

The Thematic Review on the Safety and Health Measures of Foreign Workers in the Construction Sector in Malaysia

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Abstract

Purpose: Malaysia has been under fire for years for its treatment of foreign workers, whether legitimately or illegally. When the economy is in decline, the government's goal is to decrease the number of undocumented foreign workers by arresting them or threatening them with deportation; when the economy is steady, the government will find a method to increase worker entrance. Despite its popularity, no review article has been published on the subject of foreign worker safety and health measures. The purpose of this thematic review is to combine material from 2000 to 2021 that discusses foreign worker safety and health measures.

Design/methodology/approach: A total of 191 peer-reviewed journal articles were found using a keyword search followed by a filter based on SCOPUS, Web of Science, and Hein Online inclusion criteria using ATLAS.ti 8. However, after the inclusion and exclusion procedure, only 38 papers were selected for evaluation. A thematic analysis of these 38 publications revealed 21 initial codes that discussed the safety and health of foreign workers. The codes were clustered into three categories; human rights, technology, and education.

Findings: The findings contribute to future research on safety and health measures. Despite the criticism on the bad treatment of foreign workers, the Malaysian authority still preserves its sovereignty and does not succumb to public pressure but at the same time adhere to the Sustainable Development Goals focuses explicitly on labour rights protection and the promotion of healthy and secure working conditions for all employees, including migrant workers, particularly women migrants and those in hazardous professions.

Research limitations/implications: The study identifies significant gaps in current knowledge about the safety and health measures applicable to foreign employees, especially in the construction sector and a further study should also consider the review on other sectors especially on manufacturing since both sectors recorded high industrial accident and fatality rate. The study of the literature may have overlooked any important articles that utilise other terminology.

Practical implications: Employers should also play an important part in making sure that the safety and health measure of their foreign employees is adhering to the standard. This will also reduce direct costs, such as a rise in insurance claims and payouts. Other indirect costs to the employer include reduced productivity, quality, project delay, and non-conformance.

Originality/value: This is the first time that the research on safety and health measures has been consolidated and reviewed for publication in this manner.

Paper type: Literature review

Keywords: Foreign worker, Migrant, Human rights, Technology, Education

Introduction

The construction sector is one of the biggest on a global scale and is critical to a country's growth (Asif, 2016). The construction industry's significant contribution to Malaysia's economy has elevated it to a critical sector, with statistical analyses showing a strong positive correlation between the construction sector and the country's economic growth. (Khan et al., 2014). The value of construction projects completed in 2019 was RM146.4 billion. It increased by 0.6% from RM145.5 billion in 2018 (DOSM, 2020). Currently, the construction sector grew 42.6 per cent to RM28.2 billion in the second quarter of 2021, the highest rate of growth since the second quarter of 2012, due to the lower 2020 base (DOSM, 2021).

Unfortunately, foreign workers are one of the most significant issues in the Malaysian construction sector. This problem occurs as a result of the growing need for skilled labour in the construction industry (Abdul-Aziz, 2001; Jamil & Yusof, 2011; Lee, 1996). As a consequence, Malaysia became a source and destination for immigrants (Amarjit Kaur, 2014), as well as the nation most reliant on Asian migrant labour (Pillai, 1999).

Malaysia has historically welcomed foreign labourers engaged in agriculture, building, and mining since the British colonial era at the turn of the nineteenth century (Abdul-Aziz, 2001; Amarjit Kaur, 2014; Dannecker, 2005; Lee, 1996). Foreign workers started arriving in the 1970s due to a lack of legal job opportunities, and it was not until the 1980s, after a significant inflow of foreign workers in Malaysia, that the Immigration Rule was extended to foreigners (Amarjit Kaur, 2014; Azizah Kassim & Zin, 2011; Vijayakumari Kanapathy, 2008). The issue of the international worker movement is inevitable, much more so when economic growth is the primary objective of the majority of the world's nations (Noor Zaleha Mohd Isa et al., 2011). Malaysia was home to about 2-4 million illegal migrant labourers in 2018 (IOM, 2020). As of August, last year, the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) estimates that about 3.3 million foreign employees are illegal (New Straits Times, 2020a). Legal foreign workers between the ages of 18 and 45 are mostly employed in construction, manufacturing, agricultural plantation, and service industries, as well as domestic labour (Immigration Department of Malaysia, 2020). However, the construction industry's full economic growth potential is limited by occupational risks and high accident and injury rates (Abdullah & Wern, 2011). The construction sector, according to accident and death data, is one of the most hazardous in the world (Pinto et al., 2011). Accidents occur at a far higher incidence in the construction business than in most other sectors, and they have severe consequences for both workers and the broader public (Sousa et al., 2014).

According to the Social Security Organisation (SOCSO) of Malaysia's statistics, Chong and Low (2014) discovered that the number of fatalities and permanent disabilities caused by falls from heights is among the highest in comparison to other industries, owing to the nature of construction work: work is performed outside in the hot sun or rain, and; workers are required to work in hazardous conditions. All of these inherent dangers, along with the nature of the tasks done by employees, contributed to Malaysia's construction industry having the greatest overall number of fatalities.

