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DETERMINANTS OF PETROL STATION EMPLOYEES SAFETY PRACTICES

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine the safety practices of petrol stations employees in the Federal Territory of Labuan and Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. One hundred and sixteen employees participated in this study where they were randomly selected by using simple random sampling. The data were collected through a set of self-administered questionnaires. The results show that all three independent variables (occupational hazard awareness, hazard control methods awareness, and safety attitude) were significantly correlated with safety practices. Further results showed that hazard control methods awareness and safety attitude could explain 57.3 per cent of employee safety practices with hazard control methods awareness contributing the most to safety practices. The findings of this study indicate that strong awareness and attitude are essential in preventing injuries and accidents in the workplace.

Keywords: Sccupational hazard awareness; Hazard control methods awareness; safety attitude; Safety practices; Petrol stations employees

Abstrak

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menentukan amalan keselamatan pekerja stesen minyak di Wilayah Persekutuan Labuan dan Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. Seratus enam belas pekerja telah mengambil bahagian dalam kajian ini di mana mereka dipilih secara rawak menggunakan persampelan rawak mudah. Data dikumpul melalui satu set soal selidik yang ditadbir sendiri. Hasil kajian menunjukkan ketiga-tiga pembolehubah tidak bersandar (kesedaran bahaya pekerjaan, kesedaran kaedah mengawal bahaya dan sikap terhadap keselamatan) mempunyai korelasi yang signifikan dengan amalan keselamatan. Hasil kajian selanjutnya menunjukkan bahawa kesedaran kaedah mengawal bahaya dan sikap terhadap keselamatan boleh menjelaskan 57.3% daripada amalan keselamatan pekerja dengan kesedaran kaedah mengawal bahaya menyumbang paling banyak kepada amalan keselamatan. Dapatan kajian ini

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menunjukkan bahawa kesedaran dan sikap yang kukuh adalah penting dalam mencegah kecederaan dan kemalangan di tempat kerja.

Kata kunci: *Kesedaran bahaya pekerjaan; Kesedaran kaedah mengawal bahaya; Sikap terhadap keselamatan*

Introduction

Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) is a multidisciplinary field emphasising workers' safety, health, and welfare. Occupational safety and health programs aim to prevent workplace injuries, illnesses, and deaths, as well as the suffering and financial hardship these events can cause for workers, their families, and employers (OSHA, 2016). Unsafe behaviours or decisions are normally the leading cause of unwanted incidents. Failure to implement safety practices amongst workers may expose employees to injuries and accidents in the workplace or, worst of all, fatalities (Zarrilli, 2018).

The total amount of occupational accidents in all sectors reported by the Department of Safety and Health (DOSH) as of October 2021 is 6686 (DOSH, 2021). It is reported that 6263 cases are accidents involving non-permanent disabilities. The statistics also reveal that 249 accidents resulted in a permanent disability and 174 fatalities. For petrol stations that fall under the wholesale and retail trade sector, the total accidents statistic in the year 2020 is 128, where one ended up with a permanent disability, three deaths, and 126 non-permanent disabilities (DOSH, 2020). There is an increase in the total number of accidents in 2021, which has a total of 187 accidents, with three having permanent disabilities, 182 non-permanent disabilities, and two deaths (DOSH, 2021). Although the number is low in comparison to other sectors, it is estimated that the total number of unreported accidents is high because developing countries are more likely to place less emphasis on making occupational safety and health inadequacy, resulting in no records (Ahmed et al., 2013).

Pump attendants are exposed to petrochemical all the time as they work around the pump islands most of the time (Johnson and Umoren, 2018). Since petrol stations are equipped and surrounded by multiple complex machines such as the petrol pump itself, accidents cannot be prevented rather, they can be minimised. Because petrochemicals are flammable even at low temperatures, the management must provide safety equipment such as fire extinguishers, safety kits, and the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Employers are responsible for providing a safe working environment for their employees while also adhering to all government safety laws and regulations. The organization and its owners are responsible for promoting a safer workplace and ensuring the well-being and safety of all employees (Taylor, 2017). According to Brisk (2016), there are several ways to prevent workplace

accidents, including proper signage, sufficient maintenance of machines, usage of proper equipment, and training.

