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Summary of **Landscape**

Analysis of Transport Safety in the Garment Sector *in Vietnam*

...the first time I had ever seen a man with a beard and a turban...

...and I was struck by the way he looked at me...

...and I felt a strange sense of familiarity...

...and I knew that I had found a friend...

...and I was no longer alone in this world...

...and I felt a sense of peace that I had never known before...

...and I knew that I had found a home...

...and I was no longer a stranger in a strange land...

...and I felt a sense of belonging that I had never known before...

...and I knew that I had found a family...

...and I was no longer a stranger in a strange land...

...and I felt a sense of peace that I had never known before...

...and I knew that I had found a home...

...and I was no longer a stranger in a strange land...

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Disclaimer

This report was prepared by AIP Foundation. It is an independent report. The views expressed herein are the authors' own and do not necessarily represent the official views of GIZ or the German government. This publication has been produced with the assistance of H&M and Primark through their financial support, feedback on content and factory access.

This publication presents a summary of the main findings and recommendations. If you are interested in the detailed landscape study, please write an email to trang.tran1@giz.de to receive the full study.



Key findings in Vietnam

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>1</p> <p>In Vietnam, road safety has received growing attention from policymakers over the years. However, road crashes continue to be 1.7 times higher in industrial zones where most garment factories are located.</p> | <p>5</p> <p>Attitudes and behaviours of garment workers were generally quite good, but there were cases where workers showed risky behaviours such as driving without a driving license, not wearing a helmet, drink-driving or speeding. Noticeably, the average helmet-wearing rate among workers was high.</p> |
| <p>2</p> <p>As garment factories are in close vicinity to national highways, most workers who travel to work via motorcycle (87%) share high-speed roads with heavy vehicles like freight trucks and are thus highly vulnerable to the risk of road crashes.</p> | <p>6</p> <p>Interventions for improving road safety for garment workers have been limited: there have been small-scale interventions initiated by some factories, though these generally lack an evidence-based approach and long-term planning and evaluation.</p> |
| <p>3</p> <p>As a result of unsafe driving practices and a lack of precautions, turnover and absenteeism at work increase while labour supply and productivity decrease.</p> | <p>7</p> <p>While Vietnam has demonstrated a commitment to improving road safety management, there is an urgent need for national and local government to demonstrate leadership and collaborate to introduce road safety policies that meet international standards.</p> |
| <p>4</p> <p>The Vietnamese government has introduced several laws to improve road safety; there is a foundation for road safety in industrial zones, but more legislation, funding and enforcement are needed.</p> | <p>8</p> <p>Factory management, brands, researchers and development organisations should join forces and promote evidence-based interventions to improve transport safety of garment workers.</p> |



Setting the scene

Vietnam loses an estimated 24,970 lives to road crash injuries and fatalities annually (Vietnam National Traffic Safety Committee, 2019). A combination of poor road infrastructure, gaps in legislation and poor enforcement of traffic laws has resulted in weak road safety management and high risks for vulnerable road users.

Road traffic injuries and fatalities not only severely impact the victims and their families, they also affect factories through turnover and absenteeism and have adverse economic consequences due to a loss of effective labour supply and productivity. Previous research estimates an economic loss of 3-5% of GDP in low- and middle-income countries (WHO, 2015).

Several high-profile and tragic incidents involving the death of factory workers have prompted much-needed attention to the safety of commuting garment factory workers. They are particularly vulnerable to road crashes as they continue to travel on dangerous roads without the necessary safety measures. As the textile and garment industry accounts for over 15% of export revenues in Vietnam (International Labour Organization, 2019), employing 2.5 million workers (Chi, 2016), improving the safety of workers in this sector is a growing priority.

Although the transport safety of factory workers has emerged as a key area for improving worker safety, existing research on the topic in Vietnam remains limited. This study attempts to improve the knowledge of road safety for garment factory workers and inform future recommendations and programmatic interventions.