Table1: Occupational Accident Rate by Sector until June 2021

SECTOR	NPD	PD	DEATH	TOTAL
Hotel and Restaurant	61	1	0	62
Utilities (Electricity, Gas, Water and Sanitary Service)	100	0	4	104
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Business Services	156	6	9	171
Construction	77	6	36	119
Transport, Storage and Communication	127	0	4	131
Manufacturing	2099	103	32	2234
Wholesale and Retail Trade	111	2	0	113
Public Services and Statutory Authorities	34	1	1	36
Mining and Quarrying	23	1	2	26
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery	472	11	11	494
TOTAL	3260	131	99	3490

In general, the increasing number of accident incidents and the high mortality rate on construction spots have sparked widespread alarm among safety practitioners and stakeholders (Lee Chia-Kuang & Yusmin Jaafar, 2012). By nationality, 27,754 accidents (84.9 per cent) included Malaysian employees, while 4,920 accidents (15.1%) involved non-Malaysian workers (see Figure 1). As of June 2021, (see Table 1) the construction sector recorded a total of 119 accident cases with 77 cases of non-permanent disability, 6 cases of permanent disability, and 36 cases of death and considered the highest among all industries followed by the manufacturing sector with 32 cases of fatality (DOSH, 2021).



Figure 1: Occupational Accidents and Fatality by Nationality, 2020

Furthermore, since foreign workers dominated the construction sector by 70 to 80 per cent, it is widely believed that some cases of foreign worker injury and death are not reported to authorities because they may have worked without or with expired working licences. The most recent estimates are considerably higher when non-members of the Social Security Organization are included (Abdul Rahim Abdul Hamid et al., 2008).

While accidents may occur for a variety of reasons, they are often the result of a combination of factors from either the employees or the business (Manu et al., 2012). A study was conducted to determine the causes of accidents in the Malaysian construction industry, and it was determined that the primary causes of accidents were management's failure to implement and maintain a high-quality safety management system, and employees implementing unsafe work procedures (Hamid et al., 2019). Indeed, safety commitment is shown via good site management, with workers' views of the company's commitment to safety playing a major role in determining the frequency of workplace injuries (Flin et al., 2000; O'Toole, 2002).

Additionally, research shows that management is accountable for improving working conditions and preventing accidents or mishaps (Hansez & Chmiel, 2010).

Malaysia is pursuing its goal of becoming a global leader via the National Transformation 2050 Plan (TN50). As an industrialising nation, it has achieved tremendous strides in enhancing worker safety and health. To do this, it is unavoidably going to affect Malaysian labour. Rapid industrialization has resulted in both convergence of innovation and a slew of new dangers to the working environment (Rampal & Mohd Nizam, 2006). In addition, Malaysia is committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Every human person has a fundamental right to the highest possible level of health, which is enshrined in the World Health Organization's Constitution. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reinforces a rights-based approach to health by placing a premium on universal health care and equality, as reflected in the concept of "leaving no one behind" (Tulloch & Machingura, 2016).

When it comes to health protection (which many ASEAN nations provide), foreign employees are often excluded or forced to enrol in less favourable programmes. Indeed, many foreign employees in ASEAN member nations are not insured against occupational accidents and illnesses. Although it may be due to unlawful citizenship, contractor non-compliance, foreign employees' ignorance of their rights, language barriers, or lengthy administrative procedures, it is often more probable that it is due to these other factors (Ong & Bista, 2015). As such, this research will systematically review past literature on the safety and health measures on foreign workers in Malaysia's construction sector published between the year 2000 to 2021 based on the following research question:

RQ: What is the foreign workers' safety health measure in the construction sector in Malaysia discussed in the literature from 2000 to 2021?

Methods

The term thematic review using ATLAS.ti 8 as the tool is chosen in this research since the approach integrates theme analysis into a literature review, as suggested by Zairul (2020). Clarke and Braun (2013) define thematic analysis as the process of identifying patterns and creating themes via thorough reading about a subject. The next stage is to determine the pattern and build categories that will help us better understand the safety of foreign workers in Malaysia's construction industry. The study's tenets are to analyse and evaluate data to provide recommendations about future research safety management. The literature was chosen using the following criteria: 1) publishing between 2000 and 2021; 2) Include at least one of the following keywords: foreign labour, migrant, or refugee, or safety, or health. 3) Concentrating on the Malaysian building industry. The decision to restrict place of origin was taken to assist in defining the challenges and concerns about safety, especially in the Malaysian construction industry.

Table 2: Search Strings from Scopus, Web of Science and Hein Online

SCOPUS	TITLE-ABS-KEY ((“foreign labour” OR “foreign labours” OR “foreign workers” OR “foreign worker” OR “migrant” OR “migrants” OR “irregular migrant” OR “irregular migrants” OR “refugee” OR “refugees” OR “asylum seeker” OR “asylum seekers” OR “undocumented migrant” AND “safety” AND “health” AND “construction” AND “Malaysia”))	14 results
Web of Science	TS=(("foreign labour*" OR "foreign labours*" OR "foreign workers*" OR "foreign worker*" OR "migrant*" OR "migrants*" OR "irregular migrant*" OR "irregular migrants*" OR "refugee*"	38 results

	OR “refugees*” OR “asylum seeker*” OR “asylum seekers*” OR “undocumented migrant*” AND “safety*” AND “ health*” AND "construction*” AND “Malaysia*”))	
Hein Online	Just Search For: ((“foreign labour*” OR “foreign labours*” OR “foreign workers*” OR “foreign worker*” OR “migrant*” OR “migrants*” OR “irregular migrant*” OR “irregular migrants*” OR “refugee*” OR “refugees*” OR “asylum seeker*” OR “asylum seekers*” OR “undocumented migrant*”) AND (“safety*”) AND (“ health”) AND (“construction*”) AND (“Malaysia*”))	139 results

