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Assignment 2 – Q1

From the short piling case either in Yuen Chau Kok or in other corner-cutting building projects, various perspectives would be implicated significantly.

As construction professionals, engineers and contractors should have moral and legal responsibilities to make sure their constructed buildings are safe and fulfilling related requirements and standards. From the case, using short piling and other corner-cutting methods disobeys the standard and professional ethics. Especially in the Yuen Chau Kok two 31-storey blocks of flats, the engineers and contractors did not play their professional responsibilities to ensure the building's safety. They disregarded the life of occupants. The reason that they use short pilings and other corner-cutting methods could be saving costs and time but the lives of many people are put at risk. This action is unacceptable in the construction industry. The safety of occupants should be considered the priority of any action. The case shows engineers and contractors violated the professional perspective and the reason why this perspective is essential.

From the economic perspective, using short piling and other corner-cutting methods would result in serious impacts. Although it reduces production costs in short term, inescapable and irreversible consequences would happen in the further future. Using the case of two 31-storey blocks of flats in the Yuen Chau Kok, the building has to be removed because of the risks of collapse. Based on this, the demolition of the buildings requires enormous costs. Examples of the costs like the money used for employing teams and borrowing equipment to remove, paying for throwing the construction waste, and transportation. Apart from this, it results in ripple effects in the related industry., especially the awful effects on the competitiveness aspect of construction industries. With the spreading of news to the world, the reputation and the attraction of Hong Kong construction reduce which means less investment in the field and cause a loss in economic development in Hong Kong. Moreover, because of the reduction of economic activities, many people would lose their jobs and resulting in a bad atmosphere in the economic aspect. Therefore, especially in the construction field, short piling and other corner-cutting methods would have a huge impact from an economic perspective.

Not only impacts the economic perspective but the environment also be affected. From the two 31-storey blocks of flats in the Yuen Chau Kok case, because of the use of short piling and other corner-cutting methods, the building has to be removed. The result is that huge amounts of debris and waste would be produced. They are harmful to the environment and required to be disposed of. Many environmental problems would happen such as soil erosion, water pollution, and the impacts on the ecosystem. During the demolition of the building, transferring the waste and placing it in the landfills, pollutants especially dust would also spread in the air and dirty the environments nearby. Noise pollution is another essential concern. Due to these, plants and animals, also including humans, would be affected. For example, reducing the quality of life of the people and lives living near the building. This also enlarges the side effect of the landfills zone in Hong Kong. Therefore, the action in the case shows engineers and contractors did not consider the further problems and had harmful consequences to the environment aspect.

Also, the use of short piling and other corner-cutting methods impacts the health and safety perspective. As for the case of Yuen Chau Kok, the building has significant threats and risks to the safety and health of occupants. If the building did not be found using short pilings and planned to remove, the building would be collapsed without expectation. This means the lives living in or even near the building would properly die and be injured. It would result in irreversible consequences and should not be allowed to happen. That is why the health and safety perspective must be put on the priority of consideration in the construction field. In fact, considering the building was removed, the demolition causes a series of pollution such as dust, noise, and waste. From a biological point of view, they hurt and damage the respiratory, auditory, and digestive systems of the human. These are long-term impacts. It continuously impacts the health of people, especially the occupants living near the building. The case shows the actions of engineers and contractors are unacceptable the reason why this perspective is the most significant.

Besides, using short piling and other corner-cutting methods in building projects have serious legal implications. From the two 31-storey blocks of flats in the Yuen Chau Kok case, the because of the collapse of the building, two company directors and an engineer had to go to jail. They defied the construction regulation and standards. The legal implications of the case did not only relate to individuals and companies, the surrounding properties and families also be implicated. The collapse survivors have the right to legal redress for trauma and injuries and the related families could seek compensation because of the loss of their families. Therefore, the actions of the case are violations of the law and that is the reason why short piling and other corner-cutting methods are not advisable.

All in all, the above five perspectives would be implicated. Based on these, being in these projects, I would make several actions and inaction.

Before I decide to use short pilings or other corner-cutting methods, the most essential thing is to put health and safety as the first concern. It means all plans and actions I make must not cause any death or injury or even minimize pollution. Afterward, as a professional engineer or director, I have the responsibility to ensure the building I construct or follow must be safe and ethical, and law-abiding. Therefore, short pilings or other corner-cutting methods must not be used.

As to ensure the projects have compliance with regulations and standards, I would employ professionals that are rich in experience and have an ethical mindset. Then, I would clearly indicate the standards and requirements for them to follow. At the same time, I employ another team of professionals for monitoring purposes. At every stage of construction, they would check the details of the building and the progress report to ensure the construction follows the requirements. Once the use of short pilings or other corner-cutting methods is found in the project I handle, without exceptions, I would stop the project and report the problem to regulatory bodies. This action will ensure that the problem is contained and resolved, at least legally and economically, before it leads to inevitable and irreversible consequences.

In conclusion, the action of short piling in the case should be avoided, unless it would have a series of inevitable and irreversible consequences from various perspectives. And, the building should be ensured safe, following the standards, and away from economic and legal repercussions.