

Assessment of Safety Prevention Practices on Employee Performance at Hirshabelle Civil Service Commission, Somalia

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Abstract: Issues of occupational safety and health have become a global concern. This has been ascribed to increasing proof of significant losses and suffering caused by unsafe environment across the various job industries. Given the amount of expenditure involved in health and safety management, action needs to be taken. The study therefore sought to establish the influence safety prevention on employee performance at Hirshabelle civil service commission in Somalia. The study was anchored on human factors theory which looks into the relationship between humans and their working environment. A descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The research targeted a complete population of 210 staff with a census being carried out. Questionnaires were the main primary information collection tools. For data analysis, descriptive and inferential statistics were used. Using tables and figures, the results were presented. The findings from the correlation and regression analysis indicated that safety prevention has a positive significant effect on employee performance. The findings led to the recommendation that Hirshabelle Civil Service Commission and other organizations need to invest in implementation of safety prevention practices involving Occupational exposure, Risk awareness/ preparedness and Mitigation plans to ensure that employee's welfare is well taken care of to trigger their positive performance.

Key Words; Safety prevention practices, human factors, Risk awareness, risk exposure, preparedness, performance

I. INTRODUCTION

There is increasing proof of major losses and suffering caused by occupational diseases and ill-health across the different industries of jobs (Friend & Kohn, 2018). Organizations all over the globe have therefore invested heavily on safety prevention mechanisms so as to create safe working environment for their employees. African countries have made efforts to address the issue of occupational health and safety practices in order to bring down the high number of accidents and fatalities reported. In fact, the ILO reported that approximately 63,900 work deaths occurred across the 54 African countries while an estimated 1,560,000 work injuries occurred (ILO, 2010). According to Nyakang'o (2009), the issue of occupational health and safety has not received sufficient attention, particularly from managers, employers, employees, trade unions, associations of employers and other stakeholders (Jilcha & Kitaw, 2017). Implementing of occupational health and safety practices is one of the key

responsibilities of the Hirshabelle civil service commission. Therefore, the organization ensures that employee performance is enhanced through adoption of occupational health and safety practices notably safety prevention, first aid support and safety rules. Working in a safe and healthy environment increases the satisfaction of the employees. This translates to workforce that is contented, excited about their work and attached to their jobs. Under these circumstances, the performance of the employees will improve because of the cases of reduced absenteeism, punctuality and low turnover rates (Sanchez, Peláez & Alis, 2017).

A study by Goetzel and Ozminskowski (2008) found out that many employers associated reduced employee performance with work safety. Further, the study revealed that there were costs of workers in poor health; these included medical care. One way of empowering employees is by managing employee performance. Hirshabelle Civil Service Commission Hirshabelle civil service commission is a public agency establish to manage the welfare of the public servants in the Hirshabelle state in Somalia. The Commission's mandate is to: monitor and evaluate public service organization, administration and staff practices; ensure that the public is served well (Obsiye, 2017). The commission seeks to achieve the above mandate through provision of safe and health working conditions for all public servants. In line with this, public entities are supposed to draft and implement a health and safety policy which can in turn stipulate various practices that may be adopted hence the suitability of the of this study.

Occupational hazards have been on the increase in the recent past and various organizations have developed policies to address the issue. This is because the work environment of employees has significant effects on their performance. Health care costs have continued to increase, leading to conflict between the needs of the company and those of the employers. While the companies are pushing for increased output, employees on the other hand are demanding protection from hazards and accidents in the place of work. Kahya (2007) asserts that unfavorable health conditions in the workplace decrease workers' concentration towards duties and lead to lower worker performance resulting in high costs. Various studies have been conducted to address the issue, for instance, a study by Abuga (2012) was carried out to establish the effect

of health programs on organization effectiveness at the Pyrethrum Board of Somalia. The study revealed that employees must be involved in planning of occupational safety and health programs. Mberia (2007) did an evaluation of programs adopted by banks operating in Somalia. The study revealed that banks were very keen on physical and mechanical hazards that affect employees to increase their productivity. It is evident from the existing literature that employee performance is influenced by the occupational safety conditions of the workers, but the area has not been adequately covered. These studies have been conducted on the various issues relating to employee productivity and occupational health and safety in different sectors (private and public) in different countries. However, none of the studies conducted have attempted to establish the influence of safety prevention practices on the performance of employees especially in Somalia's public agency. To fill this knowledge gap the study sought to assess the influence of safety prevention on employee performance

