

Pilot Survey: Agent Fees

Research by Transient Workers Count Too

1: Summary

This survey was conducted in June and July 2016 among male work permit holders working in the construction sector, with a total of 68 responses. Since there were only 5 Indian nationals in the sample, they were eliminated from the analysis.

The aim of the study was to see if anecdotal reports of unusually high recruitment fees were supported by a simple survey, and to test the questions for a larger survey in 2017, if such an exercise is warranted.

Salient findings – from the 63 Bangladeshi construction workers (after excluding the Indians) – are as follows:

Recruitment costs for first jobs

For first-time jobs, average recruitment costs were rather volatile, moving up and down between 2007 and 2014 within the range S\$5,500 to S\$11,000. Then in 2015, there was a spike to \$15,555.

Few respondents could provide a breakdown of their total costs. Those who could indicated that about half their costs was for their skills training and half was the 'agent fee'. Payments were almost all made in Bangladesh.

Recruitment costs for subsequent jobs

For subsequent jobs, our data was concentrated within the years 2014 to 2016. The average each year was in the region of S\$3,000 to S\$4,000, except for those recruited in 2015, when the average rose slightly to \$4,299.

About half of respondents coming for subsequent jobs paid part or all of their costs in Singapore, with some of them reporting that they had to pay their employers for their jobs.

This pilot survey's findings are consistent with anecdotal observations that recruitment costs for first jobs have risen dramatically and suggests a need for a larger study. While respondents seemed unable to provide detailed breakdowns for the cost of their first jobs, they were more able to provide information



about the cost components for their subsequent jobs. The many kinds of payments they have to make may be worth a closer look.

2: Introduction

“Agent fees” remain a huge issue for migrant workers working in Singapore. Male migrant workers typically have to pay these fees upfront before they can get a job. Until they have worked long enough to recover this sunk cost from earnings, workers feel trapped in those jobs. They feel they have no choice but to continue working even if they are not receiving their due salaries, employers are abusive or if workplace and housing conditions are abysmal. To quit or to lodge a complaint with the relevant authorities (which would effectively end the job) would leave them in a net loss position financially, affecting not just themselves, but the families that depend on them.

This is because under present Singapore regulations, they would have to be repatriated. They are generally not allowed to switch to another job. Once home, they would have to pay agents all over again to get new jobs, even if they have not recovered the sunk cost of the first job.

Thus, the higher the ‘agent fees’, the longer the period of effective entrapment. A 2011 study¹ by Transient Workers Count Too titled **“Worse off for working?”** found that when the average placement cost for a new worker was \$7,256, men needed an average of 17.5 months on the job to recover this cost.

Starting from late 2015, volunteers with Transient Workers Count Too (TWC2) have been coming across anecdotal reports of unusually high ‘agent fees’ from among first-time foreign workers in Singapore, particularly Bangladeshi men. Figures never heard before, e.g. S\$17,000, began to surface. How many years would they need to work to recover such costs? When these casual reports began accumulating, TWC2 decided to conduct a small-sample survey to assess whether a larger study would be merited.

A pilot study would also help us refine the questions we would need to ask to make a larger study more meaningful. This is because, while we often simplify and label the total amount of money paid by a worker for a job as “agent fees”, the reality is far from being this simple. These workers are introduced to the prospects of a job through myriad avenues – friends or relatives who have worked, or are currently working here, job agencies and training centres, as well as independent job brokers in Singapore or their home country.

Fees paid are often split to different parties both in the home country and in Singapore. Most workers pay a sum of money to an ‘agent’ (who can be anyone at all) or a training centre, which is then split among various parties. Would workers be able to provide us with a detailed breakdown? A pilot survey could reveal if enough workers had enough detail to include such questions in a larger study.

¹ Worse off for working? Kickbacks, intermediary fees and migrant construction workers in Singapore (<http://twc2.org.sg/2012/08/12/worse-off-for-working-kickbacks-intermediary-fees-and-migrant-construction-workers-in-singapore/>)



In this paper, the term 'agent' is used loosely to mean any intermediary whom the worker primarily deals with to get a job. Typically it would be a countryman from his home country or a training centre there, rather than any employment agency licensed under Singapore law.

3: Survey method

The survey was conducted over two months – June and July 2016 – by TWC2 interns, led by Colin Ng. Most of the respondents were from TWC2's free meal programme, The Cuff Road Project (TCRP), while a small number of responses were obtained from workers that were at the TWC2 office on certain days.