To start, a comprehensive evaluation of the existing literature on the subject of worker safety and health in Malaysia is conducted. If available, journal papers published in Scopus, Web of Science, and Hein Online (see Table 2) were gathered using the keywords TITLE-ABS-KEY ((“foreign labour” OR “foreign labours” OR “foreign workers” OR “foreign worker” OR “migrant” OR “migrants” OR “irregular migrant” OR “irregular migrants” OR “refugee” OR “refugees” OR “asylum seeker” OR “asylum seekers” OR “undocumented migrant” AND “safety” AND “ health” AND "construction” AND “Malaysia”). Web of Science database and Hein Online database was also used to extract data within 2000 to 2021 to see the trend and thus resulted in about 191 journal articles. As this review is limited to open access journals, in the field of law and confined to Malaysia only and after some duplications, 8 journals were removed. Next, we examined a list of papers published between 2000 and 2021, because a search of 10 years length did not provide enough articles to examine. 38 publications were reviewed in this study, having been filtered to eliminate irrelevant articles and after the removal of duplicate abstracts. Articles have always been considered unimportant if they lacked a connection with other industries, therefore they were deleted (see Figure 2 below).

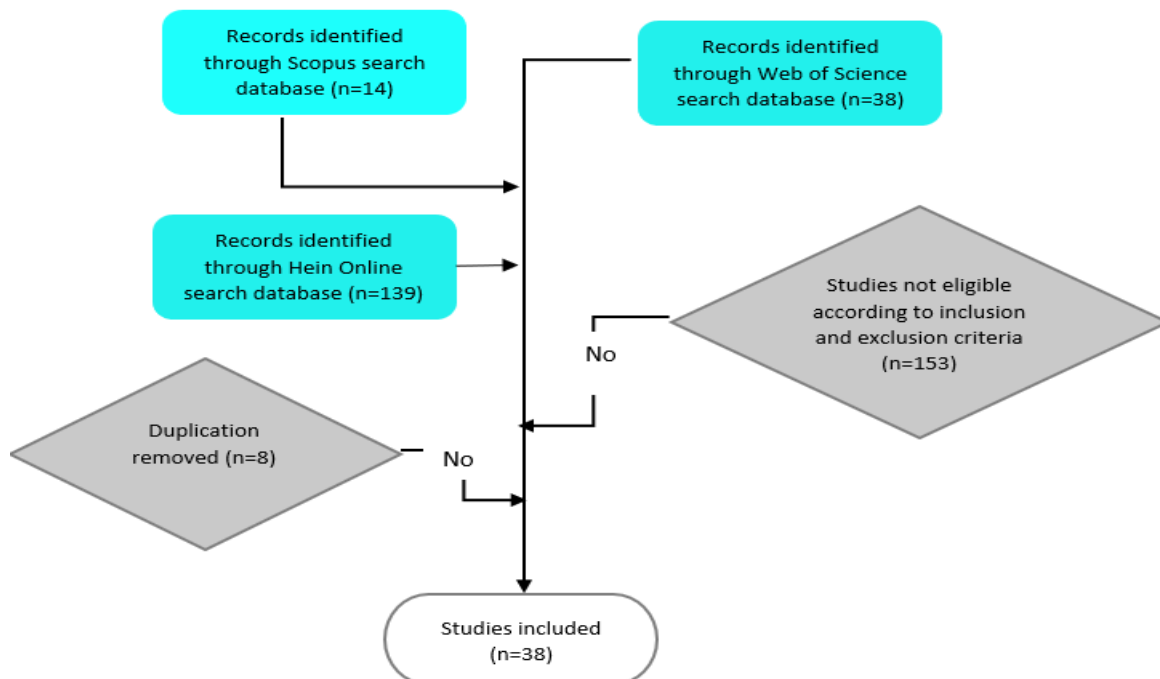


Figure 2: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria in the Thematic Review (Zairul, 2020)

In the Scopus, Web of Science, and Hein Online databases, literature searches were conducted. Out of the original search, 14 articles were found in (SCOPUS), 38 in (Web of Science), and

139 in (Hein Online). The number of articles eliminated was 153 since they do not address the matter at hand. A few of the articles were unfinished, and a few of them were repetitive. As a result, a 38-article evaluation of the final document was completed (see Figure 2). Each paper was first submitted as a main document in ATLAS.ti 8 and then sorted into six categories: author, journal, volume, year, and periodical. The review may also research the articles by the year they were written and how the debate pattern changed over time.