There are a total of 3,700 petrol stations in Malaysia, representing various companies such as Petronas, Shell, Petron, BHP, Chevron Caltex, and others, with 1065, 950, 570, 420, 360, and 335 units respectively; with Petronas, Shell and Petron having the highest number of stations as of 2017 (Müller, 2022). Each of these petrol stations is distinct in its way, whether it's through its logo, colour, or motto. Every petrol station is constantly on the lookout for new ways to increase their daily profits.

Quite a recent incident occurred in January 2020 at a petrol station in W.P. Labuan, in which a motorcycle's fuel tank caught fire while being refuelled (Banting, 2020). The fire was started by a spark from the suspects' lighter which led to the accident. Fortunately, one of the petrol station's employees brought a fire extinguisher and extinguished the fire. There were no injuries reported as a result of the incidents Another incident was reported in Johor Bahru, where a car was destroyed by fire while being refuelled (Devi, 2019). There were two fire trucks and one Emergency Medical Rescue Services (EMRS) van on the scene. This incident resulted in a destroyed petrol pump, roof damage and a completely burnt car. Fortunately, no injuries were reported.

Employees may take advantage of the lower accident rate in the manufacturing industry by failing to prepare for such incidents. They may only practice proper safety if an accident is likely to occur frequently, as opposed to a rare occurrence. Such behaviour increases the likelihood of unwelcome occurrences at the petrol station, including slips, trips, and falls caused by fuel and oil spills on the forecourt and collisions with moving vehicles (Health & Safety Authority, n.d.). According to Ahmed et al. (2013), the vast majority of hazardous situations and actions result from human behaviour As a result, the purpose of this study is to determine the petrol station employee's safety practices.

Literature Review

Occupational Hazard Awareness

Awareness of occupational hazards creates a safe working environment. When each employee is equipped with adequate occupational hazard knowledge, the workplace becomes much safer, which benefits all parties. Safe workplaces generate profits for the company, its shareholders, its user reputation, and its ability to attract and retain employees and customers (Jilcha and Kitaw, 2016). According to the safety knowledge perspective, when occupational hazard awareness is lacking, there is a high likelihood of workplace accidents occurring. Petrol station employees have the

greatest need for safety training, as they regularly handle flammable liquids. Lack of such knowledge can result in injuries or, at worst, death.

Previous research has demonstrated that lack of awareness contributes to undesirable attitudes and practices that result in unanticipated incidents or accidents (Zakaria et al., 2012). Consequently, employees must be made aware of the safety of their surroundings and their knowledge of safety to ensure that their safety practices are at an excellent level to increase workplace security. Another study found that employee safety behaviour is dependent on having a high level of awareness of workplace hazards (Nneka et al., 2017). For example, if employees are aware of the dangers of petroleum, they will be more cautious when dealing with such hazardous substances to avoid the unfavourable situation. Furthermore, Abidin et. al. (2018) as cited in Fizal et. al. (2019), stated that several studies revealed that the level of employee awareness had a significant correlation with their response to workplace hazards. This demonstrates that employees' awareness of occupational hazards can have an impact on their safety practices. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between occupational hazard awareness and employees' safety practices.

Hazard Control Method Awareness

Due to the presence of flammable liquids such as petrol, diesel, kerosene and lubricants, petrol stations pose a significant risk to both employees and customers. Therefore, workers need to understand and identify the hazard contributing factors to limit and control accidents. According to Ahmed et al. (2013), hazards associated with petrol station operations fall into two categories: onsite and offsite. Onsite hazards are dangers caused by internal factors such as fuel dispenser malfunction, fuel tank leakage, fuel spillage and electrical sparks. Offsite hazards, on the other hand, are those that are caused by factors outside of the organisation, such as customers purchasing fuels and lubricants. Since the items sold in petrol stations are classified as flammable, it is the responsibility of station owners to ensure that any potential danger regarding the storage and handling of hazardous substances at the compound is manageable, that is, if it is not possible to eliminate it, any risks should be reduced (Magambo, 2016).