We chose only those workers who had suffered a work injury for the survey, not those with salary or other problems. By its very nature an unpredictable accident, the occurrence of work injuries would have no correlation with employer attitudes regarding money, unlike cases where a worker presents, for example, with a salary problem.

Responses were documented with the help of a survey form which was only available in English. Thus, questions had to be explained verbally or translated with the help of other workers who were more fluent in English. While this may have resulted in workers who were unable to converse adequately in English being less represented, we note that none of the workers approached for a survey failed to provide answers or complete the survey due to language difficulties – language problems were close to insignificant. All responses were obtained anonymously, and were computed and analyzed by TWC2 interns.

For the purposes of the survey, we deliberately restricted the data gathering to male construction workers who possessed a Work Permit, for two main reasons:

Firstly, for this survey, we wanted to investigate trends in recruitment costs paid by workers over the years. One component of these costs is that of training centres. The requirement that prospective workers obtain a skill certification from Singapore's Building & Construction Authority via a training centre in their home country before applying for a job in Singapore applies only to the construction sector. Hence the recruitment costs borne by construction workers differ in a material way from workers in other sectors who do not face this pre-certification requirement.

To get around this problem, we could have collected a different subset of data pertaining to non-construction workers, but for two reasons below, it was not considered necessary for the purposes of a pilot survey:

- (a) the anecdotal reports that triggered this pilot survey all came from construction workers;
- (b) Most men visiting the Cuff Road Project for meals were construction workers; to want to seek out injured workers from other sectors in order to collect a separate subset of data might prove daunting, since it would take a longer time to get enough responses.

Secondly, the survey also contained two questions (Q9 and Q10) regarding the training that workers had to undergo, questions which are only applicable to construction workers.



The training requirement applied only to first-time workers. Workers coming for their second or subsequent jobs do not have to undergo basic skills certification all over again. Hence, in the analysis below, we segregate the costs reported for "first job" from costs for "subsequent job".

Whilst a large majority of the workers surveyed were not currently in possession of a valid Work Permit (they had been issued Special Passes due to their work injury compensation claims), we only required that they were employed on Work Permits during their current and past jobs.

To obtain data regarding recruitment costs for subsequent jobs (i.e. subsequent to their first jobs), we merely asked men for information relating to their current jobs (if not first-time jobs). We are aware that some men might be on their third or fourth job, and ideally, we should be asking them to enumerate the costs for each of the jobs they have been through. However, we wanted to avoid making the survey too complex.

Moreover, if we recorded multiple costs for the few men who have held many past jobs, the data might be skewed to these men's experiences.

A substantial chunk of questions sought to break down each respondent's total cost into its components, e.g. training costs, agent costs, airfare, etc. We found that most respondents were not able to give us details of these components, even as they clearly remembered the total amount paid. This pilot survey therefore tells us that in the main survey to come, it may not be worthwhile including such detailed questions.

Respondents' answers were given in Singapore dollars (SGD), Bangladeshi taka (BDT), Indian rupee (INR) or in a mixture of two currencies (depending on the question). For analysis, we decided to standardise the figures using SGD as the currency. In so doing, we had to factor in the exchange rate when standardising the data. Though exchange rates vary throughout a year, it would have been impossible to take into account the exact rate for the exact day for each worker. In any case, no worker could provide exact dates on which he made payments. It was thus more practical to use the average rate for each year in our analysis. We obtained the average annual exchange rates online². Since the analysis of the results would exclude Indian workers (see Section 4 below) and would be only for Bangladeshi workers who paid recruitment fees in 2007 or later, Table 1 presents the exchange rates applied.

Year	S\$1=...taka
2007	46.7727
2008	49.3340
2009	48.2393
2010	51.9481
2011	59.8086
2012	66.6223
2013	63.4518
2014	62.2665
2015	57.7367
2016	58.1058

² <https://www.oanda.com/currency/average>

4. Profile of respondents

As mentioned above, the survey was limited to construction workers who, at the time of working, were in possession of a work permit.

Of the 68 respondents, 63 were Bangladeshi and 5 Indian. Since the economics of recruitment from India could be different from Bangladesh, it was decided to eliminate the 5 Indian men from the analysis in order not to confuse the findings. The results presented here thus relate only to the Bangladeshi experience.

Table 2:

Total respondents	68	
of which:		
Indians	5	
Bangladeshis	63	Now in subsequent job
of which:		
First job started 2006 or earlier	9	9
First job started 2007 or later	54	37
	<u>63</u>	<u>46</u>

As shown in Table 2, nine of the 63 Bangladeshi men started working in Singapore before 2007. Being more than ten years ago, there was considerable risk that the economic and regulatory conditions were substantially different then and respondents' recall of fees paid subject to error. We therefore excluded them from the analysis of "first job" costs.