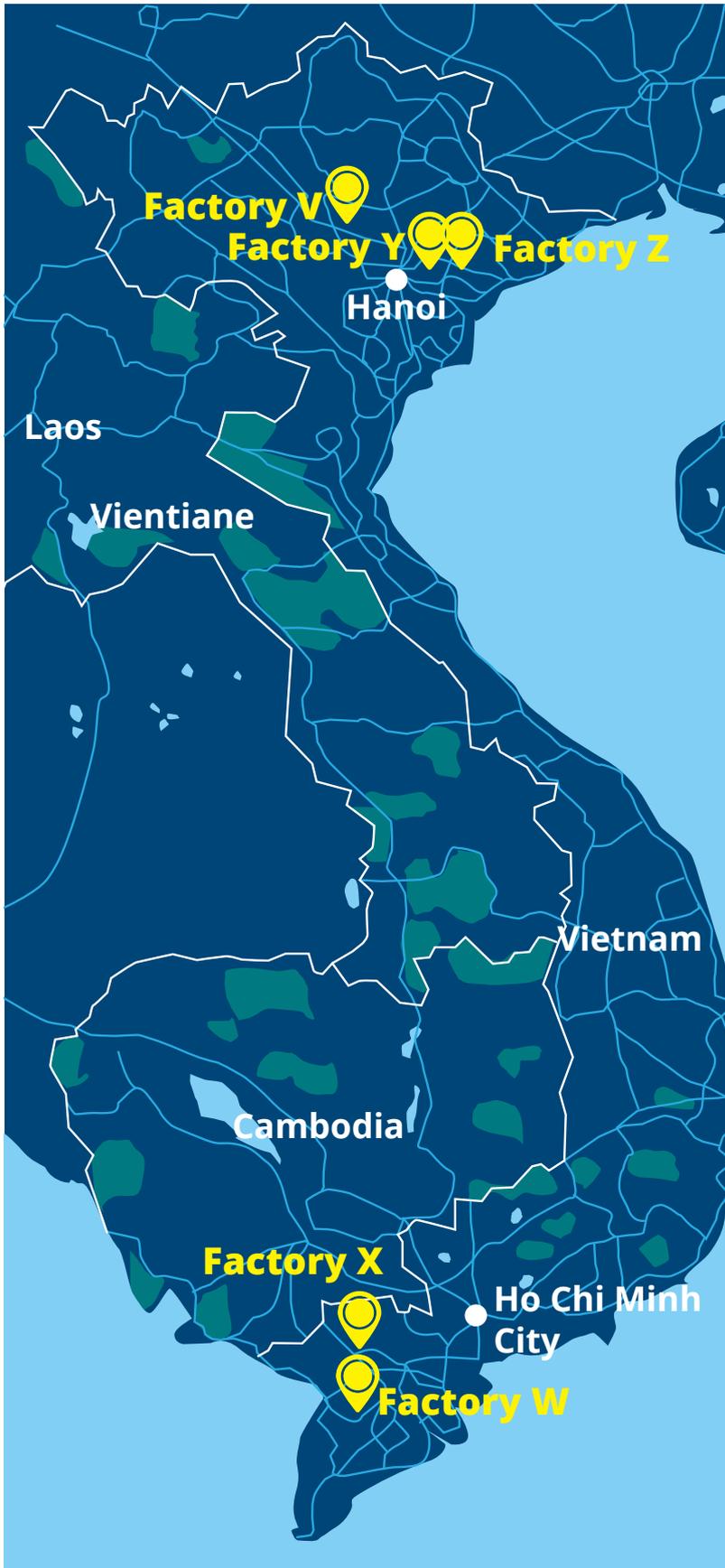
This study presents a detailed analysis of the current situation of road/transportation safety among garment workers in Vietnam. It identifies and calls attention to the key risk factors and challenges that impede safe transportation and endanger the wellbeing/lives of garment workers in Vietnam. Finally, this study provides recommendations for relevant stakeholders and decision-makers, as well as brands and development partners, on how to tackle the identified challenges in order to improve transport safety among garment workers.