Individuals typically wear safety control method equipment because they believe that it could potentially save their lives (Bachani et. al., 2017). For example, employees' safety practices were influenced by their awareness of available safety controlling methods in the workplace, such as safety helmets, safety boots and others, as they would equip themselves to avoid injuries and death. Moreover, individuals who received multiple technical supports such as equipment, tools and procedures

demonstrated a positive reaction such as being very compliant, responsive, and possibly improving quality (Oyinlola et al., 2017). For instance, when employees are provided with safety-controlling equipment and are trained on how to use it, they exhibit more reliable safety practices. Furthermore, Marahatta et al. (2017) show that poor utilisation of safety controlling methods is associated with unsatisfying safety practices. This shows that, when an employee is unaware or does not fully utilise the equipment to prevent or handle a hazard, it directly indicates that their safety practices are inadequate. The following hypothesis was therefore developed:

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between hazard control method awareness and employees' safety practices.

Safety Attitude

Safety attitude refers to employees' beliefs and feelings about policies and protocols on safety (Henning et. al., 2009 as cited in Wu et al., 2017). According to Monazzam and Soltanzadeh (2009), based on Heinrich's factors, accidents are the result of unsafe behaviour, which is defined as an unsafe attitude or a poor safety outlook. Cox and Cox (1991) as cited in Wu et al. (2017) proposed that safety attitude consists of four main components: safety hardware and physical danger, concepts and safety software, and human and risks. Positive attitudes toward workplace safety are necessary to ensure that the workplace environment is accident-free to ensure high efficiency, and superior quality, increase employees' morale and reduce the cost associated with accident repairs. In contrast, a negative safety attitude will result in an increase in employee turnover, and a decline in employee safety, morale, work quality, and revenue. To avoid accidents that can result in bodily harm or death to themselves or others, it is therefore essential that employees maintain a positive attitude.

Personality traits or attitudes, according to Ji et al., (2019) can predict the employee's safety behaviour. This demonstrates that if an employee has a negative attitude toward occupational hazards and safety practices, they are more likely to engage in poor safety practices. Additionally, having a positive safety climate, which refers to employees' perceptions, can improve safety performance (Auzoult and Ngueutsa, 2019). Therefore, it can also inspire employees to take safety measures when they perceive or have a generally positive attitude toward occupational hazards and safety practices. Another study found that both safety compliance and safety participation, which refer to attitudes towards safety elements, contribute to human safety (Dahl and Kongsvik, 2017). The following hypothesis was therefore formulated:

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between attitude towards occupational hazards and employees' safety practices.

Employees' Safety Practices

Employee safety practices are critical to ensuring that potential hazards are eliminated or at least controlled. Reason (2016) suggested two approaches to recognising employee errors at work; the first emphasises the dangerous behaviour of the employee, while the second is more oriented toward the dangerous working conditions that could result in an accident at the workplace or premises. Harmful practices, such as not washing one's hands before eating or drinking, disrupt the body's health system. This is due to the presence of pollutants in fuel such as benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylenes (BTEX) which are harmful to the human body and can result in neurological illness and cancer (Johnson and Umoren, 2018). This condition will require employees to seek treatment or be terminated from their jobs. As mentioned earlier, this situation will have a significant impact on the productivity of the petrol station. Petrol stations might experience a loss in revenue due to the decrease in productivity, which could force the company to lay off some employees to compensate for the loss in income.

Research reveals that employees that are equipped with information or knowledge about the substance that they are working with, the condition of the workplace environment, and the company's goal demonstrate a higher standard of safe (Nesheim and Gressgård, 2014 as cited in Harsini et al., 2020). Therefore, the petrol station operator needs to provide employees with safety knowledge, safety training, and courses to ensure that the premises are in a safe condition and that any accidents that occur can be effectively handled. Furthermore, Cooper (1998), as cited in Mohammad and Hadikusumo (2017), asserted that the implementation of safety practices results in a decrease in the percentage of accidents and safety-related expenditures. The following hypothesis was therefore proposed:

Ho4: Employees' awareness towards occupational hazard, awareness towards hazard control method and attitude towards occupational hazard does not influence their safety practices.