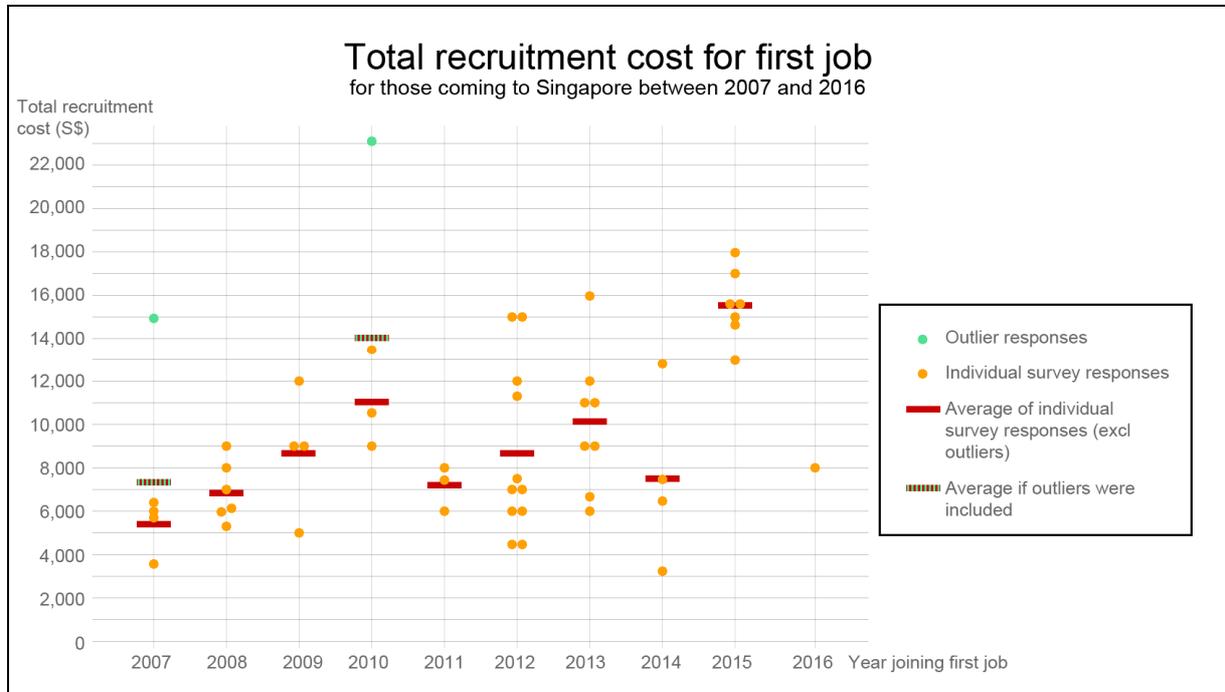
46 men were in a subsequent job – it could be their second, or third, fourth and so on – including the nine who started on their first job before 2007. All of these started on their current jobs in 2009 or later. We therefore used all 46 responses when analysing "subsequent job" costs.

5. Recruitment costs for first jobs (n= 54)

Since our sample size was small, we are able to plot each response received instead of just the average for the year.

To the question "In total, how much did you pay for your first job?", these are the 54 responses:

Graph 3:



(Dataset for the above graph can be found in Appendix 2)

Two responses (one each from 2007 and 2010) were such outliers that a case could be made for excluding them. Perhaps the respondent misreported, or the intern misrecorded. Or, since it was years ago, the respondent remembered wrongly.

Nevertheless, the graph above shows the annual averages for both scenarios: including and excluding the outliers.

If we cast our eye on the small red bars – representing the annual averages excluding outliers – one gets the sense that the first-job recruitment costs are quite volatile. Even so, there was a clear jump in 2015 compared to the preceding years.

Then again, there was also a rising trend in 2008 - 2010, albeit peaking at a level (S\$11,021) lower than that for 2015 (S\$15,555).