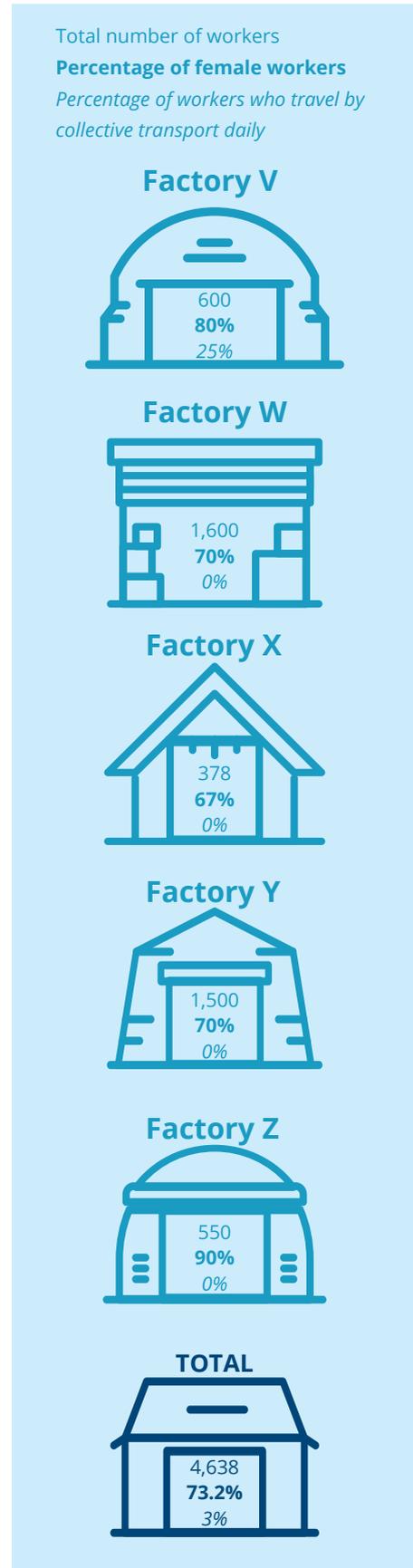
Methods

The study applied a mixed-method research design combining quantitative and qualitative research methods. The research process included desk research and field research, which was conducted from November to December 2019 at five factories across Vietnam.

The desk research consisted of a comprehensive literature review and a mapping of existing policies and regulations related to transport safety. Quantitative data collection included structured questionnaire surveys with 200 garment factory workers and drivers to determine current transport use and routes and measure knowledge, attitudes and behaviours (KAB) towards transportation and road safety. Filmed observations of 60 minutes for each of the five factories provided data on the actual helmet wearing rates of workers commuting by motorcycle. Qualitative data included focus group discussions with six to 10 factory workers at each factory to assess key road safety issues in factories. Key informant interviews (KIIs) were held with one factory manager and one factory health staff member at each factory.