Methodology

A cross-sectional quantitative design was employed to examine the determinants of safety practices among petrol station employees. The targeted population consists of petrol station employees in the Federal Territory of Labuan and Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. The estimated population in both regions exceeds 240. These two states were chosen because they are geographically close to one another. This research cannot be conducted solely in the Federal Territory of Labuan due to the small number of petrol stations operating there. Therefore, Kota Kinabalu and Sabah are added to this research. Another reason is that no academic research in this area has yet been published. There were 120 questionnaires distributed to all levels of

employees. The respondents were selected through a simple random sampling technique. Kota Kinabalu was chosen from among the seven zones in the West Coast Division of Sabah, and consequently, 24 petrol stations were then randomly chosen using a simple random sampling technique. After the identification of petrol stations, simple random sampling was again utilised to select the employees of particular petrol stations. Five sets of questionnaires were distributed to each petrol station \ to be completed by five different employees.

This research instrument in this study is a self-administered questionnaire. Items regarding occupational hazards awareness, hazards control methods awareness, and safety attitude were adopted from Adebola (2014). While the items on safety practices were adopted from Nneka et al. (2017). All of the items were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 – 5 (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The questionnaire was left at respective petrol stations for one day so that selected employees could respond before being collected the following day The estimated time required to complete the questionnaire was between 15 to 20 minutes. Only 116 of 120 questionnaires distributed to 30 selected petrol stations in the Federal Territory of Labuan and the western part of Sabah were returned.

To determine the reliability and validity test, a total of 19 sets of pre-tests were conducted. The result was a Cronbach Alpha value greater than 0.700, which exceeded Nunnally's (1978) suggested value. Items regarding occupational hazards awareness, hazards control methods awareness, safety attitude, and safety practices were 0.754, 0.711, 0.738 and 0.802 respectively.

The respondents' background was described by the descriptive analysis. The inferential data analysis involving Pearson correlation was used to ascertain the correlation between independent variables and safety practices, while the multiple linear regression analysis was employed to ascertain the influence of predictor variables on the safety practices of petrol station employees.

Findings dan Discussion

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents (N=116)

Variables	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	53	45.7
Female	**63**	**54.3**
Age		
20 and below	20	17.2
21-30	**62**	**53.4**
Above 30	34	29.3

Table 1 (continues)

Variables	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Marital Status		
Single	**80**	**69.0**
Married	32	27.6
Others	4	3.4
Educational Level		
Primary	4	3.4
Secondary	**82**	**70.7**
Tertiary	30	25.9
Working Years		
Less than 1	26	22.4
1 to 5	**47**	**40.5**
More than 5	43	37.1

Table 1 shows that more than half of the respondents are female (54.3%) compared to male (45.7%). The majority of them are between the ages of 21 and 30 years (53.4%), followed by those older than 30 (29.3%), and those younger than 20 (17.2%). Regarding marital status, the majority of them are single (69.0%), followed by those who are married (27.6%) and then others including divorced, widowed and so on (3.4%). Concerning educational level, the majority (70.7%) have completed secondary school, followed by tertiary level (25.9%) and then primary level (3.4%). In terms of working experience, the majority of respondents (47%) have between one to five years of work experience, followed by those with more than five years of experience (43%) and those with less than one year of work experience (22.4%).

Relationships Between Independent Variables and Dependent Variable

Table 2 indicates a positive significant relationship between occupational hazard awareness and safety practices ($r=0.238$, $p < 0.05$). However, the results also show a weak level of correlation between the variables. Nevertheless, the positive correlation coefficient implies that the higher the respondents' awareness of occupational hazards, the higher their safety practices. Jilcha and Kitaw (2017) stated that lack of occupational safety and ignorance of health can result in diseases, injuries, and medical costs for workers. This can be interpreted to mean that as workers' awareness of potential workplace hazards increases, so do their safety practices. Therefore, Ho1 is rejected; a significant relationship exists between occupational hazard awareness and safety practices.