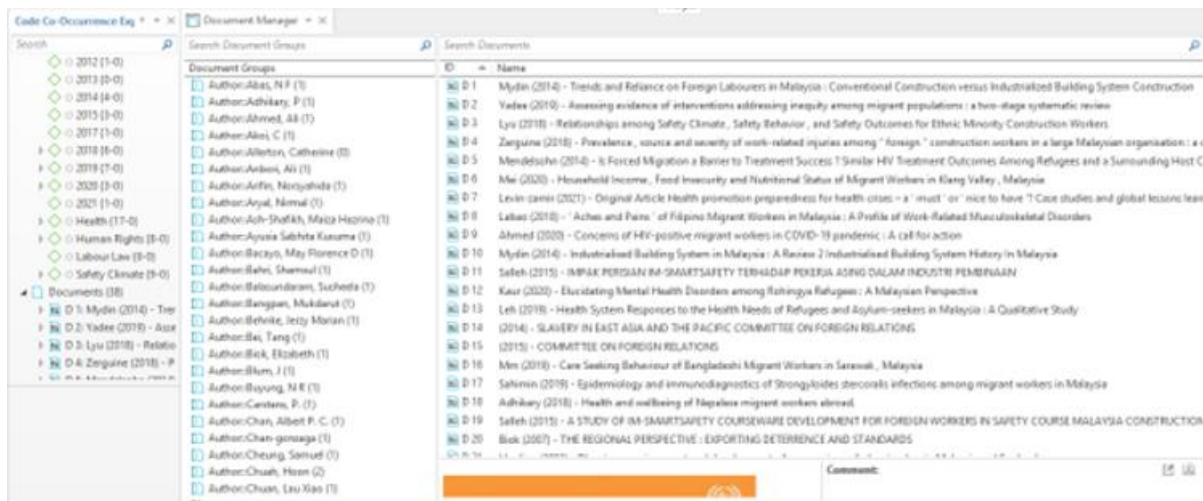


Figure 3: The Code Group Established from Mendeley Metadata

The main documents were then generated in ATLAS.ti 8, each consisting of the metadata of 38 different files. Several groups were generated in the code group automatically thanks to the information obtained from Mendeley (Figure 3). ATLAS.ti 8's categorization has enabled a much simpler and more organised sorting process. A total of 21 initial codes were generated in the first round of coding. To address the study question on "What is the foreign workers' safety and health measure in the construction industry in Malaysia mentioned in the literature from 2000 to 2021?" the codes were grouped into various categories. helped in answering the study questions by participating in the final match of three distinct categories. The information gathered during this evaluation will be split into two different categories: quantitative and qualitative results.

Findings

Quantitative Findings

As shown in Figure 4, the paper discussed the frequency of the journal according to year. The number of previous literature that discussed issues relating to safety and health measure is increasing gradually starting from 2014 until recently. In addition, Table 3 demonstrated the trend of the articles reviewed that were derived from various journals including the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, Jurnal Teknologi, and Annas of Global Health. Notice that most of the journal is not a law-related journal except for Ateno Law Journal and Medicine and Law and most of the papers was published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health with a frequency of three journals.

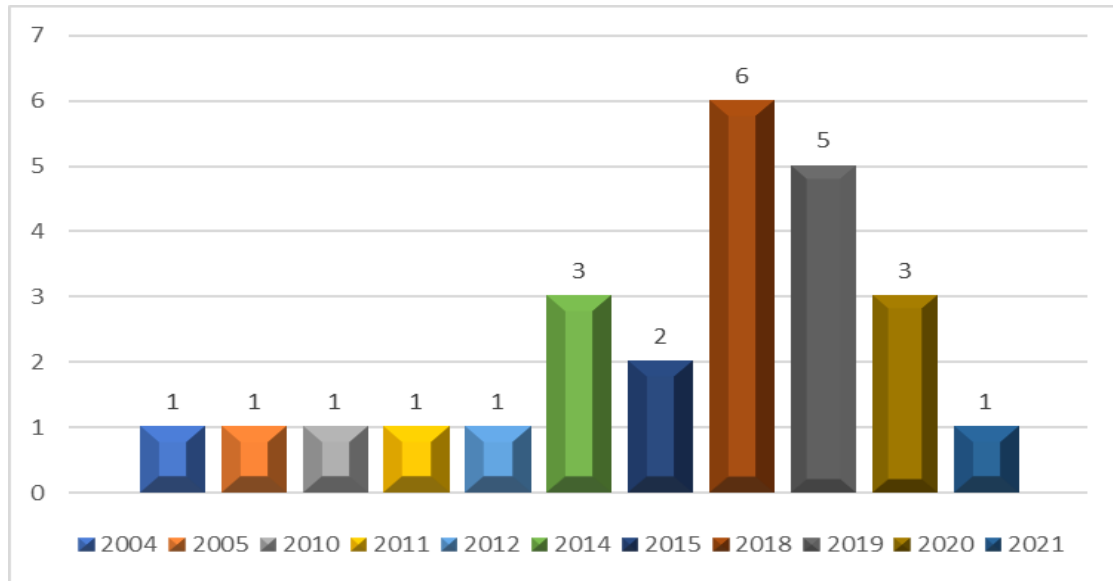


Figure 4: Frequency of Paper Discussed According to Year

Table 3: Articles Reviewed based on Journal

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
AIDS and Behaviour	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Annals of Global Health	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-
Ateneo Law Journal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Asian Pacific Journal of Tropical Medicine	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Bangladesh Med Res Counc Bull	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
BMC Public Health	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Global Health Promotion	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Industrial Health	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
International Journal for Equity in Health	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-
International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-
International Journal of Migration, Health & Social Care	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Journal of Global Health	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Journal of Refugee Studies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Journal of Refugee Studies	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Jurnal Teknologi	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Medicine and Law	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nepal Journal of Epidemiology	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
SHS Web of Conferences	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stephen Castles	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
XI JEAIL	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-



