

# Influence of SME Business Leaders' Motivations & The Role of Risk Awareness on WSH Leadership Behaviours

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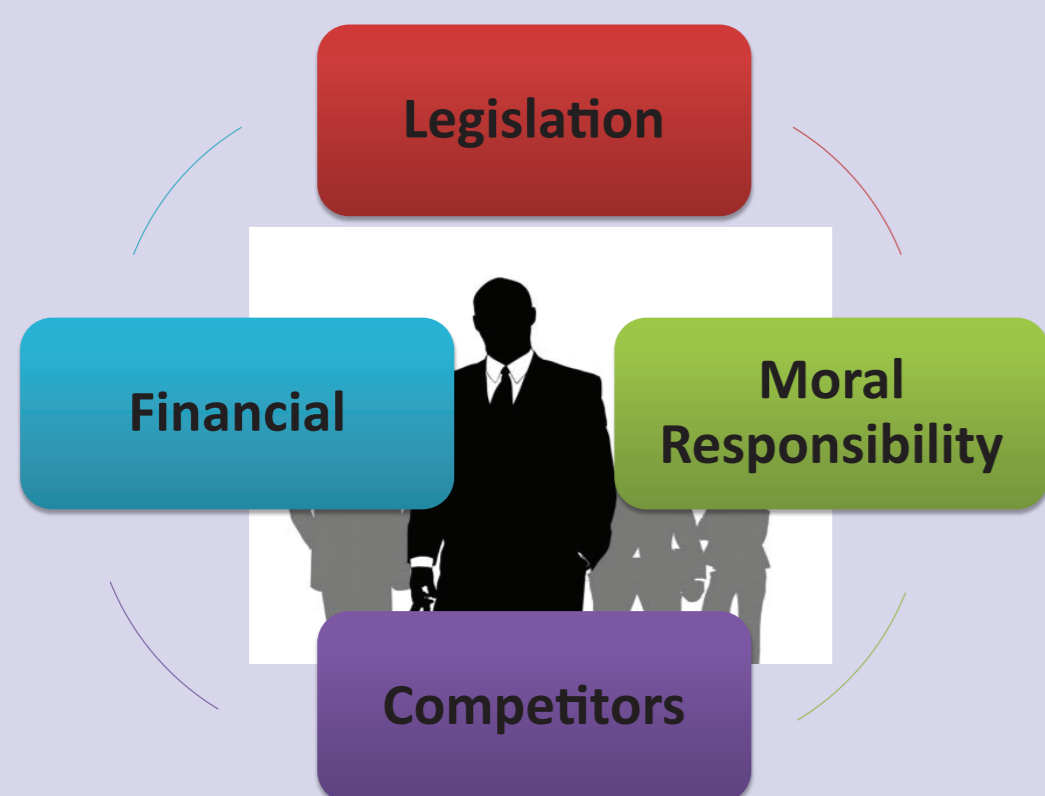
## Introduction

Encouraging small and medium enterprises' (SMEs) commitment to WSH is essential. Over 99% of enterprises are SMEs. They employ 7 out of 10 workers and contribute more than 50% of national GDP in Singapore (SPRING Singapore, 2013).



Leadership commitment is the foundation and catalyst for achieving workplace safety and health (WSH) excellence. Companies whose directors took a personal responsibility had decreased work-injury levels of up to 25% more (HSE, 2010).

Key motivations of senior management in WSH were identified from research literature (Gunningham, 1999; Wright et al., 2005) and a National SME Convention (SBF, 2012).



This poster presents our findings on the key motivations that influence how involved SME business leaders are in WSH leadership behaviours, as well as the importance of risk awareness in this aspect.

## Method

Telephone interviews were conducted with a random sample of 123 SME business leaders (e.g., Company Owners, CEOs, Managing Directors). Two-thirds were from the Construction, Manufacturing and Marine industry. The rest were classified as others.

## Results

### I. SME Business Leaders' WSH Motivations

- Concern for employees wellbeing **72.4%**
- Accidents are costly to business **67.5%**
- Compliance with legal requirements **56.9%**
- Competitors are improving WSH **47.1%**

❖ In particular, **22.8%** of SME business leaders cited no motivation in WSH.