The survey did not collect any data that could point to reasons for trends. One possibility was that recruitment costs were sensitive to the economic situation in Singapore and the number of job openings available for

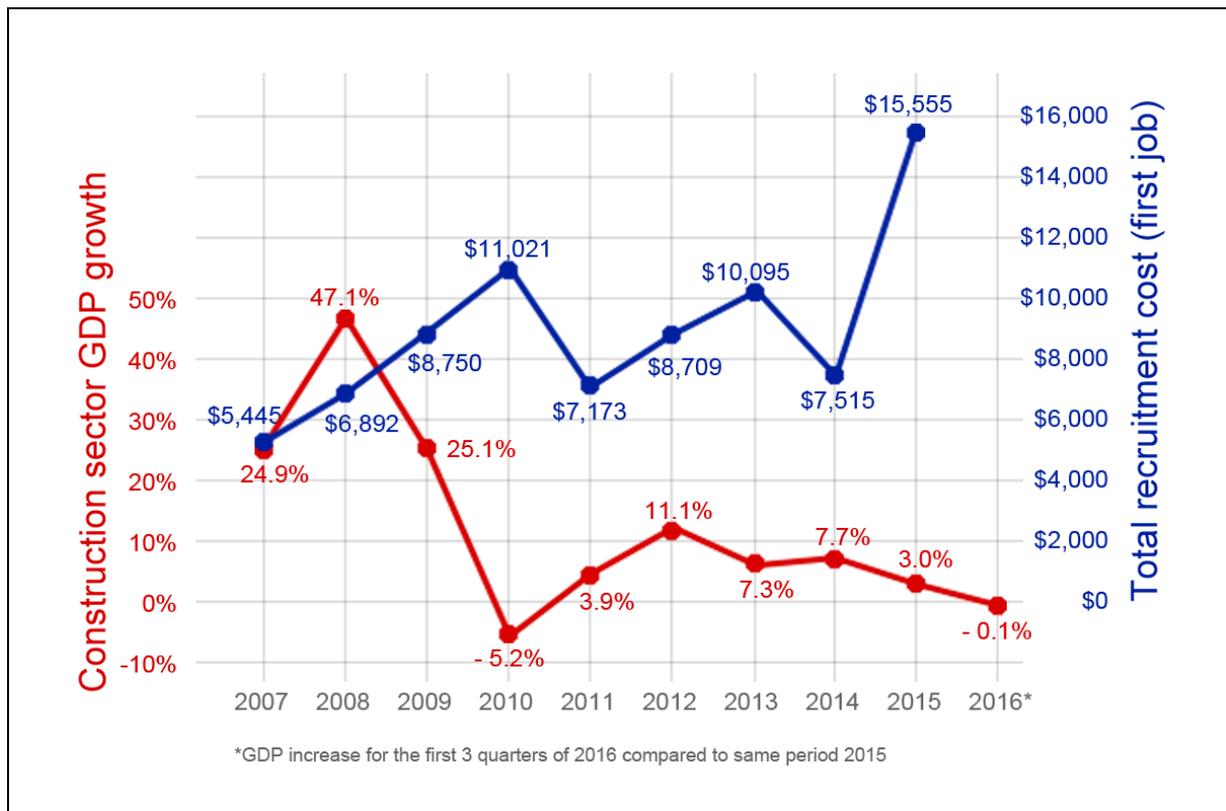
The 2011 study *Worse off for working?* reported that the average total recruitment cost for 150 workers who came to Singapore between 2007 and 2011 was \$7,256.

It may be interesting to note that the average total recruitment cost for the 20 workers in this study who first came between 2007 and 2011 was \$7,636 – a figure in the same ballpark. This average did not include the two outliers.

construction workers in the corresponding years.

For the next graph, we extracted from the Department of Statistics' website data regarding GDP for the construction sector for those years.

Graph 4:



(Dataset pertaining to construction sector GDP can be found in Appendix 4)

Graph 4 plots the average total recruitment cost for first jobs (blue line) against the growth rate of Singapore's construction sector (red line). The graphs hint at a degree of inverse correlation. It is interesting to note, for example, that the previous peak in recruitment cost (in 2010) coincided with a trough in our construction sector. In 2010, this sector shrank by 5.2 percent.

There are doubtless other factors that could be in play, for example, regulatory changes with respect to levy rates, the domestic economic situation in Bangladesh and relative opportunities for Bangladeshi workers in other countries such as Malaysia and Saudi Arabia. We note that Malaysia imposed a ban on hiring Bangladeshi workers in 2009 (lifted 2012)³ as did Saudi Arabia in 2008 (lifted 2015)⁴.

³ <http://www.thedailystar.net/the-plight-of-low-skilled-migrants-in-malaysia-63070>

Nonetheless, even if the volatility of recruitment costs can be explained by demand and supply, such an explanation would not begin to address the moral question of whether anyone should be expected to pay for a job whatever the macro economic conditions.