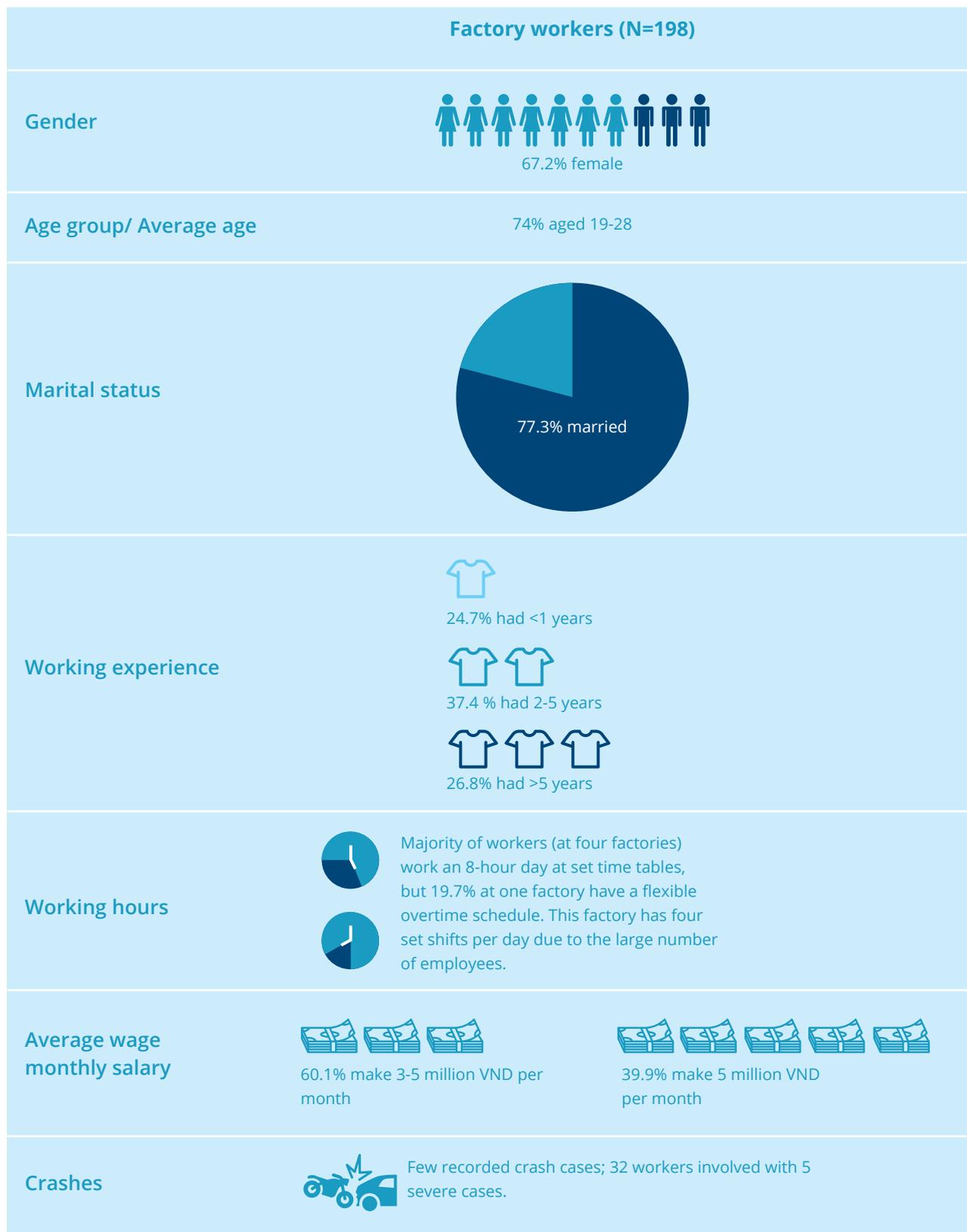
Source: Google Maps



Basic information on factories in Vietnam

Field participants in Vietnam

A total of 204 respondents participated in the study, 198 of whom are garment workers and 6 of whom are collective vehicle drivers. Because it is uncommon for factories to organise communal transport for factory workers in Vietnam, factory-employed drivers were excluded from the final sample. This study focuses primarily on the results relevant to workers.



Main findings

Road safety policies in Vietnam

Overall, the Vietnamese government has demonstrated strong consideration for road safety and introduced several laws to protect the public on the roads. There is a foundation for road safety in industrial zones, but more legislation, funding and enforcement is needed.

Table 1. General road safety policy/interventions in Vietnam (updated as of 2018)

| Road Safety Policy | Y | N | Quality | Enforcement |
|---|---|---|--|-------------|
| Funding in the national budget | ✓ | | Partial funding | |
| National road safety strategy | ✓ | | Good | |
| Use of star rating for existing and new road infrastructure | ✓ | | Good, however regular road maintenance is lacking | |
| Vehicle safety standards applied | | ✓ | | |
| National emergency care access phone number for post-crash care | ✓ | | | |
| National speed law | ✓ | | Inadequate | Average |
| National drink and drug driving law | ✓ | | Good | Good |
| National motorcycle helmet law | ✓ | | Good, however it only covers child passengers over six years old | Good |
| National seatbelt law | ✓ | | Inadequate | Average |
| National child restraint law | | ✓ | | |
| National law on mobile phone use while driving | ✓ | | Good | Average |

Source: WHO Global Status Report 2018

In 2016, the Ministry of Transport approved a nationwide legal decision called “Reinforcement of measures to ensure road traffic order and safety in the areas of industrial zones across the country,” aligning to the overall aim of reducing road fatalities by 5-10% annually and minimizing traffic congestion in industrial zones/complexes across the country (The Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2016). To achieve these goals, multi-pronged measures are proposed in a detailed action plan for 2016 to 2020. The action plan focuses on several key areas presented in Table 2. One example is the Decree 100/2019/ND-CP introduced in 2019 which increased administrative fines for road traffic violations.

Table 2. Road safety policy in industrial zones required by Decision 2376/QD-BGTVT (The Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2016)

| Road safety policy in industrial zones | Y | N | Quality | Enforcement |
|---|---|---|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| Funding in the national budget | ✓ | | Inadequate - no detailed regulation | |
| Institutional/competitive framework | ✓ | | Good | |
| State administration | ✓ | | Good | Good |
| Traffic infrastructure and organisation | ✓ | | Good | |
| Transport vehicles and transport activities | ✓ | | Inadequate - no detailed regulation | Average |
| Dissemination and education about laws | ✓ | | Inadequate - no detailed regulation | Average |
| Investigation and inspection | ✓ | | Inadequate - no detailed regulation | Poor |
| Human forces | ✓ | | Good | |
| Implementation | ✓ | | Good | |

Road safety intervention programmes in industrial zones in Vietnam

While interventions for improving road safety for garment workers has been limited so far, there have been small-scale interventions initiated by some factories, though these generally lack an evidence-based approach and long-term planning/evaluation.

“

“Current communication at the factory is a speaker system: we record, then play, in the morning 2 times, afternoon 2 times. Some existing communication products are leaflets or handbooks.” (Factory manager)

“The most difficult thing for us now is that the officers [who] are trained to teach occupational safety do not have experience or knowledge about road safety to teach workers. Without documents and knowledge to teach, they did not dare to teach.” (Factory manager)