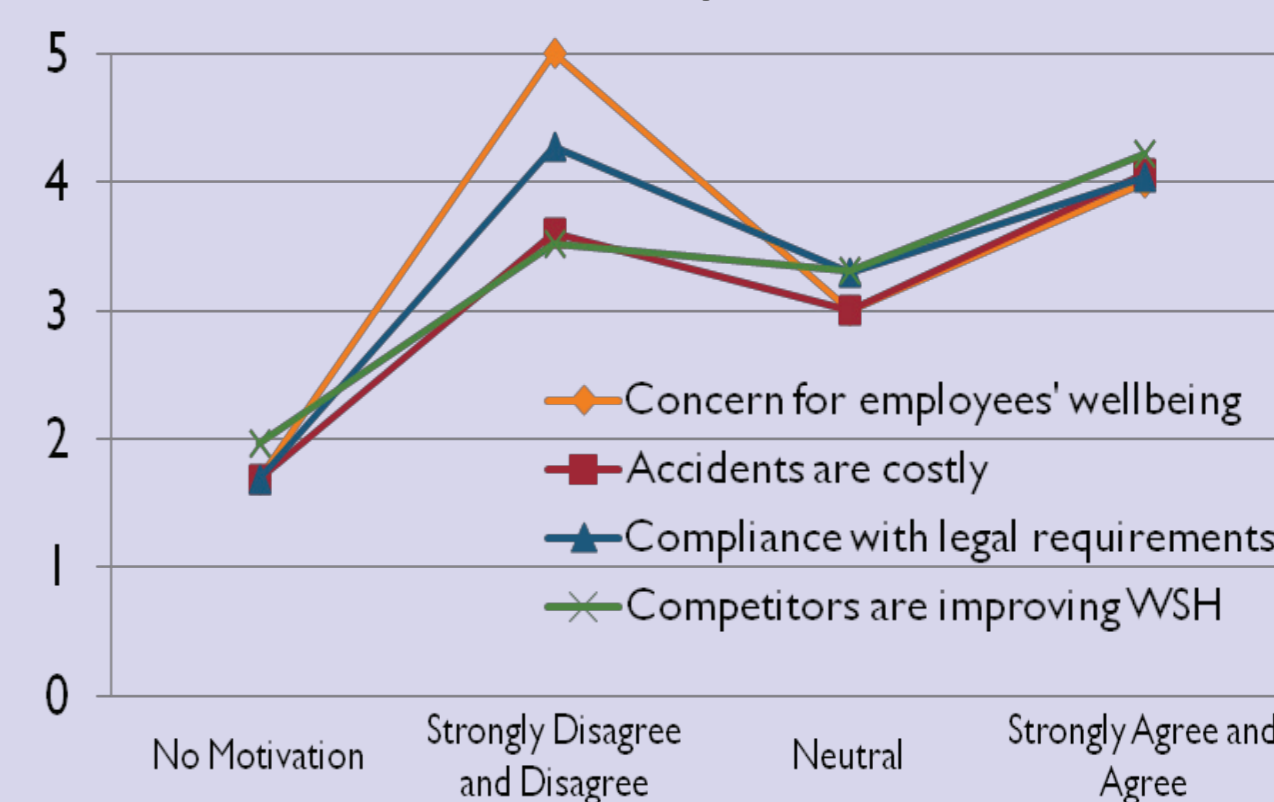
### II. SME Business Leaders' WSH Behaviours

- Communicate and get feedback on WSH **78.9%**
- Conduct regular WSH inspections **77.2%**
- Monitor company's WSH performance **74.8%**
- Set WSH performance targets **59.3%**
- Attend WSH committees and meetings **53.7%**

❖ SME business leaders were more engaged in **'on-the-ground'** versus 'oversight' behaviours.

### III. Influence of Motivations on Involvement in WSH Leadership Behaviours

Mean score of WSH leadership behaviours



• A significant difference ( $p < .001$ ) was found between those who indicated "strongly agree/agree" versus "no motivation".

❖ Having a motivation was associated with **2x** the level of WSH leadership involvement by a SME business leader.

### IV. "Unmotivated" SME Business Leaders

	WSH Risk Awareness	
	Yes	No/Don't Know
Motivated	76.8%	23.2%
Unmotivated	39.3%	60.7%

• A significant difference ( $\chi^2_{(1df)} = 6.6, p = .01$ ) was found between in the WSH risk awareness of the "motivated" versus "unmotivated".

❖ Almost **3x** of the unmotivated SME business leaders were unaware of the WSH risks in their own company.

## Conclusion

- Concern for employees' wellbeing and greater participation in on-the-ground WSH leadership behaviours could be due to the small size and tight-knit nature of SMEs.
- 'Having a motivation' appears more important than the 'type of motivation' in influencing WSH leadership behaviours.
- Risk awareness is an important precursor for a motivation to exist.

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