Components of recruitment cost (first job) and where paid

We attempted in this pilot survey to get information about the components of recruitment costs. However, few workers could provide meaningful numbers. Only 14 of 54 first-job respondents gave a rough picture of how much the training centre took out of the total cost. The (rough) answers were that the training centres took about half of the total.

Table 5:

Where and to whom did you pay?			
In Bangladesh	In Singapore	No. of respondents	Remarks
Paid agent	Nil	19	
Paid training centre	Nil	26	
Paid agent & paid training centre	Nil	1	
Paid friend	Nil	1	
Paid agent	Paid agent in Sg	1	
Paid agent	Paid friend in Sg	1	
Paid agent	Paid boss in Sg	1	See note [1]
Paid training centre	Paid agent in Sg	1	
Paid training centre	Paid friend in Sg	1	
Nil?	Paid friend in Sg	1	See note [2]
No answer or don't know		1	
TOTAL		54	

[1] Respondent #25: paid boss \$1,000 out of total \$7,000
 [2] He probably meant he paid a friend in Singapore in addition to agent/training centre

⁴ <http://www.ibtimes.com/saudi-arabia-lift-ban-labor-migration-bangladesh-1805350>

The survey also attempted to establish where payment was made and to whom. Virtually all first-job respondents said they paid a training centre and/or an agent in Bangladesh though some said they paid others in addition. Considering the intertwined nature of training centres and recruitment agents, we can treat both versions of the answer as one and the same, and that this seems to be an exclusive channel for recruitment. Exclusive channels however create rentier profits and tend towards oligopolistic pricing.

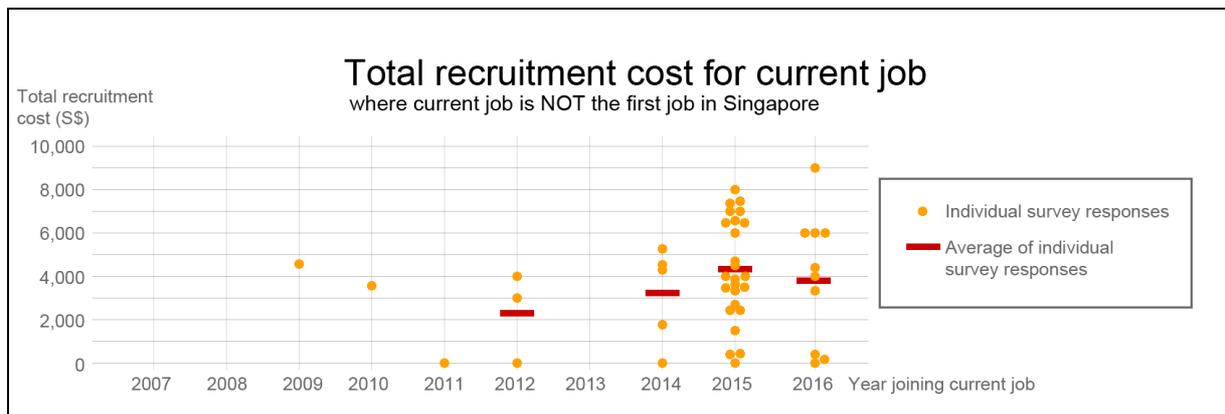
Three men (respondents #3, #20 and #23) reported that for their first jobs, they also paid in Singapore to a "friend". This term must be understood loosely. It could be a relative or just an acquaintance, and the recipient might himself be an intermediary who passed the money onwards to another person.

One man (respondent #25) said that he had to pay his boss \$1,000 in Singapore for his first job, and that this factored into his total cost.

6. Recruitment costs for subsequent jobs (n=46)

There was a noticeable difference between the responses for first jobs and current, subsequent jobs. The datapoints for subsequent jobs were less scattered; they were more closely bunched together. As we expected, they were also of lower amounts compared to first-job costs, as can be seen in Graph 6 below. (Note: the Y-axis in Graph 6 is not any more compressed than the Y-axis in Graph 3.)

Graph 6:



(Dataset for this graph can be found in Appendix 3)

With only 46 responses in this dataset, it would not be wise to try to draw much by way of conclusion. The limited data we have seems to indicate that the cost for a subsequent job is slightly less than half the cost of a first job, except in 2015, when it was less than a third.

What may be noteworthy is that there are nine dots (nine men) in the graph at or near the zero line. These will be discussed in a little further below.

The datapoints are also bunched in another way: most workers said they took up their current (subsequent) jobs in 2014 or later. Data for the years before that are rather sparse (but see box alongside). This indicates that men have not been long on their current jobs.