Figure 5: Word Cloud Generated from 38 Articles

Table 4: Author Reviewed based on the Theme

	Education	Human Right	Technology
Mydin et. al (2014)			/
Yadee, et. al (2019)		/	
Lyu et. al (2018)		/	
Haroun, Shamsul & Juliana (2018)	/		
Mendelsohn et. al (2014)		/	
Mei, et. al (2020)	/		
Levin-Zamir, et.al (2021)	/		
Labao, Faller, & Bacayo (2018)	/		
Ahmed et. al (2020)		/	
Mydin, Sani, & Taib (2014)			/
Salleh et. al (2015)			/
Kaur et. al (2020)	/	/	
Chuah et al.(2019)		/	
Asian & Affairs (2015)		/	
Cohen (2015)		/	
Halim et al., (2019)	/		
Sahimin et. al (2019)	/		
Adhikary et. al (2018)		/	
Salleh et. al (2015)			/
Biok (2007)		/	
Harding (2003)		/	
Chan-Gonzaga (2004)		/	
Rogan (2019)		/	
Zayzda, Ash-Shafikh & Kusuma (2019)		/	
Daway (2010)		/	
Malaysia (2005)		/	
Cheung (2012)		/	
Aryal et.al (2019)	/		
Blum, Carstens & Talib (2005)		/	
Ramji-Nogales (2017)		/	
Mingquan & Bei (2009)		/	
Pugh (2004)		/	
Daher et. al (2011)		/	
Castles, (2010)		/	
Hamid, Shukor & Ali Mohamed (2018)		/	
HE, I. (2010)		/	
De Meyer, Suriyasarn, & Haspels (2007)		/	
Chuah, et.al (2018)		/	

In addition, Figure 5 represent the word cloud that is generated from all selected article which indicates that the selected articles are relevant for the topic under study. On the other note, table 4 below contains a list of publications and their classification into subcategories. The original 21 codes were subsequently classified under three major themes: education, human rights, and technology. Apparently, the majority of writers focus their study on human rights issues, while another researcher focuses on the development of technology to decrease Malaysia's reliance on foreign labour in the construction sector. Interestingly, several journals stressed the importance of education and knowledge on safety in mitigating the accident on the site since the construction sector is considered the most hazardous sector in Malaysia.

Moreover, table 5 discussed the theme according to the year. Both tables noticed a trend on the human rights theme rather than education and technology. The human rights issue is discussing on the basic rights according to the international standard as well as according to Malaysian labour law. Further, several authors contended that the Malaysian authority had violated the basic human rights principle and foreign workers have long been mistreated regardless of the sector that they are working.

Table 5: The Theme According to the Year

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Education	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	2	1
Human Right	-	1	2	2	2	1	3	1	1	-	2	1	1	4	4	2	-
Technology	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	-

Qualitative Findings

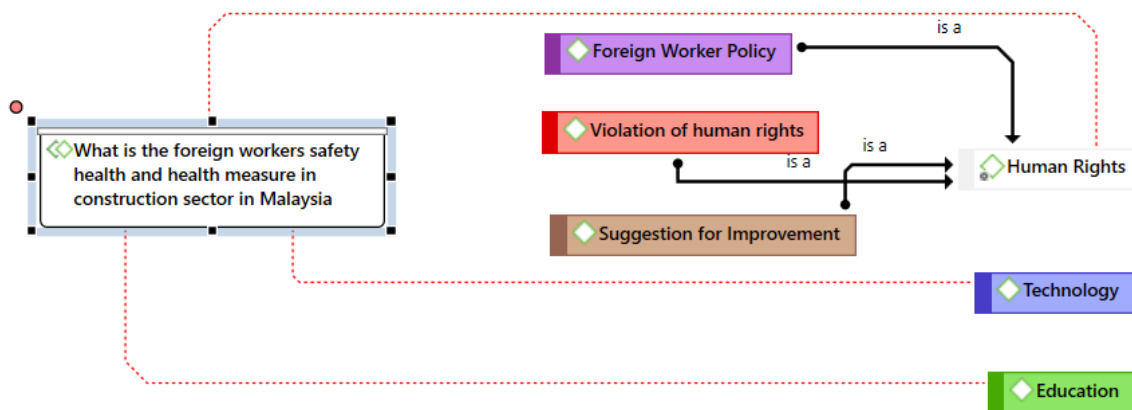


Figure 6: A Network View on How to Answer Research Questions through Thematic Review

Theme 1: Human Rights

The first theme is segregated into the other sub-theme namely on the policy of foreign workers internationally and locally, violation of the human rights issue including the fundamental right of foreign workers. The literature search also found that a handful of journals are discussing the right to health as this is one of the main keywords in answering the research question.

Numerous authors also discussing on the possible solution to mitigating the accident and fatality rate among foreign workers.

Subtheme 1: Foreign Worker Policy

The topic of human rights policy seems to catch the attention of many authors. In safeguarding the right of foreign workers in Malaysia, the government had created a national Occupational Safety and Health Council, comprised of members from labour, business, and government, to develop policies and coordinate occupational safety and health measures (Malaysia, 2005). Zayzda (2019) points that ASEAN member states agreed that all kinds of migrants should have equal access to labour laws, social protection, and anti-discrimination legislation. Furthermore, the International Labour Organisation's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work states that these principles and rights apply to all human beings worldwide, regardless of nationality, residence, or migrant status (De Meyer et al., 2007). While the majority of Southeast Asian countries are not members to the Refugee Convention, this does not imply that local value systems condone migrant maltreatment (Ramji-Nogales, 2017). In the case of refugees in prolonged asylum circumstances, Mendelsohn et al. (2014) contended that the favourable treatment for them should be included in the government strategic plan following national standards. Interestingly, on the contrary, Daher et al. (2011) showed that Iraqi migrants in Malaysia had almost equal access to health care as Malaysians, but at a higher cost unless they work for the Malaysian government.

