Awareness, Attitude, and Practices on Workplace Safety and Security Among Faculty and Staff of a Public Higher Education Institution in Western Visayas, Philippines

Reynante A. Santiago[1], Leon II B. Rogador[2], Dian B. Garcia[3], Rene Jun B. Belgica[4]

[1,3,4]Northern Iloilo State University, Iloilo, Philippines

[2]LGU-Municipality of Estancia, Iloilo, Philippines

ABSTRACT

Workplace safety and security are critical concerns in higher education institutions, as they influence employee well-being, productivity, and organizational effectiveness. This study examined the levels of awareness, attitude, and practices on workplace safety and security among faculty and staff of a public higher education institution in Western Visayas, Philippines. A descriptive-comparative research design was employed, utilizing a survey questionnaire with high internal consistency to gather data from 153 faculty and non-teaching personnel. Findings revealed that respondents demonstrated a high level of awareness and a positive attitude toward workplace safety and security, while safety practices were also favorably observed, although they were demonstrated less consistently than awareness and attitude. When respondents were grouped according to sex, no significant differences were found in their levels of awareness, attitude, and practices, indicating that male and female employees shared comparable perceptions and behaviors related to workplace safety and security. Similarly, no significant differences were observed when respondents were grouped according to employment category, suggesting that faculty and staff exhibited a common understanding and implementation of safety and security measures within the institution. The results indicate a generally uniform safety culture across employee groups, reflecting the effectiveness of institutional safety and security initiatives. However, the findings also highlight the need to strengthen the translation of positive awareness and attitudes into consistent safety practices. Continuous safety training, regular monitoring, and sustained administrative support are recommended to further enhance workplace safety and security in higher education institutions.

Keywords: Workplace safety; safety awareness; safety practices; safety culture; higher education

INTRODUCTION

Workplace safety and security have emerged as critical global concerns, particularly in organizational settings where employees are exposed to physical, environmental, and psychosocial risks (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2019; Huang et al., 2022). Unsafe working conditions contribute to work-related injuries, reduced productivity, and diminished employee well-being across sectors (ILO, 2019). In higher education institutions, where academic, administrative, and support functions intersect, ensuring a safe and secure workplace is essential to sustaining institutional effectiveness and protecting human capital (Lee et al., 2023).

Existing literature highlights that effective workplace safety and security depend largely on employees' awareness, attitude, and practices. Awareness enables employees to recognize potential hazards and understand institutional safety policies, while attitude reflects their beliefs, commitment, and willingness to comply with safety measures. Practices represent the actual behaviors and actions taken to maintain a safe working environment (Geller, 2016; Neal & Griffin, 2006). Recent studies show that high safety awareness and positive attitudes improve compliance and reduce workplace incidents (Kim & Park, 2022; Lee et al., 2023). However, awareness and attitude do not always translate into consistent safety practices because behavior is influenced by organizational climate and supervision (Guo & Yiu, 2021; Huang et al., 2022).

In higher education contexts, empirical studies on workplace safety remain limited, particularly in developing countries. Previous research has focused largely on industrial and healthcare settings (Clarke, 2013; Vinodkumar & Bhasi, 2010), leaving universities less explored despite diverse employee roles and risk exposure. Furthermore, few studies compare safety perceptions across employee groups such as sex and employment category. This gap highlights the need for localized evidence in public higher education institutions.

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the level of awareness on workplace safety and security among faculty and staff?

2. What is the level of attitude toward workplace safety and security among faculty and staff?

3. What is the level of practices on workplace safety and security among faculty and staff?

4. Are there significant differences in awareness, attitude, and practices when grouped according to sex?

5. Are there significant differences in awareness, attitude, and practices when grouped according to employment category?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive-comparative research design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) to examine the levels of awareness, attitude, and practices on workplace safety and security among faculty and staff of a public higher education institution in Western Visayas, Philippines. The design was appropriate for describing existing conditions and determining differences in respondents' perceptions and behaviors when grouped according to sex and employment category. The identity of the institution was withheld to maintain institutional confidentiality.

The participants consisted of 153 employees, composed of 60 faculty members and 93 non-teaching staff, including 68 females and 85 males, who were actively employed during the conduct of the study. Respondents were selected based on availability and willingness to participate. The inclusion criteria followed standard survey eligibility procedures (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), requiring participants to be currently performing their official academic or administrative functions, while those on extended leave or not engaged in regular work duties were excluded. Data were gathered using a researcher-developed questionnaire composed of three sections measuring awareness, attitude, and practices related to workplace safety and security using a five-point Likert scale. The instrument underwent pilot testing prior to actual administration to ensure clarity and suitability of the items. Reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.89, indicating high internal consistency (Field, 2018).

