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IMPACT OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS ON PRODUCTIVITY OF EMPLOYEES.

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ABSTRACT

In organisations today, human resources have become the major asset for productivity in its maximum since machines do not have the capacity to operate it selves. In Nigeria, industrial workers lacked the right information to work safely which has exposed many employees to potential risk and workplace hazard that may have a partial or permanent disability and sometime may result to fatality at work site, this could be as a result of ignorance to the correct practice or people still trying to gain earns meet for survival due to the low job opportunity in the country. This paper will highlight the standards operational procedure at workplace to enlighten organisational workers the duty of care of the employers to them while they carry out an assigned job, the paper will also cover the identification of health risk and safety risk and the required preventive controls to reduce risk to as low as reasonably practicable in the workplace, safe work environment and practices are major factors to be considered before accepting job offers. The research was carried out at Olam rice factory at Nasarawa state and Lake rice factory at Kebi state in Nigeria. The research reveals the selected organisations has a working occupational health and safety practices but has an average management commitment to the safe work practices of employees. The data was collected via questionnaire using a four Likert scale procedures for analysis and descriptive survey method. This study is majorly concerned with the impact of occupational health and safety on the productivity of employees.

Keywords: occupational safety and health, standard operational practices, health and safety standards.

1.0 Introduction

Occupational health is an integral appendage of industrial and organisational psychology which deals with human health in relations to work and working environment. It aims at the promotion and maintenance of the maximum degree of physical, mental and social wellbeing of workers in all occupations, the preventions among workers departures from health caused by their working conditions, the protections of the workers in their employment from risk resulting from factors adverse to health, the placing and maintenance of the worker in an occupational environment, adapted to his physiological and psychological ability and to summarise the adaptation of work to man and man to work.

International labour organisation (ILO) summarised occupational health as the prevention of departure from health among workers caused by their working condition; the promotion of workers in their employment from risk resulting from factors adverse to health, the placing and maintenance of workers in a safe occupational environment, adapted to his physiological and psychological well-being and the adaptation of work to man and man to his work.

1.1 Statement Of The Problem

In recent years some workers have temporarily or permanently been disabled by work related accidents as a result of inadequate occupational health and safety standard practice and knowledge on handling of machines and equipment, negligence to safe operational procedures and poor management commitment to providing a friendly work environment.

Every business has the legal responsibility to ensure the health and safety of employees and other people affected by the business activities such as customers, suppliers, visitors and

contractors. Poor health and safety practices lead to illness, accidents, fatality and significant cost to the business.

Effective health and safety practices pay for themselves and improve the reputation of the organisations with customers, regulators and the employees.

The human resource is one of the versatile resources an organisation depends on for production. Therefore, an effective and efficient use of the human resource will translate into the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the organisation. Although, many organisations accept the human resource as an important resource but they fails to realize that as part of their human resource management practices, there is the need for management to ensure that personnel in the organisation work in safe and healthy environment that will promote their optimum utilization. It should be emphasized that accidents are costly both to the affected worker and the organisation. Therefore, every effort should be made by management and employees in order to avoid occupational accidents from occurring.

Rice manufacturing companies is one of the most physically challenging environments employee works to earn a living owing to the increasing numbers of rice company in Nigeria at the moment due to the growing rate of consumers. Workers encounter many hazards and other issues that compromise their safety such as excessive noise, dust from the husk, operating on dangerous/complex machines, heat stress in the factory and unsafe conditions and acts that could result to temporary or permanent disability to employees. According to the international labour organisation, human behaviours causes 98% of accidents on site while mechanical and environmental factors forms up 2% cause of workplace accidents respectively. Most employees are less concerned about safety precautions at work, their cost, effect and benefit to themselves and the organisation as a whole. This is as a result of ignorance and negligence to safety measures and regulations instituted by the organisation.

Workers do not adhere to the precautionary measures put in place with the organisation such as wearing of personal protective equipment, machines standard operational procedures, inadequate system of delivery and storage of materials, inadequate information for task to be accomplished as well as poor level of understanding of health and safety policies put in place by the organisation. The effect of insufficient awareness on safety standards leading to rampant loss of lives, injury and properties lost. This has a negative impact on the organisation as employees are not motivated to do their best on the job to trigger performance. Thus, resources that would have been used to develop staff, given as incentives or alternatively expanding the business operations would be used in paying for medical bill, hiring of temporary workers, paying of compensation and related court issues which also has its impact on the organisation.

