement or introduction of new technology, low salary, poor education and training, poor construction industry image, poor site safety and working environment, skilled workers migrate overseas, and lastly, unattractive job with lack of worker-oriented career path. As foreign labours are desperate for jobs and not demanding for high wages, the employers prefer to employ foreign workers (Yeoh and Lin, 2013). Subsequently, as employers do not pay high wages anymore, the locals avoid working in these sectors in the current economic state these days (Malay Mail, 2016a; 2016b).

### **2.3 *The Dilemma of Recruiting Foreign Workers***

Undoubtedly, employing foreign workers provide reasonable productivity with handsome margin for employers. There are also some disadvantages to this economic option. A total of 14,787 illegal foreign workers reported to have been detained from January up to April this year (NST Online, 2017). The increase in the number of foreign workers is also said to give rise to the crime rates in Malaysia even though only a tiny percentage of 10% is being related to the foreign workers (MEF, 2016). This stigma still induces fear, prejudice and safety concerns within communities.

### **2.4 *Strategising the Solution***

In conjunction with encouraging the involvement of the locals, part of the goals set by the programme include generating high-skilled jobs and opportunities for Malaysian youth and Small and Medium-sized

enterprises (SMEs) and reducing the reliance on low skilled foreign labour. Lill (2009) suggested the need for multi-skilled labours to increase marketability of the workers. In addition, implementation of technologies can be used to economise the shortage of the labour (Richardson. 2009). Apart from that, the implementation of new technology is also said to increase the productivity.

Vocational education and training programme (Mohd-Rahim et al., 2016) are possible ways to increase the involvement of the locals. To assist this initiative, through Ministry of Works, CIDB and the Department of Skills and Development (DSD), private and public training programmes and centers are developed immensely (DSD, 2011).

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

Mainly, the data will be collected through questionnaires that will be distributed to respected parties. The results obtained will expectantly fulfill the objectives of the research. The targeted respondents are locals who involved in the construction industry directly or indirectly within the locality of Selangor area. Nowadays, questionnaires can be paperless, where the questionnaire can easily be distributed through email or electronic mass media to be answered by respective respondents conveniently. Hence, this method is chosen to ease distribution and collection.

#### 3.1 The Questionnaires design

The development of the questionnaires is made using the objective as the foundation and rooted out to several related questions. The questionnaires design is summarised as per Table 3.1 below:

Table 3.1 : Questionnaire Design

QUESTIONNAIRES DESIGN	
<b>SECTION A :</b>	Section A will comprise of Respondent's information
<b>SECTION B :</b>	To identify the factors of the involvement of the workers in 3D job sectors.
<b>SECTION C :</b>	To study the reasons why locals are poorly involved in the 3D job sectors.
<b>SECTION D :</b>	To establish ways to improve the involvement of locals in 3D job sectors.

Likert Scale is used to express the answers given by the respondents and the rating will be used to calculate the percentage of the frequency and data received. After both primary and secondary data collecting methods are carried out, an analysis is made and the results are obtained.

### 4.0 ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The data collection was carried out and the following data is observed. In this day and age, paperless questionnaires has revolutionised the way data are collected. Distribution done through email and other online means and it has lessen time used on distributing and collecting the papers as everything can be done at your fingertips. To make sure that the results obtained is reliable; well-structured, clear and simple to understand the objective of questionnaires were designed. Approximately 50 local respondents from the Construction Industry within the Selangor area are targeted. The followings are the general demographics of the respondents collected.