Prior to data collection, permission to conduct the study was obtained from the appropriate authorities, and respondents were informed of the purpose of the research and assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Participation was voluntary and informed consent was secured. The collected data were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used to determine the levels of awareness, attitude, and practices (Field, 2018), while independent samples t-tests were employed to examine differences based on sex and employment category (Kim, 2015).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Awareness of Workplace Safety and Security

The results indicated that faculty and staff demonstrated a high level of awareness of workplace safety and security, with an overall mean of (M = 4.11, SD = 0.46). This finding suggests that employees were generally knowledgeable about safety policies, procedures, and potential hazards within the institution. High awareness reflects the effectiveness of institutional communication, orientation programs, and policy dissemination related to workplace safety and security.

This finding supports earlier work by Neal and Griffin (2006), which identified safety awareness as a key predictor of safety performance because it enables employees to recognize risks and comply with safety standards. Recent studies likewise confirm that employees' knowledge of safety protocols significantly predicts hazard recognition and compliance behavior (Huang et al., 2022; Kim & Park, 2022). Organizations that clearly communicate safety policies tend to exhibit higher levels of employee awareness and preventive behavior. In the context of higher education institutions, this awareness may be associated with regular safety briefings, posted guidelines, and administrative emphasis on occupational safety compliance.

Attitude toward Workplace Safety and Security

In terms of attitude, respondents exhibited a high level of positive attitude toward workplace safety and security, with a mean score of (M = 4.16, SD = 0.51). This indicates that faculty and staff generally valued workplace safety initiatives and expressed favorable perceptions toward maintaining a safe and secure work environment. A positive safety attitude reflects employees' willingness to support institutional safety measures and comply with established rules and regulations.

This finding aligns with Geller (2016), who emphasized that positive safety attitudes are essential in developing a strong safety culture. More recent research also shows that favorable safety attitudes contribute to safety participation and compliance behaviors (Lee et al., 2023; Nahrgang et al., 2022).

Employees who perceive safety as important are more likely to cooperate with organizational safety programs and actively prevent hazards. In higher education settings, these attitudes may stem from recognition of safety's importance not only for personal well-being but also for sustaining effective academic and administrative operations.

Practices on Workplace Safety and Security

With regard to practices, the results showed that respondents demonstrated a high level of workplace safety and security practices, with a mean score of (M = 3.95, SD = 0.53). Although still within the high range, this mean score was comparatively lower than those for awareness and attitude. This suggests that while respondents were knowledgeable about and positively inclined toward workplace safety and security, the consistent application of safety practices was relatively less evident.

This finding supports earlier studies indicating that awareness and attitude do not automatically translate into actual safety behavior. Cooper (2015) noted that behavioral compliance is influenced by situational factors such as workload and supervision. Recent research similarly shows that safety behavior depends on monitoring, reinforcement, and organizational climate (Beus et al., 2022; Guo & Yiu, 2021).

Thus, organizations may demonstrate strong safety awareness and attitudes but still encounter challenges in sustaining consistent safety practices without continuous supervision and reinforcement. The result highlights the importance of regular training, drills, and monitoring mechanisms to bridge the gap between knowledge and behavior.

Differences in Awareness, Attitude, and Practices According to Sex

An independent-samples *t* test was conducted to determine whether significant differences existed in the levels of awareness, attitude, and practices on workplace safety and security when respondents were grouped according to sex. Results indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in awareness between female respondents (*M* = 4.06, *SD* = 0.48) and male respondents (*M* = 4.14, *SD* = 0.45), *t*(151) = −1.14, *p* = .25.

Similarly, no significant difference was found in attitude toward workplace safety and security between female respondents (*M* = 4.13, *SD* = 0.43) and male respondents (*M* = 4.19, *SD* = 0.56), *t*(151) = −0.74, *p* = .46. In terms of practices, the results also showed no significant difference between female respondents (*M* = 3.94, *SD* = 0.51) and male respondents (*M* = 3.96, *SD* = 0.54), *t*(151) = −0.25, *p* = .80.

These findings suggest that sex did not significantly influence awareness, attitude, or practices related to workplace safety and security. Recent studies indicate that safety behavior is primarily shaped by organizational safety climate rather than demographic characteristics (Kim & Park, 2022; Huang et al., 2022). Therefore,

institutional policies and shared safety culture likely played a greater role in influencing employee behavior than gender differences.

