

Risk Management at Universities

Illegal Residents in Hostels & Fire Cases

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ABSTRACT: Every organization/institution is exposed to some kinds of risks that can affect them in many ways. Risks like fire, theft, damage of assets, illegal intruders etc. can affect them strategically, financially and operationally. It can also damage their reputations. Educational institutions like Universities are also exposed to these risks. This research, through some real-life cases, studies on different types of risks that the Universities are exposed to. Malaysian universities were taken under consideration. The research focuses on the measures that these universities are taking in order to safeguard the several parties exposed to these risks. The paper also puts forward some recommendations that can mitigate these risks.

Keywords - Risk management, Fire risk, Illegal resident

1. Introduction

Safety is, and must be, a primary consideration in every campus activity. The university is obliged to reduce or eliminate risks to its students, employees, and visitors. The major concerns are illnesses, injuries and property damage resulting from unsafe practices and conditions that might be taken place anytime and anywhere in campus. [1]

These risks have the potential to disrupt accomplishment of the University's strategic and operational aims in short-term and long-term as well [2]. However, the university should concentrate about the risks all the time to prevent the consequences as much as possible which can be successful if individual members of the university community do their part by accepting responsibility for developing and practicing safety awareness. [1]

The objective of risk management in university is not to have risk eliminated completely from university activities, but rather to ensure that every effort is made by the university to manage risk appropriately to maximize potential opportunities and minimize the undesirable effects of risk [2]. Management of risk in universities effectively will provide a critical contribution towards the achievement of the University's strategic and operational objectives and goals.

This article attempts to emphasize about certain risks that are chosen from one Malaysian university. According to the most common risks have taken place in the pointed university, we have chosen what would be the most risky for students, staff and visitors which are *illegal residents in hostels and fire risks*. As these risks have neglected from university, the consequences are going to effect the university in many aspects such as strategic, financial, operational, compliance, and reputational.

These risks have major impact to any university unless treatment them in high level of sense and responsibility to eliminate them or at least minimize the impacts. The first step identify each risk closely and find all reasons that cause each one , next start to assess and evaluate the riskiness in all university aspects then estimate the consequences and results from risks that occurred . Finally, find out the best treatments where necessary. The resolutions should be concerns about two factors which are before and after the risk occurred to prevent these risks before happening and make future planes when these risks occurred [3].

2. Literature Review

Ken Biery Jr stated that business risk management is designed to assess and address the

understanding of business and security management about the value security provides to the business operations. Business risk management is the process of aligning critical business function protection with security effort prioritization. The concentration should be on protecting the most valuable business resources instead of just looking at security risk has high, medium, or low vulnerabilities. This is the difference of looking at vulnerabilities versus or the risk itself. [4]

Mark Dorfman identified some strategies for risk treatment which started with avoiding risk. By avoiding risk try to avoid the risks that can be avoided with proper plan or strategy. Second is reducing the risk. And here we reduce the risk which cannot be avoided by implementing safeguard that control the potential risks. The third strategy is transferring risk to a third party by outsourcing certain operations or by purchasing insurance. [5]

Risk management will ensure the organization continuity through fix and stable procedures and it can be found anywhere in the organization also it's considered an essential portion in the business which make it stronger. Tchankova mentioned that risk can be found in each and every level in the organization and it can appear in all management levels. Risk management is a very important part in the organization's activities and the main target of it is to assist all other management activities to achieve the organizational aims straightly and effectively [6]. By referring to reference [7] Based on a report done by (University College Cork, Ireland. They defined the risk as "chance or possibility of loss, damage, injury or failure to achieve objectives caused by an unwanted or uncertain action or event. Also they highlighted the definition of the "Risk management is the planned and systematic approach to the identification, evaluation and control of risk. The objective of risk management is to secure the assets and reputation of the University and to ensure continued financial and University well-being".

Fire risk can be mitigated by having an intelligence systems and tools to make the identification of the risk easier and earlier by including an intelligence tools which will be able to proactively target services and detect the risk [8].

It is very important to handle the failure of the research and development (R&D) risks through all research and development stages so a risk management plan or platform have to be found to mitigate the risk management with in the business. According to that a new risk management structure that adjusts project risk control with business strategy and a performance statistic system to increase success of R&D projects and to accomplish business strategic objectives. The balanced scorecard is used to recognize major performance actions of an R&D organization based on the company strategy and vision. Quality function implementation is adapted to transform business performance actions into venture performance actions and a methodical procedure is developed for risk identification, assessment, response planning, and control. The suggested risk management module enables an R&D project to be focused on achieving the business objectives and provides a more effective way to recognize, assess, evaluate, and monitor R&D risks along the venture cycle [9].

3. Methodology

This study used qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data from different respondents and sources. To achieve the aim of the study, interviews were conducted with relevant departments of one Malaysian university. Moreover, to investigate the problem from the perspective of students, questionnaires were also conducted among the resident students of the university.