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study was guided by the human factors theory which was proposed by Heinrich Domino (1996) to look into the relationship between man and his working environment. According to Heinrich, the management should take responsibility of employees' safety because their health and safety will improve their performance which will in turn improve the overall performance of the organization. Prevention of workplace hazards and injuries has benefits on employee and the institution in general. In addition, Heinrich noted that work place injuries have direct costs such as employee compensation, liability claims and hospital expenses as well as indirect costs. Safety prevention practices could therefore help improve employee performance and reduce the costs associated with managing the incidents and accidents.

According to the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS 2010), almost 25% of employees in Europe (EU27) say their health or security is at risk due to their job. Risk leadership is a method progressively used in organizations and the government sector to enhance security and reliability and minimize Cox & Tait (1998) losses. For the employee allocated to them, managers in most organisations are accountable for communicating and keeping secure and healthy job environments. Supervisors will guarantee that they are all workers. It involves defining, evaluating and controlling the likelihood of an employee suffering from an injury or health issue, or from property or environment harm resulting from exposure to or contact with a hazard (Bayram, Ungan & Ardic, 2017).

James (2006) states that while machine exposure and manual labor-related hazards are decreasing, there are other dangers connected with growing productivity for employees. Realizing that organizing work can. As a result, the dangers associated with bad job organization are quite severe. To establish how

safety and risk management affect employee performance in the department of health services, the study focused on how occupational exposure, risk awareness and preparedness and risk mitigation plans affect employee productivity, achievement of objectives and staff turnover. The study established if there are any occupational exposures that pose threats to employee and the effect they have on the achievement of objectives and organization productivity. Further the study evaluated the level of risk awareness and preparedness in the event of a hazard and how it affects the achievement of objectives, whether it affects staff turnover and whether it affects the overall productivity of the employees. Lastly, the study reviewed the mitigations plans put in place to reduce the chances of injuries and hazards occurring. The study also established whether the mitigations plan, if any affected the level of employee productivity, reduced staff turnover or enhanced the achievement of the set objectives.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design. A descriptive survey design describes current phenomena by assessing individuals' perceptions, attitudes, behaviors and values (Kothari's 2008). The study area was Hirshabelle civil service commission in Somalia with total workforce of 210 staff in the human resource, logistics, finance and support staff sections. It is located in the capital city of Somalia. The study adopted a census method where the entire population of the study was studied since it was small and manageable. In this study, a pilot study was carried out before the actual study of six members of the Hirshabelle Civil Service Commission, in line with the guidelines of Mugenda and Mugenda, that 10% of the sample is sufficient. A semi structured questionnaire was used as the data collection tool with both open and closed ended questions. The researcher sought the requisite permission from Hirshabelle civil service commission management and Ethical Review Committee of Mount Kenya University prior to data collection. Data was analysed through descriptive and inferential statistics and represented in tables.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

159 out of 210 questionnaires were properly filled and collected representing a response rate of 75.7 percent which the researchers found to be satisfactory according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2009) who posited that a response above 50 percent is good.