The 2011 study *Worse off for working?* obtained an average of \$3,332 as recruitment cost for subsequent jobs. With fieldwork done in 2011, the data reflected the period 2007 – 2011.

Components of recruitment cost (subsequent job) and where paid

It is interesting how similar that figure is compared to those obtained in this pilot survey – between \$3,151 and \$4,299 in 2014 - 2016. This suggests far less volatility in recruitment cost for subsequent jobs compared to first jobs.

Having to pay the employer for the job was more common in subsequent-job situations than in first-job situations. As discussed in the preceding section, only one man out of 54 reporting on their first jobs said he had to pay his boss. But among 46 subsequent-job responses, five said they had to pay their bosses \$500 or more.

Table 7:

Where and to whom did you pay?			
In Bangladesh	In Singapore	No. of respondents	Remarks
Paid agent	Nil	19	
Paid airfare	Nil	3	See note [1]
Paid agent	Paid agent in Sg	1	
Paid agent	Paid boss in Sg	3	See note [2]
Paid friend	Paid agent in Sg	2	
Nil	Paid agent in Sg	9	
Nil	Paid friend in Singapore	1	
Nil	Paid boss in Sg	3	See note [3]
Nil	Nil	5	
TOTAL		46	

[1] Respondents #54 and 56 paid S\$400 each, #60 paid \$312
 [2] Respondent #30 paid boss \$1,000 out of total \$7,000; #51 paid boss \$500 out of total \$4,700; #57 paid boss \$2,000 out of total \$6,600.
 [3] Respondent #26 paid boss \$1,600; #31 paid boss \$4,500 in monthly installments; #68 paid boss \$150 (perhaps to cover airfare?)



One of these five (respondent #31) explained that his boss deducted monthly installments from his salary, adding up to a total of \$4,500. It should be noted that it is illegal for employers to take payments from workers for giving them employment. That examples are so easily surfaced from even a small survey like this one indicates that this practice is far from rare.

Thirteen workers obtained their jobs through contacts (whom they referred to as either 'agent' or 'friend') in Singapore, either partly or wholly. That these intermediaries took money, rather than recommending a job out of goodwill, implies that they were acting as employment agents. These unnamed intermediaries were unlikely to have been licensed agents in Singapore, and thus would have committed criminal offences by taking money for placement.

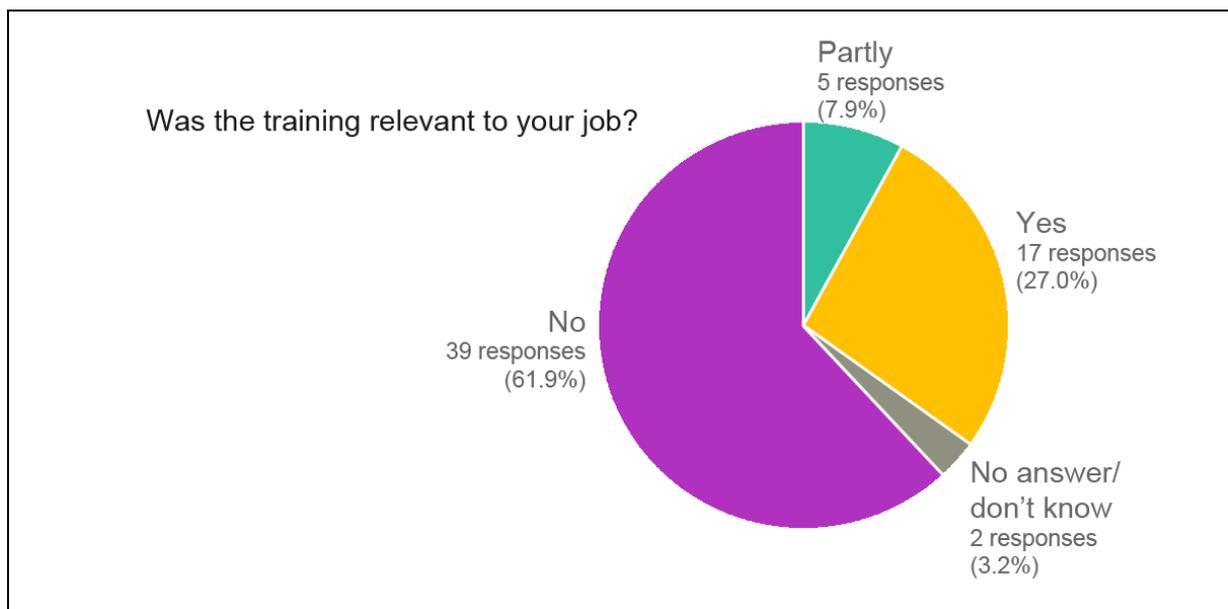
It is possible too that some or all of the money they took was given to the employer.

