

# Employer Perception toward Safety and Health on Professionals' Commitment, Ethics and Regulatory Compliance in Malaysia

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**Abstract** The attentiveness of ethical commercial practices is developing into a pivotal purpose in equally the trade world and academe. As multicultural expansion develops in line for to globalization, the opinion of principled behaviour attracts growing inquiry as the public perceives the transforming worldwide society. This constantly transforming setting of globalization and demographics of the 21<sup>st</sup> century contests safety and health authorities' ethical reasoning, regulatory compliance and commitment as they attempt to endure the claims of industry. Commerce signifies to entirely arrangements of commercialised trade linked with the producing, manufacturing or constructing of a varied range of merchandises, goods or services. At the similar instant, training and advanced training authorities remain confronted with the duty of formulating potential safety authorities to convene the day-to-day accountabilities of trade as the variables predict besides cooperate with the wider aspect of cross-cultural globalization. The reason of this analysis is to assess analytical relations among ethical reasoning, professional commitment and the regulatory compliance belief amongst employer. By observing the analysis, the factors in this research, relevant employer will be capable to centre on likely areas of essential contained by safety requirements acceptable to well formulate forthcoming safety requirements in Malaysia.

**Keywords** Employer Perception, Safety and Health, Ethics, Regulatory, Malaysia

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## 1. Introduction

Annually, in Malaysia, there are occurrences of injuries and deaths on the job daily as a result of workplace injuries, demonstrating the need for continued regulatory enforcement as these accidents do affect businesses. One of the responsible parties in these predicaments is safety professional (Hip & Thuan, 2014). The field of occupational safety and health has experienced continued growth since the inception of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) of 1994. Malaysian Government enacted OSHA in an effort to assure that workers in Malaysia are provided a safe and healthy work environment through the enforcement of regulations over those industries covered by the standard (Hamimah, et. al, 2012). **Significance of research:** Regulatory bodies like NIOSH and DOSH may benefit from the results of this research in making preliminary recommendations on curriculum enhancement in the area of ethics. By examining the relationships between and levels of professional commitment, ethical reasoning, and belief in regulatory compliance, the stakeholders will be able to focus

on areas of need within safety curriculum in order to better prepare future safety professionals.

## 2. Literature Review

With a wider role for safety in organizations, here will be an increased need for strategy and change management. Historically, safety professionals were considered little more than rule enforcers. Still, they are seen as individuals who interpret and ensure regulatory compliance, affording employers the ability to defend themselves against OSHA inspectors and the fines they levied. Safety programs and even safety professionals are considered a business expense. Since past, the engagement of safety professionals in a project is still influenced by production and profits bottom line (Smith & Hume, 2005).

The emerging role of the safety professional is changing the way companies operate. Safety today is treated as a business function impacting the corporation as a whole Groover & Spigener (2008) and Hamimah et. al., (2012) safety professional's primary mission is the prevention of events that harm people, property, or the environment. They help organizations identify and prevent injuries, illnesses, and property damage. Safety professionals must acquire a

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solid knowledge of the safety sciences through education, experience, and judgment enabling others to rely on their recommendations. This knowledge is based on a firm grasp of qualitative and quantitative analysis of simple and complex products, systems, and operations, affording the ability to identify hazards. Additionally, they operate through a system of deductive reasoning, safety professionals evaluate the hazards to determine the probability of incidents or failure. Once determined, they are able to implement the corrective measure based on ethical reasoning, regulatory compliance, commitment and cost effectiveness, formulating recommendations to upper management (Salas, et. al., 2012).

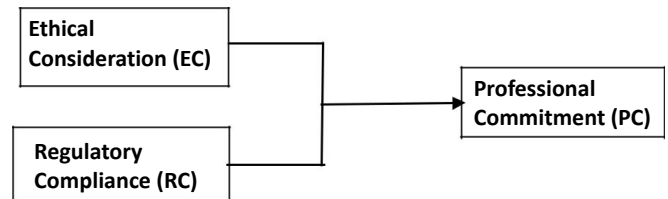
When applied to the safety profession, Frank's Four Ethics Question Base indicated that ethics as a process of determining what an individual perceives as right or wrong. When making ethical decisions concerning regulatory compliance, the decision process is engaged in weighing outcomes. The application of ethical consideration is a learned process that must be cultivated early in the education process, situation tested, and applied without reservation. Ultimately, safety professionals are faced with the daily task of weighing potential financial loss due to injury or property damage versus the potential gain of profitability in saving time and expense for the company. This daily task requires the safety professional to balance opposing issues with the application of ethical reasoning and professional commitment (Weber, & McGivern, 2010). Professional commitment is an individual's ability to identify with and interact within a profession while demonstrating the belief and acceptance of the goals and values of the profession.