Although Management and employees are making efforts to ensure safety in the workplace, workplace accident cannot be totally eliminated which simply indicates that work environment is still unsafe. It is in this vein that the study has chosen to examine the impact of occupational health and safety standards on the productivity of employees in Nigeria made rice using Olam rice and Lake rice as a research case study site and how it can boost higher performance of employees and make recommendation on the health and safety.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objective seeks to:

1. Determine the effect of health and safety on employee's productivity in Olam Rice and Lake Rice Factory.
2. Examine employee's level of understanding of health and safety policies of the organisation.

3. Assess the commitment of management towards the health and safety of employees.

2.0 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 The Concept Of Occupational Health Safety (OHS)

Safety involves more than the typical dictionary definition of being free from accident". The World Health Organisation, (1999) defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Thus health and safety refer to the preventing and protecting people from injury and occupational disease in any form due to hazards and risk that may harm, injure, cause unsafe environment to people or damage equipment or the facilities put in place at the workplace.

The International Labour Organisation, (1996) defines occupational health and safety as a discipline with a broad scope involving many specialized fields. In its broadest sense, it aims at the:

1. Promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of physical, mental and social

Well-being of workers in all occupations;

2. Prevention among workers of adverse effects on health caused by their working conditions;

3. Protection of workers in their employment from risks resulting from factors adverse to health;

2.2 Safety And Productivity In Organisation

Productivity is generally seen as a measure of the amount of output generated per unit of input. In many countries, public sector productivity has been assumed to be zero in the

national accounts. According to Boyle (2006), output of the government sector has been measured as equal in value to the total value of inputs. The challenge is to devise alternative estimates based on output measurement in a public sector context where collective services are provided, in most instances, no market transaction in services provided to individuals (Boyle, 2006).

Putnam, (1993) rejects the idea of including outcomes in productivity measurement. He opined that productivity should focus on outcomes which includes changes over which the government has no control. Holzer and Seok-Hwan, (2004) argue that although the concept of productivity has been utilised for many years, it is often simplified, misinterpreted and misapplied. According to them, the concept of performance may represent a more attractive conceptual path toward improvement. Still, both concepts are underlying premises of public administration and the core of an on-going effort that persists because it addresses a fundamental linkage: a productive society is dependent upon a high-performing government. In fact, the use of the concept of productivity has been intermingled with the concept of performance (Jackson, 1999).

According to Holzer & Seok-Hwan, (2004) productivity and performance are functions of many factors ranging from top management support, committed personnel at all levels, a performance measurement system, employee training, reward structures, community involvement and feedback to correction of budget-management decisions. McCunney (2001) intimated that productivity is also often linked to discussions concerning general efficiency. Productivity is understood in a wider sense and combined to rationalisation of work and improvement of wellbeing in the work community.

McCunney (2001), views productivity as a conceptual phenomenon and widening the concept weakens its characteristics as a tool for research and development.

At the core of the healthy organisation perspective is the relationship between healthy work contexts and organisational outcome rather than individual outcomes. Productivity or organisational performance is one set of outcomes. Most research linking employee health to productivity takes a conventional health promotion perspective. This reflects the expansion in the United States of workplace wellness programs in a drive to reduce employer medical care costs (Baker and Green, 1991).

Muchemedzi and Charamba, (2006), view occupational health and safety as a science concerned with health in its relation to work or working environment. Oxenburgh et al, (2004), intimated that the health and safety of all employees is closely linked to the company's productivity in all workplaces. In most cases, occupational health and safety is largely measured by negative outcomes such as workplace injury and illness but these measures have a shortfall, for instance, a low incidence or injury does not necessarily mean that adequate safety systems and controls are in place (Health and Safety Executives, 2006).

2.3 Organisational Role And Attitude To Health And Safety

The role of organisations in the promotion of safety can be termed as safety management and is often reflected on the attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and values that employers share in relation to safety. According to Stranks, (2000), health and safety is a major concerns for management. Management's attitudes and approach towards accident prevention are always reflected in the supervisory force of the organisation. Thus if the employer is not genuinely interested in preventing accidents no one else is likely to be since the basic fact applies to every level of management and supervision. Beach, (2000) stated that, accident control programme results from top management's efforts and is demonstrated if employees co-operation and participation are to be obtained. This means that management should setup

information and control systems so that the health and safety performances are monitored and corrective actions initiated when required.

According to Pantry, (1995) management should ensure that safe work procedures are implemented by making supervisor accountable for health and safety performance in their areas of operations and by providing them with help, guidance and training needed to carry out their responsibilities effectively. The membership of such committee must be drawn across the organisation to review practices and conditions and make suggestion to improve health and safety performance.