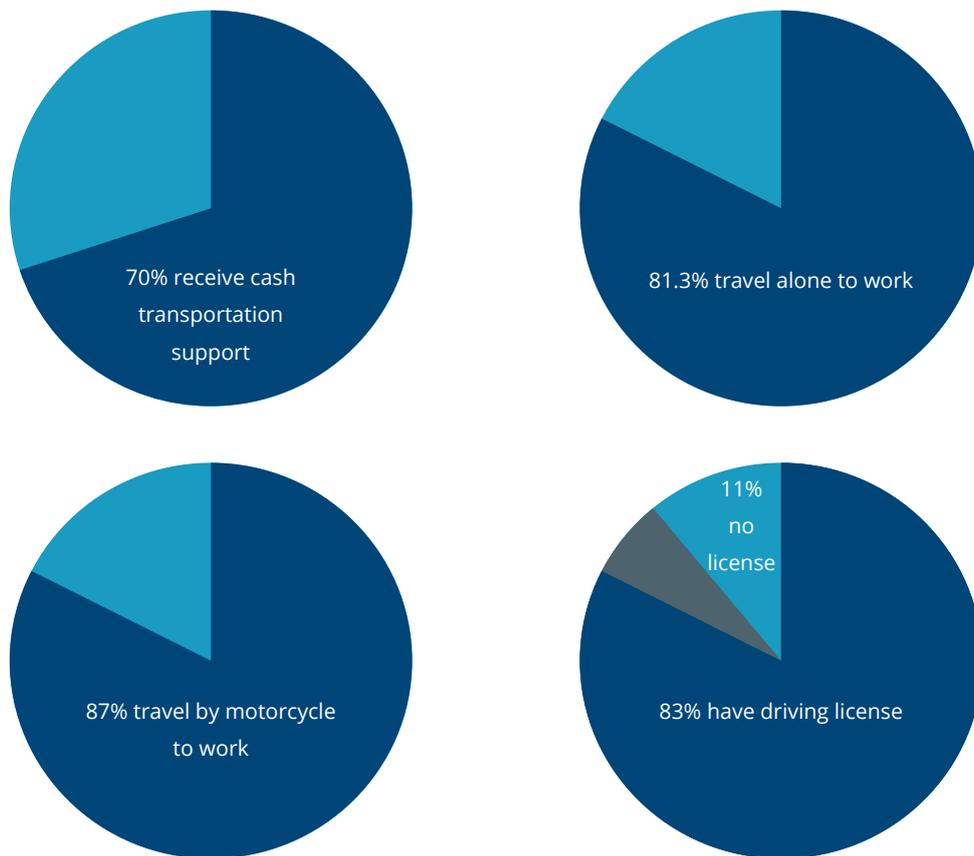
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To improve road safety around industrial zones in Quang Ngai Province, programmes are underway targeting improvements in black spots causing traffic accidents and removing street vendors on the corridors and roadside along a section of National Highway 1A (Quang Ngai Peoples’ Committee, 2019). In Binh Duong Province where 48 industrial zones are located, the Youth Union strengthened communication on traffic safety for young workers (Youth Union, 2017). As an example, from 2012-2015 the Vietnamese government partnered with a local road safety NGO to increase road safety knowledge and promote safe driving behaviours within schools and amongst community members and workers.

Transportation usage

Most factory workers (87%) use motorcycles to travel to and from work. Only 3% use collective transport vehicles from the factory. Only one factory offers collective transportation for their workers, however almost 70% of the surveyed workers receive transportation support in the form of cash. The majority of factory workers (83%) have a driving license, while 11% of the workers drive a motorcycle without a driving license. Most factory workers travel alone to work (81.3%).