Differences in Awareness, Attitude, and Practices According to Employment Category

An independent-samples t test was also performed to examine differences in awareness, attitude, and practices when respondents were grouped according to employment category. The results revealed no statistically significant difference in awareness between faculty members ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 0.53$) and staff ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 0.41$), $t(151) = -0.25$, $p = .81$.

Likewise, no significant difference was found in attitude toward workplace safety and security between faculty ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 0.48$) and staff ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 0.52$), $t(151) = -0.66$, $p = .51$.

With respect to practices, the analysis showed no statistically significant difference between faculty ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 0.57$) and staff ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 0.50$), $t(151) = -0.31$, $p = .75$.

These results indicate that employment category did not significantly affect workplace safety awareness, attitude, or practices. Recent research supports that organizational safety climate promotes consistent safety perceptions and behaviors across job roles (Kim & Park, 2022). Thus, faculty and staff likely shared a common safety culture shaped by institutional policies and programs rather than by occupational role differences.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the levels of awareness, attitude, and practices on workplace safety and security among faculty and staff of a public higher education institution in Western Visayas, as well as the differences in these variables when respondents were grouped according to sex and employment category. The findings revealed that faculty and staff demonstrated high levels of awareness and positive attitudes toward workplace safety and security, indicating that institutional safety policies and programs were well communicated and generally well accepted. Workplace safety and security practices were also rated high, although they were relatively less consistent compared to awareness and attitude.

The results further showed that there were no significant differences in awareness, attitude, and practices when respondents were grouped according to sex and employment category. This suggests that workplace safety and security initiatives were uniformly experienced across employee groups, reflecting a shared safety culture within the institution. The absence of significant differences implies that organizational policies, rather than demographic characteristics, play a more influential role in shaping employees' safetyrelated perceptions and behaviors.

Overall, the study shows the importance of sustaining institutional efforts to promote workplace safety and security in higher education settings. While awareness and attitudes toward safety were notably strong, the findings highlight the need to further strengthen the consistent application of safety practices to ensure a safe and secure working environment for all employees.

REFERENCES

1. Beus, J. M., McCord, M. A., & Zohar, D. (2022). Workplace safety climate and safety behavior: A metaanalysis. Journal of Applied Psychology, 107(6), 1044–1067. https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000995
2. Christian, M. S., Bradley, J. C., Wallace, J. C., & Burke, M. J. (2009). Workplace safety: A metaanalysis of the roles of person and situation factors. Journal of Applied Psychology, 94(5), 1103–1127. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0016172
3. Clarke, S. (2013). Safety leadership: A meta-analytic review of transformational and transactional leadership styles as antecedents of safety behaviours. Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 86(1), 22–49. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8325.2012.02064.x 4. Cooper, M. D. (2015). Behavioral safety: A framework for success. BSMS Inc.
4. Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.

5. Field, A. (2018). Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
6. Geller, E. S. (2016). The psychology of safety handbook (2nd ed.). CRC Press.
7. Guo, B. H. W., & Yiu, T. W. (2021). Developing leading indicators to monitor the safety conditions of construction projects. Safety Science, 138, 105202. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssci.2021.105202
8. Huang, Y., Chen, P. Y., & Grosch, J. W. (2022). The role of safety climate in predicting safety erformance: A longitudinal study. Journal of Safety Research, 82, 323–332.
9. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsr.2022.07.002
10. International Labour Organization. (2019). Safety and health at the heart of the future of work: Building on 100 years of experience. ILO.
11. Kim, H.-Y. (2015). Statistical notes for clinical researchers: Independent t-test and paired t-test.
12. Restorative Dentistry & Endodontics, 40(4), 328–330. https://doi.org/10.5395/rde.2015.40.4.328
13. Kim, Y., & Park, J. (2022). The effects of safety climate on safety behavior in organizations. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 19(5), 2726. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19052726
14. Lee, S., Kim, J., & Dalal, R. S. (2023). Safety attitudes and safety participation: A meta-analytic review. Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 28(2), 143–158. https://doi.org/10.1037/ocp0000330
15. Nahrgang, J. D., Morgeson, F. P., & Hofmann, D. A. (2022). Safety at work: Updated meta-analytic relationships among job demands, job resources, and safety outcomes. Journal of Applied Psychology, 107(4), 593–615. https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000909
16. Neal, A., & Griffin, M. A. (2006). A study of the lagged relationships among safety climate, safety motivation, safety behavior, and accidents at the individual and group levels. Journal of Applied Psychology, 91(4), 946–953. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.91.4.946
17. Vinodkumar, M. N., & Bhasi, M. (2010). Safety management practices and safety behaviour: Assessing the mediating role of safety knowledge and motivation. Accident Analysis & Prevention, 42(6), 2082–2093. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aap.2010.06.021