4. Data Collection

The whole data is qualitative and quantitative, collected by interviewing relevant departments. The interviewees were presented with open questions and notes were taken as well. The aim of

interviewees was to get enough information and cases regarding to fire risks in the university and what the university does to mitigate these risks. Moreover, questionnaires which consist of several closed questions have been given to university's students at the same time. The questions were designed in such way that they address illegal and ethical issues of illegal residents in the university's hostels. In addition, the questionnaires also design to investigate the negative consequences of illegal students in the university's hostels. The interviews were conducted face to face in order to get more relevant information of the study.

5. Fire Risk Management in the University

As the university concern about the safety of students, staff and properties; they publish units and department to control and to ensure providing best quality and services. Occupational Safety and Health Unit (OSHU) is the responsible unit for maintaining and managing fire risk in the university. This unit has to ensure that fire protection systems should be installed efficiently in all sectors and places in the university. So that their aim is to prevent any case of fire in the university and to tackle down quickly and immediately any fire case if happened in any building in the campus. They have to check and maintain the firefighting infrastructure in universities like fire extinguisher, fire hoses, fire doors, fire sprinkler systems, alarm sound system, emergency lighting and emergency signs in each place and buildings. They create an annual plan to improve the safety of fire protection. They also provide guidance, training and education programs for staff and students.

Although the university has an acceptable level of firefighting infrastructure that can help in firefighting primary aid; Firefighting systems in the university still needs improvement in so many aspects.

Firefighting system in the university starts when smoke detector detects smoke or fire or if anyone pressed emergency button. After that alarm will sound to warn staff, students and visitors to rush and evacuate a building. Sprinkler systems

will be activated by heat sensors in buildings that have it. The university doesn't have fire station so that the responding to any fire alarm should come from the witnesses or the one who heard it. Witnesses should call the security office in the university or immediately the fire station to react with the fire situation.

From that we can see some problems related to fire protection system in the university such as:

- Alarm system is distributed individually in university's buildings and it is not integrated in one system. Security office and fire station can interact with any fire case immediately in case of integrated or automated system. Integrated system can also help in solving problems of alarm if it is stopped working intentionally or unintentionally.
- They don't give special care for some sensitive places in the university which could contain of some inflammable materials such as some engineering faculties and canteens.
- Some fire protection equipment's are not fully working. For example, sprinkler systems are rarely checked and maintained and some of them are not working efficiently.

Here we come to some real cases which shows some issues related to firefighting system in the university.

5.1 Case 1: cutting alarm cable

In 2008, the alarm turned on in one of hostel's blocks. Although there was a serious case of fire, one student went immediately to the alarm and cut its cable to stop annoying sound. While no one in that block after that felt there is something wrong. After 15 minutes the residents started smelling the smoke which was going out of one student room. They called the fire station and they put out the fire which was almost out of control. After the investigation of why alarm sound doesn't work they founded that the cable was cut. Regarding to that case OSHU came with new plan and regulars and they tried to spread awareness about fire risk protection by providing training

course in each semester for residents of university's hostels. They install new alarm system for hostels that works much better than before. Moreover, they distribute fire escape plan in each level of hostel's blocks. Hostel's office assigns one student in each level in the blocks of the hostels who takes the responsible in any fire case.

5.2. Case 2: fire case in engineering faculty in midnight

In 2011, fire started at one of engineering faculty's buildings in midnight. Even though it is considered as sensitive place, no one was around either security or students to hear the alarm sound and report it. After almost 20 minutes, one student with motorcycle was passing next to that building he heard the sound and called the fire station to put out the fire. The problem with this case is that the reaction was not strongly enough to prevent something could happen again.

The solution was to assign more security staff in faculties' buildings at night and to include more alarms in whole university's buildings.

6. Illegal Residents in Hostels

One of hidden risks that can affect universities' safety in a long term. Illegal residents can our study was to assist how much university's hostel office are aware of illegal residents in their hostels and how much students have awareness of the risks come from illegal residents. The period of staying illegally is mostly some days and in some cases is for months. We distributed 52 survey questionnaires to the university's hostel residents and the results were analysed by using the SPSS software and Microsoft excel.

6.1. The ease of staying illegally in the university's hostels

Based on the hostels' residence students, the result shows that the agreement of students to this term is 42%, while the disagreement is 33%. The percentage of students who are partially agreed is 25% (figure 1). We can also see in (figure 2) that the percentage of agreement of the term hostels' office has enough staffs and strong polices to avoid illegal residence in university's hostels is 39% and

the disagreement is 26%. The percentage of students who are partially agreed is 38%. We can notice that, although the students mentioned that hostels' office has enough staff and strong polices, we can see that it is still easy for illegal students to stay in the university's hostel. From our opinion hostels' office could have staff and policies but they do not check rooms permanently which makes it easy for illegal residents to stay in hostels.