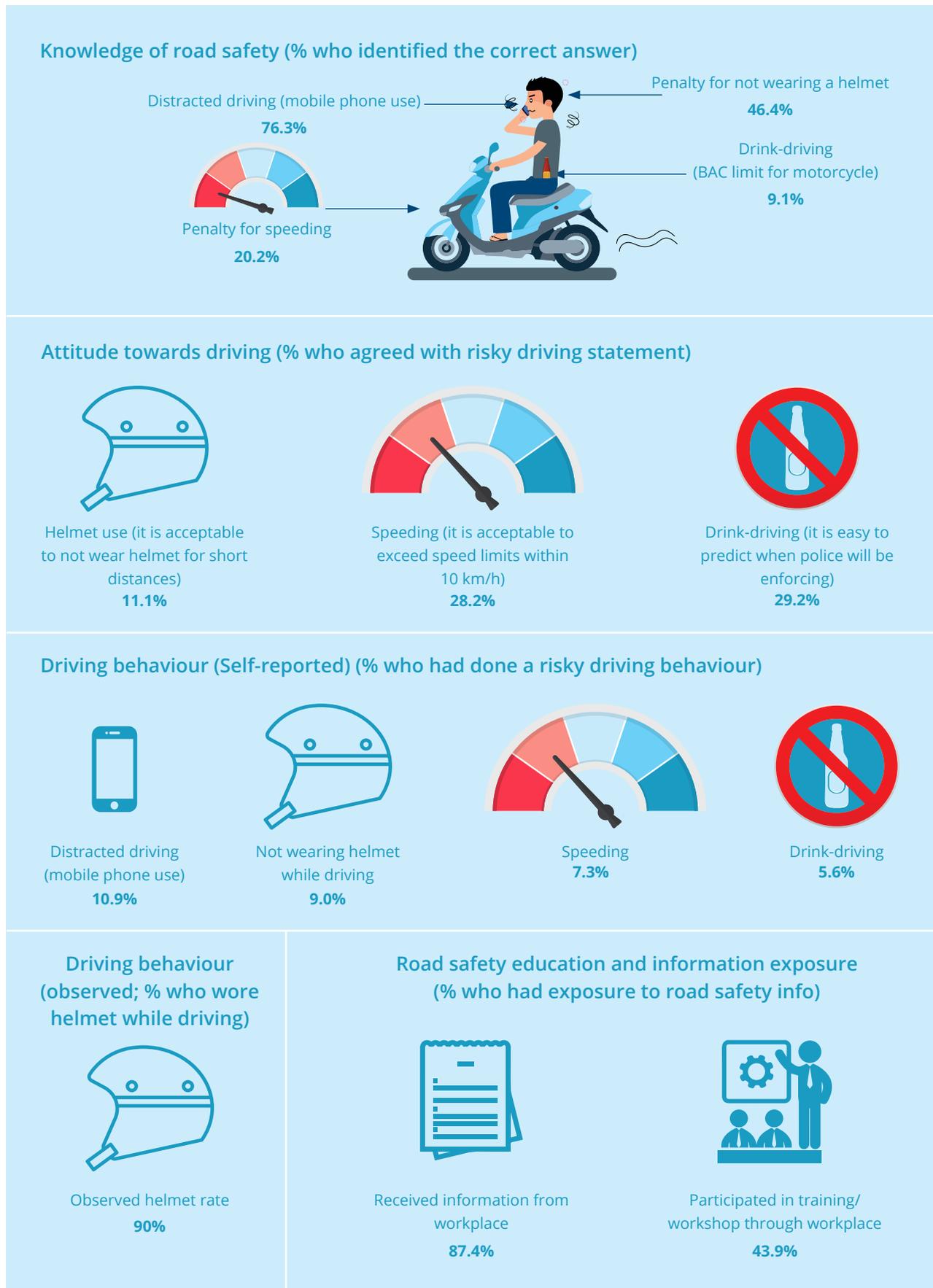
Figure 1. Transportation conditions of surveyed Vietnamese garment workers



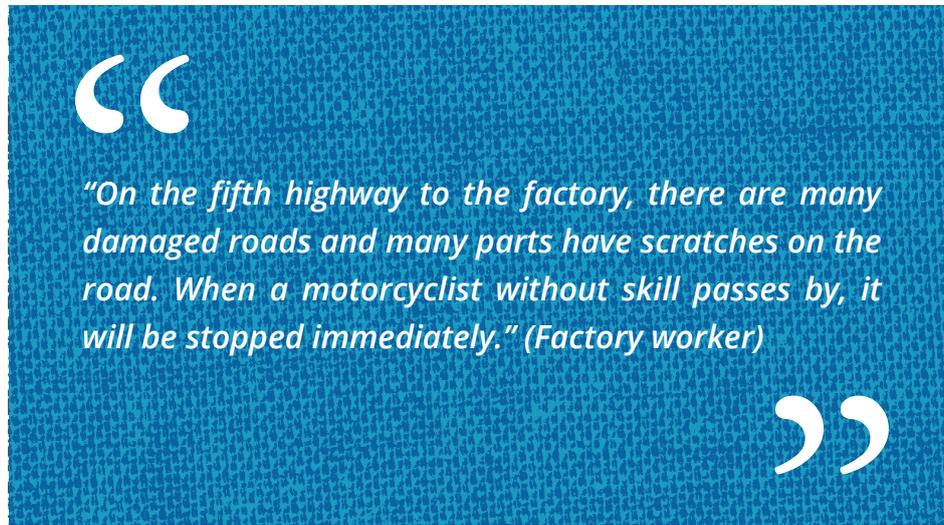
Knowledge, attitude, behaviours (KAB) survey results of workers in Vietnam

The survey shows that road safety awareness and knowledge amongst workers is mixed. Many workers generally know which behaviours are safest but could not usually identify the specific consequences of unsafe behaviours. Some expressed a willingness to continue to engage in risky behaviours, such as not using a pedestrian bridge while crossing highways, drink-driving, disobeying traffic lights speeding, or not wearing a helmet when riding a motorbike. Filmed observations at each factory showed that the overall helmet wearing rate among workers across all five factories is high (90%).