Overall, what is noteworthy is that of the 38 men in this dataset who paid something beyond airfare for their jobs, 19 or half of them paid someone in Singapore, be it the boss, 'agent' or friend. It is somewhat shocking to see how common illegal transactions are, right under the noses of our authorities.

7. Relevance of training

Was skills training really meant to impart skills, or was it primarily an additional way to pad up recruitment cost? An indicator would be to ask the workers if the jobs they finally obtained used those skills in any way. The results from all 63 Bangladeshi respondents can be seen in Graph 8.

Graph 8:





While we had expected that some workers would say no (not relevant) since in almost every field of work there is some divergence between training and the actual tasks required, it was nonetheless striking that almost two-thirds of respondents gave a "not relevant" reply. In casual conversation during the survey, a number of workers even reported that they were working in a totally different field from what they had been trained for, e.g. a carpenter working for an airconditioning company.

Our finding in this pilot survey is consistent with another small survey we conducted in 2014. See Half of construction workers deployed outside their skill areas⁵.

With so little attention paid to fitting the right skills to the job, one cannot but suspect that the training requirement is useful for quite different reasons.

8. Conclusion

This pilot survey has found support for the observation that average recruitment costs for first-time construction workers spiked in 2015. It found that the average cost in 2015 was S\$15,555, which is twice the level (S\$ 7,256) found in an earlier study *Worse off for working?* whose data covered the period 2007 – 2011.

This is a matter of great concern since high recruitment costs mean a longer period of entrapment for the worker.

Recruitment costs for first-time jobs seem to be quite volatile from year to year. However, our sample sizes are small; a larger study is needed to check this finding.

Recruitment costs for subsequent jobs also rose somewhat for those who came in 2015, but not as dramatically as for first-time workers. Whereas in years past, it hovered in the \$3,000 to \$4,000 range, in 2015, it went up to an average of \$4,299. Overall, recruitment costs for subsequent jobs do not appear to be as volatile as for first jobs.

A larger study is warranted to provide more confidence in the numbers and to see if the rising trend is persisting into 2016.

⁵ <http://twc2.org.sg/2014/04/13/half-of-construction-workers-deployed-outside-their-skill-areas/>



Appendix 1: Survey Form

AGENT FEES SURVEY	Interviewer:	
	Date:	
Q1 Do you have a work permit? (If no, end interview)		
		Y / N
Q2 Do you work in the construction sector? (If no, end interview)		
		Y / N
Q3 What country are you from? BD IN CN SL Other:		
Q4 Is this your first job in Singapore? (If yes, ignore all B questions)		
		Y / N
Q5 What year did you start:		
A) Your first job		B) Your most recent job
Q6 In total, how much did you pay for:		
A) Your first job		B) Your most recent job
Q7 Breakdown of fees paid in home country (before arrival) for:		
A) Your first job		B) Your most recent job
Training centre fees		Training centre fees
Job agent fees		Job agent fees
Air fare		Air fare
Others		Others



Q8 Breakdown of fees paid in Singapore (after arrival) for:	
A) Your first job	B) Your most recent job
Training centre fees	Training centre fees
Job agent fees	Job agent fees
Employer fees	Employer fees
Others	Others
Q9 What training did you receive at the training centre?	
Q10 Was the training relevant to your job?	Y / N
Q11 To whom did you make the payment for:	
A) Your first job	B) Your most recent job
<input type="checkbox"/> Paid friend/agent in country	<input type="checkbox"/> Paid friend/agent in country
<input type="checkbox"/> Paid friend/agent in Singapore	<input type="checkbox"/> Paid friend/agent in Singapore
<input type="checkbox"/> Others (explain):	<input type="checkbox"/> Others (explain):