The safety professional's commitment is based on three concepts or aspects labeled "normative," "continuance," and "affective." Normative was the feeling of commitment based on what the safety professional should do. Continuance was based on the commitment of feeling the need to do so. Affective produced a strong desire or want to commit. All three aspects are considered components found in attitudinal commitment that safety professionals express at varying levels during their duty. It is the combination of these components that determined a safety professional's level of commitment to an organization or profession (Mearns, et. al., 2010).

Regulatory compliance is the process by which individuals, corporations, or public agencies aspire to follow applicable local, state, and federal regulations. The measure of risk or chance in getting caught, fined, sued, imprisoned, or failing to eliminate potential hazards are all factors in the decision process of committed safety professionals (Cheng, Lin, & Leu. (2010).

### 3. Research Methodology

#### *Conceptual Framework*



This research will utilize quantitative survey research design. Participation will be solicited from members of the Malaysian Society for Occupational Safety and Health and NIOSH, who held the status of professional member. As competent professionals, they are qualified to supply relevant information for the purpose of this study. A stratified random sampling will be extracted from the official roll call. A written concern and permission will be obtained from the Malaysian Society for Occupational Safety and Health and NIOSH.

In order to test the hypotheses, the respondents will be asked to complete a survey which adapted from three survey instruments. The survey will be used to measure the variables of professional commitment, regulatory compliance, and ethical consideration. The instruments (Professional Commitment Scale, Rules Observance Scale, and The Moral Reasoning Inventory) are recognized to be separate instruments for collection and analysis of the data. However, for ease of collection and communication to participants, the instruments will be collectively referred to as the survey.

Professional commitment will be measured using the Jeffrey and Weatherholt (1994) Professional Commitment Scale. Belief in regulatory compliance will be measured using the Jeffrey and Weatherholt (1994) Rules Observance Scale. The final instrument, The Moral Reasoning Inventory, designed by Weber and McGivern (2010), will be used to measure participants' self-reported level of ethical consideration.

### 4. Finding

The consciousness of ethical business exercises is becoming a pivotal point in both the trade world and academe. As cross cultural advance increases due to globalization, there appears to be an improved attentiveness and analysis of decent exercises in the commercial setting as society perceives corruption and financial cost through the worldwide marketplaces. Ahmed, Chung, and Eichenseher (2003) noticed that the perception of rationally satisfactory ethical behaviour among various cultures varies and national and international business practices supervise to grasp these perceptions. As resolute by The Institute of Medicine (2000), globalization and cross-cultural interaction will persist to influence industry as the American worker becomes more various in age, gender, race, and nationality. The Institute emphasized that variations in demographics will remain to

obscure the implementation of workplace health and safety programs. It is the transforming diversity and globalization of the 21<sup>st</sup> century that dares the safety professional's expertise, professional commitment, and ethical reasoning capability while they try to encounter the demands of globalization. Leaders of higher training institutions are challenged with the task of establishing future safety professionals to endure the daily demands of industry as they efficiently predict and interrelate with the wider aspect of cross-cultural globalization.

This chapter has presented the research methods of this study. The research design of the study is cross-sectional which enabled the researcher to collect data at a single point in time. This is opposed to longitudinal research design which takes a longer period of time. Questionnaire method will be used to collect the research data. This is more convenient to get more data from a geographically scattered sample. In addition, interviews were carried out with some members of the university management and a selected number of safety and health professionals to clarify issues arising from the questionnaires. Also discussed are the sampling procedures, response rates, questionnaire development, reliability and validity, methods of statistical analysis and issues related to ethical considerations. The next chapter presents the data analysis.

## 5. Discussion

The attentiveness of ethical commercial practices is developing into a pivotal purpose in equally the trade world and academe. As multicultural expansion develops in line for to globalization, the opinion of principled behaviour attracts growing inquiry as the public perceives the transforming worldwide society. This constantly transforming setting of globalization and demographics of the 21<sup>st</sup> century contests safety and health authorities' ethical reasoning, regulatory compliance and commitment as they attempt to endure the claims of industry. Commerce signifies to entirely arrangements of commercialised trade linked with the producing, manufacturing or constructing of a varied range of merchandises, goods or services. At the similar instant, training and advanced training authorities remain confronted with the duty of formulating potential safety authorities to convene the day-to-day accountabilities of trade as the variables predict besides cooperate with the wider aspect of cross-cultural globalization. The reason of this analysis is to assess analytical relations among ethical reasoning, professional commitment and the regulatory compliance belief amongst professional affiliates of the Malaysian Occupational Safety and Health Professional's Association (MOSPFA) and Malaysian Society for Occupational Safety and Health (MSOSH) While the findings from this analysis cannot be oversimplified to all safety experts, it will definitely deliver valuable material regarding the intensity of professional ethics among government certified safety professionals. By observing the associations among the

factors in this research, relevant agencies will be capable to centre on likely areas of essential contained by safety requirements acceptable to well formulate forthcoming safety experts in Malaysia.

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