Figure 2. KAB survey results of workers in Vietnam

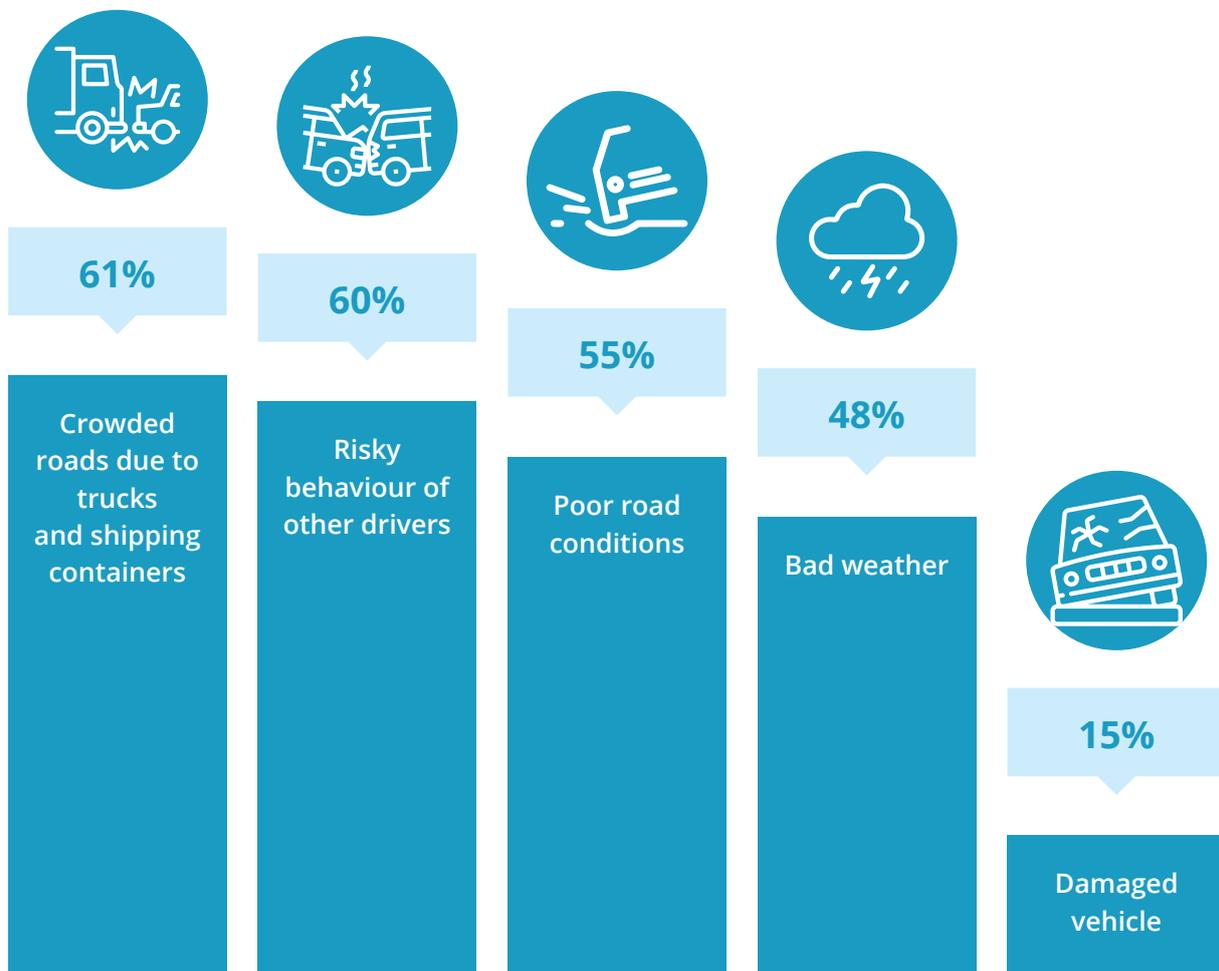


Road safety concerns of workers in Vietnam



Workers identified a number of existing potential risks related to road safety at all five factories. These risks are related to the transportation environment in the area, the driving behaviour of other drivers and the workers themselves, and poor road conditions.

Figure 3. Transportation safety concerns of surveyed workers in Vietnam



Recommendations

Country-Specific Recommendations for Vietnam

To traffic police for greater enforcement: Strengthened law enforcement is needed to prevent traffic violations in high-risk areas such as industrial zones. This can be achieved through greater investment by the local government in employing sufficient traffic police to monitor traffic in industrial zones, particularly at peak times and where traffic accidents are most likely.

To garment factory-led improvements in worker safety for mandatory license and helmet: Factory managers are in a unique position to promote safe driving behaviours by introducing and enforcing policies to require staff to maintain a valid driver's license and wear helmets whilst driving to and from work. Mandatory licensing and helmet use by factory managers will be most effective when coupled with road safety awareness campaigns and driving courses for those without a valid license.