Subtheme 2: Violation of the Human Rights

The basic rights of the foreign workers, including the ability to travel, to work, and to education and health care, are not available in most countries. (Biok, 2007; Pugh, 2004). Malaysia's experience demonstrates how lawful immigration affects the nation's overall health condition and places a strain on the health care system (Blum et al., 2005). To date, for the economic sector, professionals, skills, and labour, specific mechanisms for controlling migration and workforce mobility in the area are still in their infancy (HE, 2010). In Malaysia, both legal and illegal migrant labourers have historically been exploited. They may fall prey to human trafficking and forced labour, or physical and mental abuse.

Malaysia's current legislative system has always emphasised the need for migrant worker protection (Hamid et al., 2018) however, this situation is believed to be related to shortcomings in the rule of law, with existing laws not being advanced enough to adequately safeguard foreign employees (Harding, 2003), and most of the time policies always favour employers while failing to protect migrant workers are a source of contention (Rogan, 2018). In the case of Rohingya people, their possession of UNHCR documentation is not conclusive, since the government has not been officially recognised the paperwork as a replacement for national identity cards and therefore may not exclude execution of immigration rules (Cheung, 2012). The other violation includes the dearth of information on health insurance, low salaries as significant impediments to accessing health care services, lack of employee-friendly health policy and lack of knowledge on health and inadequate access to local health care (Adhikary et al., 2018).

Subtheme 3: Suggestion for Improvement

Numerous authors provide the suggestion for improvement especially related to foreign workers' health conditions. Among the suggestions include; i) create laws that address fundamental rights to work and universal health care (UHC) for refugees in Malaysia (Kaur et al., 2020) ii) a health advocacy strategy that is founded on the universal right to healthcare; iii) multi-sectoral approach; iv) address socioeconomic determinants of health; v) adds to global

and national financial sources, and; vi) optimises coordination and cooperation (Asian & Affairs, 2015) vii) international collaboration between countries for health security issues (Mingquan & Bei, 2009)

Due to hazardous migration procedures and the absence of labour laws and other legal safeguards for migrant workers, they occasionally constitute an ideal target for traffickers. As far as forced labour issues and human trafficking is concern, the bellow suggestions were tendered; i) effective engagement to discuss issues on forced labour and modern slavery; ii) negotiate changes to laws and practices (Cohen, 2015); iii) negotiation of the labour importers' economic and political supremacy (Castles, 2010); iv) develop safety measures (Lyu et al., 2018) as well as a paradigm shift toward recognising migrants as global rights holders and the right to health as a basic right to be claimed both abroad and at home (Chan-Gonzaga, 2004). The recognition of the human rights framework is a cornerstone of policymaking.

Academically, several articles highlight issues on limited studies examining the equitable characteristics of health treatments designed for migrant populations. This demonstrates a lack of attention to the fairness of migrant groups. More emphasis should be paid to equity-focused outcome evaluation to assist policymakers in considering all important outcomes when making good decisions about immigration (Yadee et al., 2019). Lack of sufficient health entitlements and health inequalities will make it impossible for them to receive health care in a safe, appropriate, and equitable way (Ahmed et al., 2020). To promote more equitable access to healthcare for refugees and asylum seekers, as well as other foreign workers, it is critical to create comprehensive practices and studies that address the social, cultural, and economic determinants of health (Chuah et al., 2018, 2019).