Appendix 2: Dataset for first jobs

Total recruitment cost for first job

for those coming to Singapore between 2007 and 2016

Respondent serial no.	Is he still on this job?	When did he join this job?	Total recruitment cost (S\$)
11	No	2007	3,592
34	No	2007	5,773
51	No	2007	6,000
58	No	2007	6,414
63	No	2007	14,966 (1)
AVERAGE (2)			5,445
38	No	2008	5,270
61	No	2008	6,000
67	No	2008	6,081
62	No	2008	7,000
14	No	2008	8,000
57	No	2008	9,000
AVERAGE			6,892
28	No	2009	5,000
20	No	2009	9,000
52	Yes	2009	9,000
54	No	2009	12,000
AVERAGE			8,750
53	No	2010	9,000
42	No	2010	10,588
59	No	2010	13,475
65	No	2010	23,100 (1)
AVERAGE (2)			11,021
68	No	2011	6,019
23	No	2011	7,500
15	No	2011	8,000
55	No	2011	(3)
AVERAGE (3)			7,173
12	No	2012	4,500
3	Yes	2012	4,503
35	Yes	2012	6,004
60	No	2012	6,004
25	Yes	2012	7,000
26	No	2012	7,000
56	No	2012	7,505
66	No	2012	11,258
50	Yes	2012	12,008
40	No	2012	15,010
40	No	2012	15,010
AVERAGE			8,709

Respondent serial no.	Is he still on this job?	When did he join this job?	Total recruitment cost (S\$)
44	Yes	2013	6,000
49	Yes	2013	6,698
21	No	2013	9,000
64	Yes	2013	9,000
31	No	2013	11,032
48	No	2013	11,032
6	No	2013	12,000
7	No	2013	16,000
AVERAGE			10,095
30	No	2014	3,212
37	No	2014	6,500
39	No	2014	7,500
47	Yes	2014	12,848
AVERAGE			7,515
13	Yes	2015	12,990
46	Yes	2015	14,722
29	Yes	2015	15,000
1	Yes	2015	15,588
33	Yes	2015	15,588
18	Yes	2015	17,000
4	Yes	2015	18,000
AVERAGE			15,555
22	Yes	2016	8,000

(1) Treated as outlier datapoint. Likely to have have misreported or misrecorded.

(2) Average does not include the outlier

(3) Average does not include respondent #55 who could not give an answer because "My brother paid for me."

Appendix 3: Dataset for current, subsequent jobs

Total recruitment cost for current job

where current job is NOT the first job in Singapore

Respondent serial no.	When did he join this job?	Total recruitment cost (S\$)
34	2009	4,600
62	2010	3,600
32	2011	0 (2)
5	2012	0 (1)
65	2012	3,000
16	2012	4,000
AVERAGE		2,333
28	2014	0 (1)
11	2014	1,800
58	2014	4,256
66	2014	4,500
21	2014	5,200
AVERAGE		3,151
20	2015	0 (2)
60	2015	312 (3)
56	2015	400 (3)
26	2015	1,600 (6)
8	2015	2,500
63	2015	2,500
27	2015	2,700
67	2015	3,300
10	2015	3,500
53	2015	3,500
12	2015	3,700
55	2015	3,800
38	2015	4,000
14	2015	4,000
31	2015	4,500 (5)
51	2015	4,700 (7)
59	2015	6,062
17	2015	6,500
48	2015	6,500
57	2015	6,600 (8)
30	2015	7,000 (9)
37	2015	7,000
19	2015	7,300
6	2015	7,500
39	2015	8,000
AVERAGE		4,299

Respondent serial no.	When did he join this job?	Total recruitment cost (S\$)
42	2016	0 (4)
68	2016	150 (6)
54	2016	400 (1)
23	2016	3,400
7	2016	4,000
61	2016	4,400
40	2016	6,000
40	2016	6,000
24	2016	6,000
15	2016	9,000
AVERAGE		3,935

- (1) No agent fee.
- (2) No agent fee, but he paid his own airfare, except that he didn't state how much he paid.
- (3) No agent fee, paid his own airfare; amount is for the airfare.
- (4) No agent fee; rehired by previous employer.
- (5) No agent fee; boss deducted monthly installments from salary.
- (6) No agent fee; paid boss directly.
- (7) Paid \$4,200 to agent, \$500 to boss.
- (8) Paid \$4,600 to agent, \$2,000 to boss.
- (9) Paid \$6,000 to agent, \$1,000 to boss.

Appendix 4:

Construction sector GDP growth and average total recruitment cost (first job)

	Construction industry GDP (million S\$)	Percentage increase from previous year	Average total recruitment cost (first job)* in S\$
2006	6,526		
2007	8,151	24.9	5,445
2008	11,988	47.1	6,892
2009	14,997	25.1	8,750
2010	14,221	-5.2	11,021
2011	14,778	3.9	7,173
2012	16,413	11.1	8,709
2013	17,618	7.3	10,095
2014	18,967	7.7	7,515
2015	19,534	3.0	15,555
2015 Q1 - Q3	14,526		
2016 Q1 - Q3	14,506	-0.1	

*excludes outlier datapoints