Table 1 Response Rate

	Frequency	Percentage
Response	159	75.7
Non-Response	51	24.3
Total	210	100

The research tool was tested for reliability before the main survey. Internal consistency was interrogated through Cronbach Alpha method at a threshold of 0.7. All the study variables were reliable since their Cronbach values; 0.905 and 0.861 for safety prevention and employee performance respectively were above 0.7. This is consistent with Cronbach (1951). Since they were reliable, the questionnaire was not revised before the main data collection process. In addition, no additional comments, observations, ideas and reflections were added to the questionnaire. It was adopted in its form for the main survey.

The descriptive results of the statements on safety prevention as presented in Table 3 shows that at the Commission, occupational exposure influences employee turnover to a high extent ($M = 4.21$), occupational exposure influences employee turnover to a high extent ($M = 4.24$), risk awareness leads to achievement of objectives by employees to a very high extent ($M = 4.56$), having risk mitigation measures in places leads to high employee productivity to a very high extent ($M = 4.52$) and that the commission promotes employee's performance through having risk management practices in place to a high extent ($M = 4.39$). The results generally demonstrate that the commission has promoted safety prevention practices to a high extent. Basically, there is risk awareness, risk mitigation practices, risk management practices and occupational exposure among the respondents. The interrogation is consistent with James (2006) who argued that organizations have put in place measures to ensure employee work place safety in order to enhance their productivity.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Safety Prevention Practices

Statement	Mean	Std Dev
Occupational exposure influences employee turnover	4.21	0.89
Occupational exposure influences employee turnover	4.24	0.92
Risk awareness leads to achievement of objectives by employees	4.56	0.68
Having risk mitigation measures in places leads to high employee productivity	4.52	0.72
The commission promotes employee's performance through having risk management practices in place	4.39	0.98

The descriptive statistics of employee performance results showed that in the commission, the employee performance has improved due to embracing of health and safety practices to a high extent ($M = 4.48$), organizational support on health and safety issues has led to improved employee performance to a very high extent ($M = 4.51$), the commissions conformance to health and safety rules has led to less staff turnover to a high extent ($M = 4.49$), adherence to safety and health rules has led to less cost on employee accidents to a high extent ($M = 4.50$) and the commissions working environment has improved due to observation of health and safety practices to a very high extent ($M = 4.52$). Overall, the

results show that implementation of safety and occupational health standards has improved employee performance.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Employee Performance

Statement	Mean	Std Dev
The employee performance has improved due to embracing of health and safety practices	4.48	0.89
Organizational support on health and safety issues has led to improved employee performance	4.51	0.72
The commissions conformance to health and safety rules has led to less staff turnover	4.49	0.75
Adherence to safety and health rules has led to less cost on employee accidents	4.50	0.76
The commissions working environment has improved due to observation of health and safety practices	4.52	0.78

A linear regression of study variables using the proposed model was carried out to determine regression model coefficients. The results showed that prevention has a positive and significant effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.190$; Sig < 0.05) as indicated in table 5. This implies that a unit increase in implementation of safety prevention leads to an improvement in employee performance by 0.190 units. Improving such practices as implementation of safety and health rules, conformity to safety health requirements by the management, adherence to safety rules by employees as well as establishment of well written rules and processes on safety and health issues is associated with improved employee performance. The findings are consistent with James (2006) who also established that safety prevention practices improved employee performance significantly in Europe.

Table 5: Model Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.830	.239		3.478	.001
Safety Prevention	.190	.088	.184	2.148	.033
Dependent Variable: Employee Performance					

The resulting study model therefore becomes; *Employee Performance* = $0.830 + 0.190$ (*Safety Prevention*). The equation means that safety prevention has a positive effect on employee performance with an effect of 0.19.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings led to the conclusion that promoting Safety Prevention practices involving Occupational exposure, Risk awareness/ preparedness and Mitigation plans leads to improved employee performance. Hirshabelle Civil Service Commission and other commissions should invest in implementation of safety prevention practices involving Occupational exposure, Risk awareness/ preparedness and Mitigation plans to foster their employee productivity. Since

the study limited itself to a case study, other researchers may carry out studies on other organizations.

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