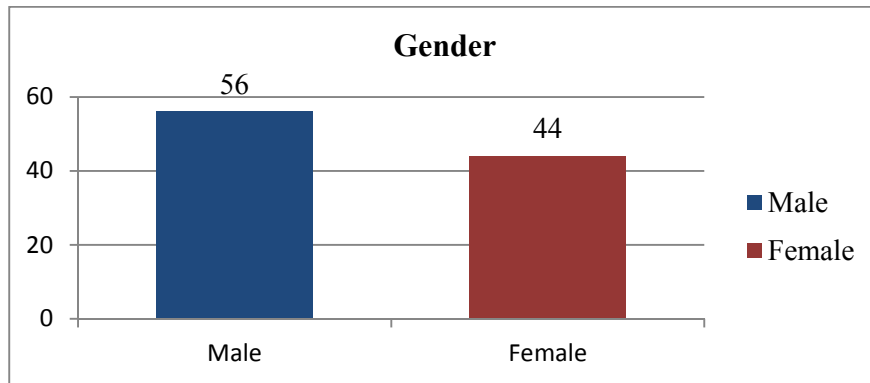


Figure 1: Respondents by Gender

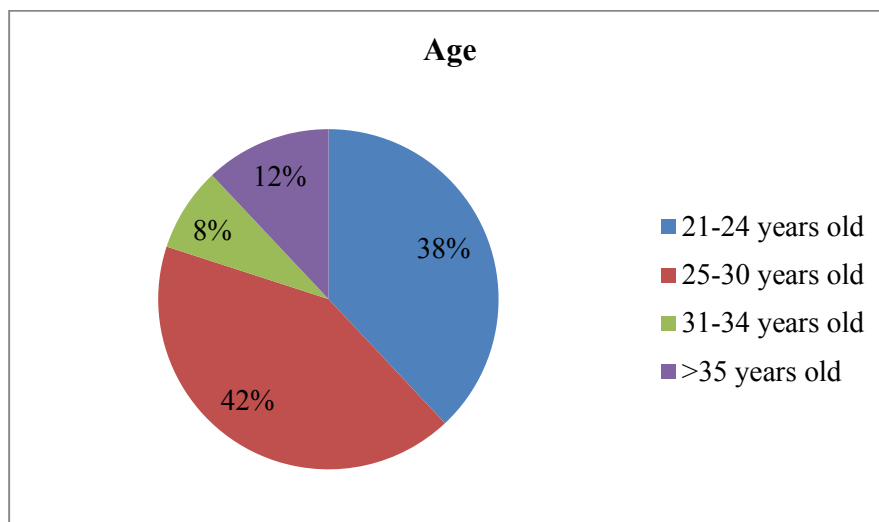


Figure 2 Respondents by Age

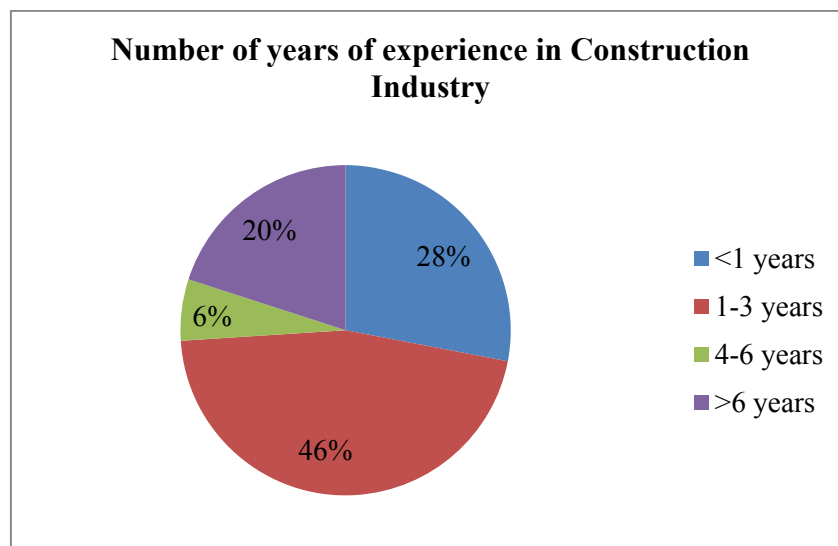


Figure 3 Respondents by number of experience in Construction Industry

As the respondents are highly coming from age range of 25-30 years old, it does affect the length of experience by the respondents. Most of them are fresh graduates and are new to the Construction Industry. There are a total of 24 various classifications of job of the respondents obtained by the researcher. It consists of Quantity Surveyor, Architect, Electrical Engineer, trainees and etc. The data gathered through the questionnaires are highlighted in the following results :