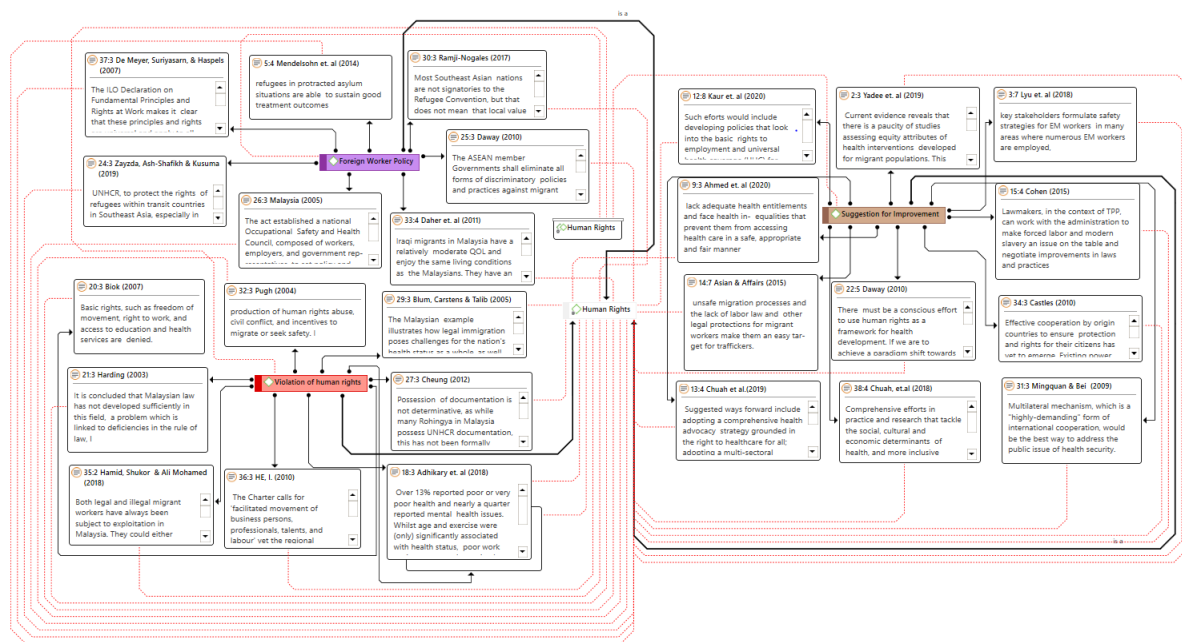


Figure 7: Human Rights Theme

Theme 2: Technology

A new trend in the building industry in Malaysia is the Industrialised Building System (IBS), which involves using a more systematic and mechanised approach to construction and shifting away from traditional practices to minimise the need for foreign labour. This aims to mitigate the country's reliance on foreign labour (Mydin, Buyung, et al., 2014). This may be accomplished through promoting positive advancements in construction-site safety in terms of

a cleaner, more convenient, and more organised work environment (Mydin, Sani, et al., 2014). On the contrary, Salleh (2015) claimed that SmartSAFETY courseware aided in meeting the needs of foreign workers in familiarising them with different types and uses of personal protective equipment (PPE). In addition, the IM-SmartSAFETY courseware has had a significant effect and fulfils the requirements of international employees on construction sites, as well as serving as a vehicle for resolving the language barrier (Salleh et al., 2015).

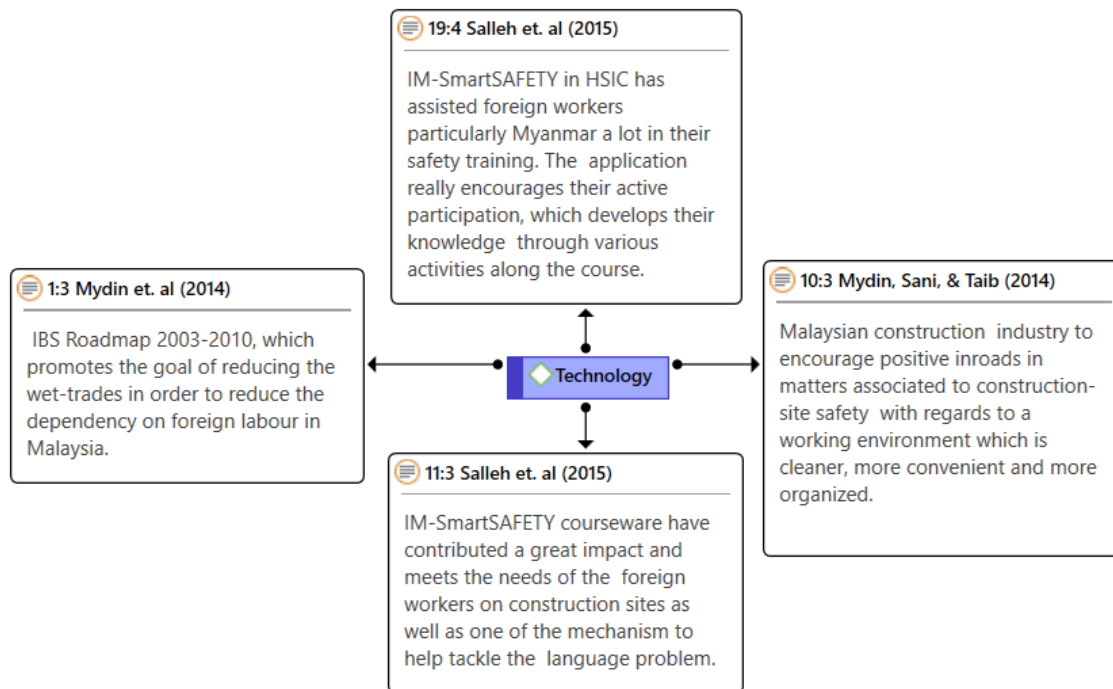


Figure 8: Technology Theme

Theme 3: Education

Foreign employees' knowledge of health insurance is deemed limited, which may create major barriers to obtaining health care services. Thus, notwithstanding their knowledge of local health care, a foreign workers' friendly health strategy may be implemented for their welfare (Halim et al., 2019). Rapid reaction, effective communication based on health literacy, and cooperation across nations, disciplines, and health and education systems are all necessary components of effectively tackling global health problems (Levin-Zamir et al., 2021). Mental health education and screening programmes for foreign workers should also be implemented immediately (Kaur et al., 2020). The other knowledge includes nutritional education on food selection and policy implementation. Adequate knowledge is also crucial to examine the accessibility to health care, nutritional illnesses, and eating habits of foreign workers, all of which are risk factors for food poverty (Mei et al., 2020). Besides, the foreign worker also suffers MDD and PTSD as a result of food insecurity. Other fatality among the foreign workers also includes sudden cardiac attack (Aryal et al., 2019).