Table 2: Relationship between independent variables and dependent variable

Variables	Pearson Correlation Coefficient, r	Sig. p
Awareness towards OH	0.238**	0.010
Awareness towards HCM	0.708**	0.000
Attitude towards OH & Safety Practices	0.675**	0.000

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

On the other hand, there is a strong positive significant relationship between hazard control methods awareness and safety practices, with a correlation coefficient value of 0.708. The results indicate that as respondents' awareness of hazard control methods increases, so too will their safety practices. This finding can be supported by Zaira and Hadikusumo (2017), who asserted that technical safety interventions, including PPE and the availability of safety equipment in the workplace, have a significant relationship with safety practices. Thus, Ho2 is rejected; there is a significant relationship between hazard control method awareness and safety practices.

Table 2 also demonstrates a positive and moderate significant relationship between safety attitude and safety practices ($r = 0.675$, $p < 0.01$). To support these findings, Harsini et. al. (2020) suggested that employees' attitudes toward safety culture and paying attention to safety can motivate them to engage in a positive safety practice on their job. Therefore, Ho3 is rejected; there is a significant relationship between safety attitude and safety practices.

Multiple Regression Analysis for Safety Practices Predictors

Table 1: Multiple Regression Analysis for safety practices predictors

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients Beta(B)	Standardized Coefficients Beta (β)	t	Sig. (p-value)
(Constant)	1.275		4.219	0.000
HCM awareness HCM	0.410	0.458	5.323	0.000
Safety attitude	0.305	0.361	4.323	0.000
OH Awareness	0.016	0.022	0.333	0.740

Note: Dependent Variable = Safety Practices
F= 50.192, p = 0.000, R= 0.757, R^2= 0.573, Adjusted R^2= 0.562

Based on Table 3, hazard control method awareness ($\beta = 0.458$, $t = 5.323$, $p < 0.001$) and safety attitude ($\beta = 0.361$, $t = 4.323$, $p < 0.001$) significantly predicted safety practices with the predictors explained 57.3 per cent of variance. The contribution percentage can be explained by the value of R^2 which is 0.573, R^2 value reports how

much of the variance in this analysis is explained by the various predictor variables. In contrast, awareness of occupational hazards does not predict safety practices (β = 0.022, t = 0.333, p < 0.740). The findings revealed that the strongest predictor for safety practices is hazard control method awareness. Ultimately, Ho4 is partially rejected; safety attitude and hazard control method awareness do influence safety practices.

Implication and Conclusion

Several implications could be drawn from this research study. Firstly, this research study contributed to the existing literature on safety practices, specifically the factors that contributed to safety practices. Based on the Multiple Regression findings, hazard control method awareness accounted for the most dominant proportion of variance in safety practices. Therefore, from this result, it is essential for companies or organisations, particularly those involved in the oil industry, to emphasise the availability and functionality of the equipment for hazard control. Furthermore, it is important to provide clear and understandable guidance on how to use the safety kits. Since awareness of the hazard control method strongly contributed to safety practices, an easy manual book that allows users to easily operate hazard control method tools could significantly increase their awareness of such equipment as well as their safety practices.

Furthermore, a safety attitude plays an important role in influencing safety practices. Workers must maintain a positive attitude because it is associated with safety practices. According to Aluko et. al. (2016), to maintain a positive safety attitude, 81% or 234 respondents suggested that strict punitive sanctions be imposed on employees who fail to comply with the safety practices. Not only that, companies should consider alternative methods of influencing employees' safety attitudes and safety practices. Skinner's Operant Conditioning Theory, in which subjects are given either a reward or a punishment based on their attitude, is one method that can be used. Employers can, therefore, punish workers who disregard safety to influence their safety attitude and safety practices.

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