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## Safety Culture Behaviour in Electronics Manufacturing Sector (EMS) in Malaysia: The Case of Flextronics

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### Abstract

The prevention of work-related injury and illness is of crucial importance to employees, industry and society as a whole. Corporate safety culture is now generally accepted as having a strong influence over workplace accidents and injuries. After implementation of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) in the organization, there have been an improvement in term of safety in the workplace. However, there are still some cases of accident being reported even after the organizations' management provided training, introducing stricter rules and regulation regarding safety, and provides proper equipment to employee. Hence, the study is carried out in order to examine the effect of employees' attitude and subjective norm toward safety culture behaviour in organization. The study was conducted in manufacturing service industry in Malaysia, and data collection was done at Flextronics Penang Sdn Bhd, a company in the northern part of Malaysia. Data were collected through 196 survey questionnaires distributed to operators (90 respondents), technician (52 respondents) and engineer (27 respondents) in Flextronics Penang Sdn Bhd. The results showed that safety culture behaviour is significantly influenced by employee's attitude and subjective norm. Based on the findings, several recommendations are being put forward in order to improve the safety culture behaviour among employees in the organization. For future research in the same area, it is being recommended to include management commitment, leadership, safety education, and training under scrutiny in order to understand its relationship with safety culture behaviour among employees.

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## 1. Introduction

The evolution of the global market leads to economic growth via industrialization and significantly impacts the profitability of companies and workers' quality of life, but also resulted in increasing number of accidents at the workplace (Soehod and Laxman, 2007). According to the statistics collected by International Labor Organization (ILO) in Soehod and Laxman (2007), it was estimated about 2 million employees are killed due to work-related accidents and diseases, 270 million occupational accidents and 160 million work-related diseases occur every year. Providing a safe place to work is necessary to every employer in order to provide a comfortable, safe and meet or exceed health and safety requirements in the country. It will leads to the increased productivity of the company itself (Tammy, Gina, Judene, Jack & Carol, 2000). In Malaysia, manufacturing industries have high accident rate among other industry sectors which may be due to lack of safety culture among middle to lower group employees (DOSH annual report, 2013). The existence of the problems shows that employees' behaviour and compliance to OSHA 1994 will lead to positive safety culture and reduction of accidents rate in the manufacturing industries in Malaysia. Apart from OSHA, the term safety culture is also an important aspect in reducing risks and accidents at workplace (Ostrom, Wilhemsen & Kaplan, 1993). Noor, Wan Mohd and Aziz Wan (2013) state that the term *safety culture* was introduced by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) after nuclear accident at Chernobyl, Ukraine in 1986. A study by Abdul (2006) reported that organizations which emphasize on OSH will create a safer work environment which is critical to the success of any organization because it could sustain employees' commitment and maximize productivity.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.0 *Electric Manufacturing Sector (EMS)*

The electronics manufacturing sector is defined as businesses that manufacture electronic components and sub-assemblies such as printed circuit boards, manufacture, assemble service or repair products that primarily produce an output dependent upon an electronic signal rather than a physical effect. Businesses may make products of their own design and innovation but can also include those who undertake contract manufacturing to meet the demands of others utilizing the extensive skills and capabilities they possess (Earl, Jim, Shijie & Doug, 2000).

### 2.1 *Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA)*

In 2013, the statistic of occupational accident in Malaysia indicates that the highest non-permanent, permanent disabilities and fatal accidents which involved manufacturing industry recorded 58 death cases, 1469 non-permanent disability cases and 128 permanent disability cases (DOSH annual report, 2013). The statistic shows that agriculture, forestry, fishing and logging sectors are the second highest contributor to the cases recorded: 33 deaths cases, 488 non-permanent disabilities cases and 14 permanent disabilities cases. This is followed by accidents in the construction sector which recorded 69 death cases, 83 non-permanent disability cases and 12 permanent disability cases. Thus, accidents and their consequences continue to be a major public health concern (DOSH annual report, 2013). Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) 1994 stated that the self-regulation concept was promulgated based on the primary responsibility of ensuring safety, health and welfare of all persons at all places of work. Therefore, an introduction of safety culture can be seen as a systematic solution towards the establishment of zero accidents in the workplace. Based on this scenario, this study is carried out to measure the safety culture in manufacturing industry in Malaysia. Choudhry, Fang and Mohamed (2007) suggested that the dimension of safety

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