To avoid physical injury, foreign workers must also be equipped with appropriate training and safety equipment to reduce workplace accidents and injury rates (Haroun Zerguine et al., 2018). It is suggested to establish an ergonomics policy and to educate employees on proper posture, lifting methods, and physical function (Labao et al., 2018). This is significant since migrant workers in Malaysia have seen increased hygiene and sanitation standards reflected in education initiatives and educational programmes (Sahimin & Zain, 2019).

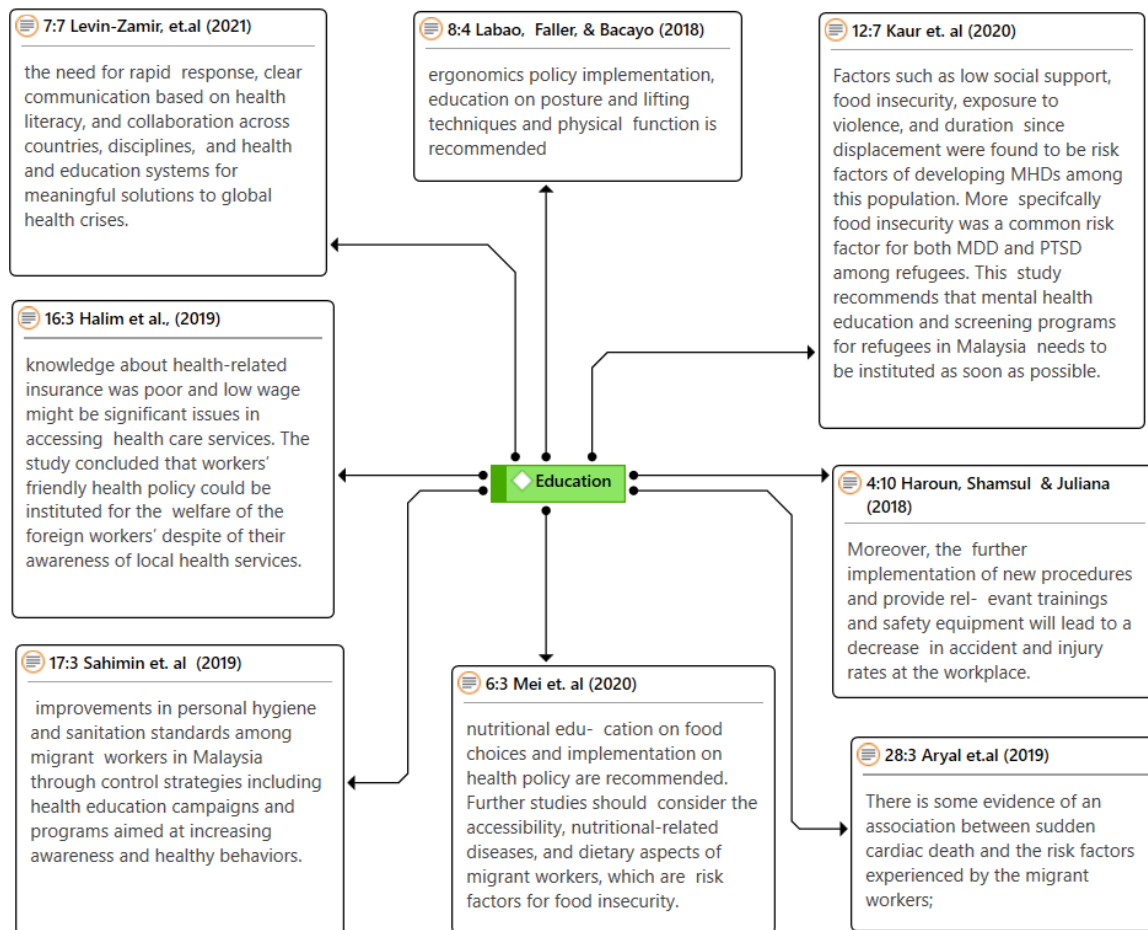


Figure 9: Education Theme

Discussion and Conclusion

In economic and social contexts, the position of foreign employees is seen as a problem. From one perspective, foreign national employment is critical for the country's economic growth and therefore their presence here is inevitable. Foreign workers are seen negatively in Malaysia as a cause of societal issues despite their contribution to the Malaysian economy. Additionally, research has shown that the potential exploitation of foreign employees is exacerbated by the nature of construction labour. The thematic study revealed that Malaysians has been long criticised for their ill-treatment of foreign workers. Even though Malaysia have been pressure to accord to the international standard in protecting foreign workers, we are safeguarding our sovereignty and not going to adhere to the international demand. Having said so, since the foreign workers is integrated as part of our society, the harmonisation and their assimilation cannot be avoided.

Practical and Social Implications

It is therefore of utmost importance for the authority to find a concrete solution revolving never-ending issue of foreign workers. Most of the articles reviewed that there is a need to have a holistic safety and health mechanism in ensuring the safety and health of everyone including foreign workers. Besides, the integration of technology and sufficient knowledge on safety are also crucial in mitigating the alarming rate of an accident involving foreign workers. Both the employer and the employee must flourish in a safe and healthy working environment. Employers are tasked with the responsibility of providing a safe and healthy work environment

that will not only protect employees from injury and illness but will also help employers reduce the cost of injury and illness for which they may be accountable, but at the same time increasing productivity, quality, and employee morale.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

To summary, future studies should deliberate how the resolve never-ending issues involving the safety and health of legal foreign workers as some of them are here to make a decent earning and some of them are also the victim of forced labour. Above all, human life is valuable and worth living.

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