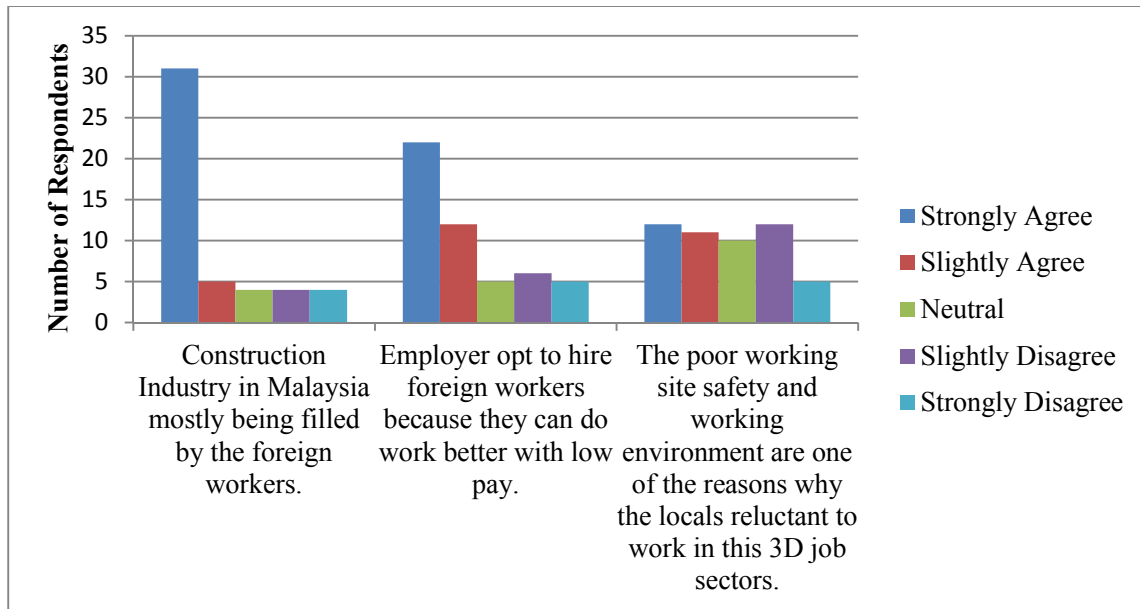


Figure 4 Data collected from the respondents

Several factors are identified to be the cause of the lack of involvement from locals and why foreign workers are favoured by most employers. The data extracted confirmed that locals' involvement are indeed in scarcity and the number of foreigners are continuing to rise. According to Figure 4, 31 respondents confirmed that most of the Construction Industry are occupied by foreign workers as they are capable to do work with low pay. Poor safety and poor environment are among the few reasons why the locals are reluctant to work in this 3D job sectors with 44% and 24% respectively strongly agreed with these facts. It is seen that 34% of the professionals in their responses said that the number of illegal immigrants is higher compared to the legal immigrants that migrate to our country. Most respondents at 26% either slightly agree or neutral in saying that a lot of crimes reported nowadays involve foreigners.

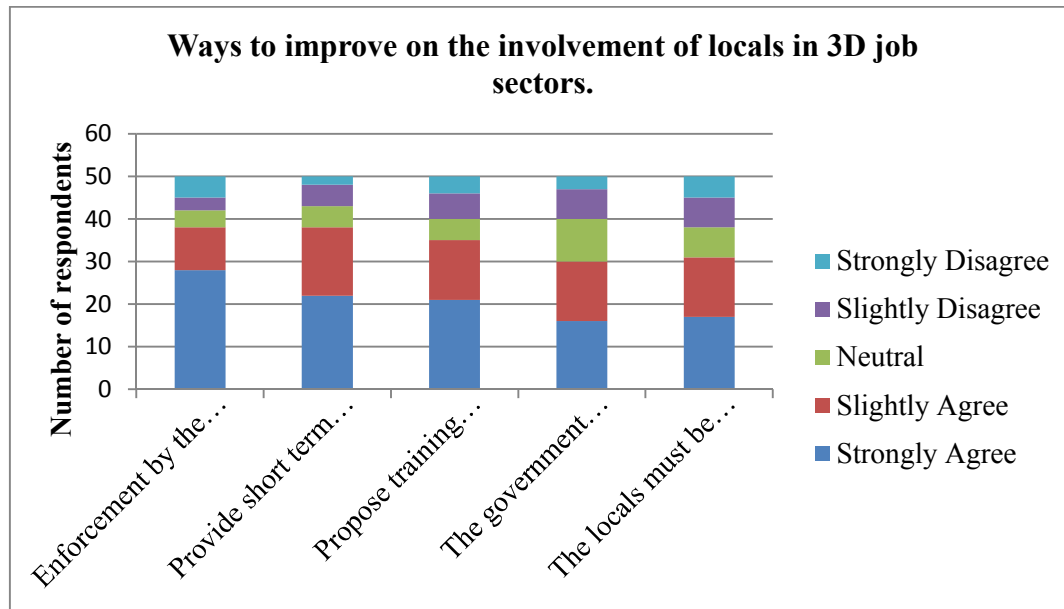


Figure 5 Data on ways to improve on the involvement of locals in 3D job sectors.

As for the efforts to improve the involvement of the locals, several initiatives are enlisted. Figure 4.5 indicates the respondents' opinions on the initiatives. The respondents favour on the enforcement by the government to increase the minimum wages for labour in 3D job sectors (56%), provide short term educational and training programme to train the inexperienced locals related to 3D job practices (44%), propose training centre to enhance the existing skills of the locals from time to time by the government (21%), enforcement by the government on the implementations of the four (4) strategic thrusts under Construction Industry Transformation Plan (CITP) 2016-2020 to the employer as well as to encourage the locals to involve in 3D job sectors (16%) . Last but not least, expose the locals to the 3D scope of works through the implementation of Skim Latihan 1 Malaysia (SL1M) Programme (34%) which are helpful in producing better skilled workers and job opportunities for locals, government's and their agencies' effort to regulate and control the intake. Besides, population and the well being of foreign workers in construction industry might also assist in the effort of producing a better professionalism deemed required by the industry.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

Initiatives such as regulated registration, professional training, acknowledgement of high-skilled and multi-skilled personnel, improvement in work and living environment and the use of quality material are identified to be the key programme in promoting this professionalism into something that would attract locals. Despite the appealing promotions and lucrative envisioned outcome, the lack of participation and interest from fastidious youth demand more awareness and education on top of a well-thought fascinating scheme to ensure the success of this initiative. Resolving this will eventually lead to local involvement and subsequent improvement in professionalism and productivity as envisioned by the authorities through CITP-CIDB.

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