To local government and public-private partners for road modifications: Greater investment by the local government and public-private partners to eliminate black spots, improve traffic safety conditions at the connection points between the industrial zones and national, provincial, district and urban roads.



General Recommendations

To local and national governments:

- Local and national governments should **work collaboratively and establish political will** to improve existing policies and gaps in both road safety and occupational health/safety across the country.
- Policies should be developed based on the analysis of shortcomings and gaps presented in this report. Legislators and government agencies should **commit sufficient funding and staff** to conduct internal assessments of existing policy frameworks and strategies, particularly those impacting industrial zones.
- Policies should **align with international standards** while being relevant to the local context. This needs to be coupled with **effective and consistent enforcement** strategies to ensure high compliance by the general public and relevant stakeholders.

To road safety organisations/experts in collaboration with trade unions:

- **Continuous advocacy** should be conducted by road safety experts and industry partners to influence local governments on strengthening road safety laws across the country with particular attention to industrial zones.
- While policy improvements and programmatic interventions are essential, they need to be linked with **effective public education campaigns** to establish real change. Regular public awareness campaigns targeting both factory workers and the general public on transportation safety—including any changes in legislative and enforcement policies—are critical for influencing and improving road safety behaviours and attitudes. Such campaigns should be informative, easy to understand and widely distributed across diverse communications platforms (e.g., social media, media, billboards) to reach a majority of the population.
- **Tailor communications to be context-specific** per the preferred channels shared by workers in this study: e.g. video clips on TV or on social networks (Facebook, YouTube), face-to-face training workshops, lunch break training sessions and workplace posters/banners/fliers. Workers said that they would like union representatives and factory managers to deliver road safety information to them.

To fashion brands:

- **Set high worker safety standards for factories** to secure their partnership, with an opportunity to collaborate such that brands can support factories as they commit to high occupational safety standards, outline an implementation plan and execute it with results.
- **Fund deployment of specific annual training sessions** provided to factory managers on the importance of worker safety and road safety.
- **Play an important role in advocacy to national and local governments** to prioritize legislation around road safety and industrial zones, arguing that this legislation will not only improve citizens' lives, but also contribute to national economic growth.
- **Work collaboratively with factory leadership** to address infrastructural barriers and identify top infrastructural issues of the local context—such as poorly maintained roads, a lack of signage, or overcrowded vehicles.
- **Provide factories with the needed additional financial support**, as part of corporate social responsibility efforts, to implement programme interventions.
- These recommendations will be difficult to achieve as a single brand but could be accomplished more quickly by **fostering inter-brand cooperation to maximize the effectiveness** of each strategy and gain more comprehensive results.

To garment factories:

- **Develop a comprehensive workplace Policies and Procedures Manual** that addresses occupational health and safety risks (including workers' commutes) as well as strategies to avoid and manage those risks. **Medical insurance and support policies** for workers to return to work after occupational accidents in the workplace or injuries outside the workplace (such as road crashes) should also be incorporated.
- **Develop an anonymous risk register and whistleblower protection policy** for workers to record risks as they arise without fear of losing their jobs. Factories can promote effective grievance mechanisms for workers to know they have been heard and their concerns are taken seriously. Factories could further create **mechanisms of social dialogue and regular feedback** with employees in order to be made aware of risks early.
- **Inform all staff about these policies** as well as their rights and responsibilities in keeping the work environment safe.
- Appoint an **occupational health and safety staff person** to **continuously monitor risks** and work with managers to **identify solutions** to those identified risks.
- Commit to **sharing road safety resources with workers through proactive communication**. As noted in the recommendations, factory workers in Vietnam shared that they prefer communication through the following channels: video clips on TV or on social networks (Facebook, YouTube), face-to-face training workshops, lunch break training sessions and workplace posters/banners/fliers. Workers said that they would like union representatives and factory managers to deliver road safety information to them.

To researchers:

- **Conduct additional research on the evolving topic of garment workers' transport safety** to promote future evidence-based interventions. Given the shortcomings of existing research to support the development of adequate road safety interventions in the garment sector, ongoing research is needed to understand localized and sector-wide risks, general needs and barriers from workers' perspectives, and appropriate evidence-based interventions.
- **Conduct assessments of existing policy frameworks and strategies**, particularly those impacting industrial zones.

To international development organisations and multilateral stakeholders:

- Foster **strong stakeholder engagement and consistent collaboration** with stakeholders across all levels of service in order to achieve measurable and sustainable progress in the garment sector's transportation safety environment, including local and national government, the private sector, road safety experts and NGOs, trade unions, traffic police, factory leadership and factory workers.
- **Fund future interventions and research** in collaboration with the stakeholders listed above in order to support them in their specific roles toward road safety.

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