The ease of staying illegally in the university's hostels

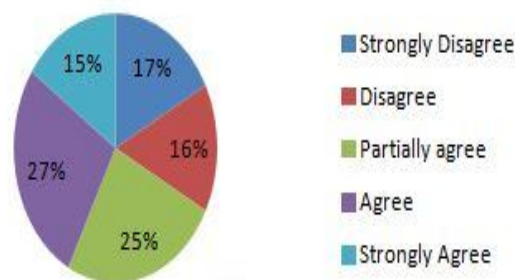


Fig. 1

hostels' office has enough staffs and strong polices to avoid illegal residence in the university's hostels

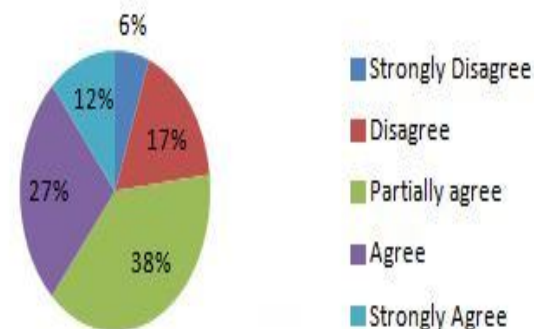


Fig. 2

6.2. Risks of illegal residence

We divided the risks into categories like causing fire, selling drugs, breaking rules, theft, and property damage. It can be seen that most of students agree that illegal residents mostly break

the rules. More over students agree that illegal residents can also damage and steal the properties. The graph shows that the most dangerous risk comes from illegal residents are casing fire.

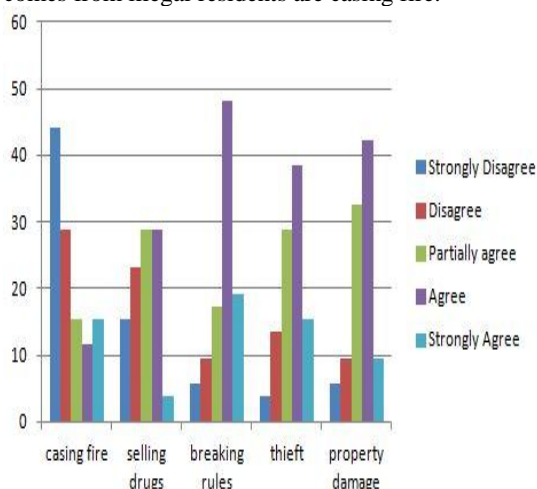


Fig. 3

6.3. The reason that makes illegal residents prefer to stay in university's hostel

As we got from the students the reason that makes illegal residents prefer to stay in university's hostel is cheaper than outside. The second high reason is that staying with friends. While it indicates that illegal residents do not concern about facilities and safety.

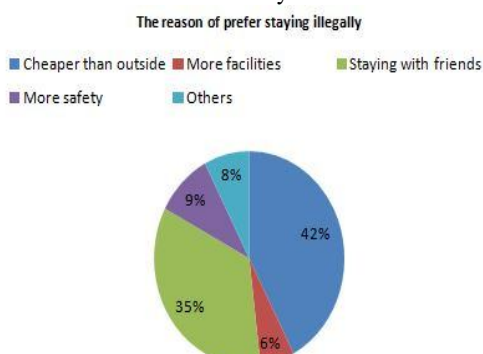


Fig. 4

The percentage of the agreement to this term is 31% and the disagreement is 40% and the percentage of the partially agree is 19%.

Responsibility of reporting illegal residents in hostel

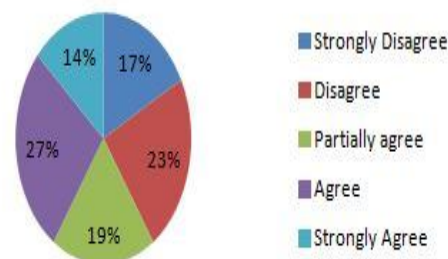


Fig. 5

7. Conclusion & Recommendation

By analysing the two fire cases in the Malaysian university, we have found out some resolutions that may help decline the consequences from these risks. First, in fire cases we propose some solutions such as more concentration is to be given to the sensitive places which contain risky equipment easy to cause fire and flammable materials. Second, building a fire detection system by using smoke detectors attached with network that covers the whole campus. It will identify the places affected by fire and inform the university's control room. Thus it will be easier to respond quickly. Finally, using new technologies like smart phones and creating mobile applications to report about fire cases immediately. It would help in quick response as well as in making report about any possibilities of fire in order to prevent it before happening.

For the second case of illegal residents at the university hostels, we recommend a couple of solutions. First, to increase security in the university's main gate in order to control and prevent the entrance of the students without the smart card. The visitors must register in security office before entering the campus. Second, to check the rooms in the hostels regularly in order to make sure that the student who has registered for the room is living there and not anybody else. Finally, install access gate in the hostels entrances to prevent anyone entering the hostel without the access card. Also, the hostel must be surrounded by strong wall to force them using access gate.

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