2.4 Occupational Health And Safety Standards

Occupational health and safety standards are organisational policies that form part of their values in ensuring employees and assets are protected against an identified and unforeseen risk with potential to cause a major or minor harm or damage. These standards are formulated from risk identification and analysis which are properly communicated to employees to enhance a qualitative behavioural safety at work place. Occupational standards are not to be maintained or adhered by the junior staffs in organisations but are also applicable to top management staffs and in extension to visitors and contractors as well. Below are occupational health and safety standards practice that will enhance maximum productivity in organisations.

2.4.1 Safety Induction.

According to Merriam webstar dictionary, induction is defined as an initial experience. Induction creates a warm welcoming environment and also tends to unveil or expose visitors, contractors and new employees to the prevailing risk on site and controls. Many take up a job in companies without good understanding of the risk associated with it, understanding

potential risk in a job modifies employees behaviours on sites and creates a safety consciousness while discharging duty. Management are to take upon them self the responsibility to induct as many that assesses the company premises to improve safety awareness on site.

Induction program are done by the Environment health and safety team where specific instructions are clearly stated out to first timers on site regarding safe behaviours at work place and important locations such as emergency assembly point, smoking designated areas and convenience. It is also an avenue to source information like health status of visitors and contractors to ascertain their permission to assess site due to allergies from some chemical smell and fumes.

The site induction communicates essential information regarding the site, the working methods and health and safety management. All attendees of the site induction are required to sign a register to confirm their attendance and their agreement to abide by the principal contractor's policies, procedures and rules and to follow the agreed method of working.

2.4.2 Safe Operational Procedures.

International labour organisation reveals 98% of accidents at work are majorly caused as a result of human factors, this can be directly traced to employees unsafe acts at work while boycotting the organisation's operational standards to deliver quickly at the expense of their health, safe work procedures may take a longer time for task delivery but it prevent injuries, fatality at work and safes the company's reputation. All machines should have a clear statement of operations and must be understood and practiced by the operators.

Safe operating procedures should be written using plain English and must be set out in a concise, logical, step-by-step, easy-to-read format. The use of photos or diagrams may assist with this process.

A safe operating procedure should include:

- The task or process to be undertaken;
- Details of any legislative requirements that are appropriate and have been considered in the safe operating procedure, e.g. for high risk tasks, forklift operations, confined space entry, hot works
- Definitions of any specialised or unusual terms;
- Specific information regarding the potential hazards and associated risks of the task;
- Precautions required to eliminate or adequately control the risk prior to commencing the task, such as isolation procedures, ensuring guarding is in place, communication procedures.
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) required to be worn while undertaking the task, (this includes site standard personal protective equipment);
- The environment where the task shall or should be undertaken;
- Visual inspection of work site and communication of Emergency procedures.
- Shutdown and housekeeping.

2.4.3 Work Place Training.

Training and instruction on the safe operating procedure must be provided to all persons that shall be required to undertake the task / process for which the safe operating procedure was developed. This may include a verification of competency (VOC) for operational procedures,

such as for loaders, operators, electrical and mechanical personnel, Labours and managers. An employee may be skilled and still be neglecting the safety precautions of the organisation because he or she has not undergone any health and safety training to get informed on safe practices on site, an organisation that refused to train her employees might not be bold enough to take disciplinary actions to why an unsafe act were deliberately conducted.

3.0 Data Collection

The study used quantitative data collection methods. Primary Data was collected mainly by the use of structured questionnaires. A Five Point Likert Scale was used to determine the degree of occupational safety and health effect to performance of employees at Olam rice mill and lake rice mill. The questionnaire was divided into three sections A, B and C. Section A contained information regarding background of the respondents, Section B contained questions on the effect of Occupational Safety and Health standards on Employee Performance and section C contains management involvement or commitment to the health and safety of employees on site. The respondents were required to fill the questionnaires at their own convenient time to avoid inconvenience during work hours. Drop and pick method was used to administer the questionnaires and the response was picked after fourteen (14) days.

3.1 Data Analysis

Data was checked for accuracy, uniformity, logical completeness and consistency before analysis. Data was analysed through the use of descriptive survey design using chi square analytical method. Presentation of the findings was done by frequency distribution tables, pie charts and bar graphs. Chi square analysis was used to establish the impact of occupational health and safety standards on the productivity of employees.

3.2 Chi Square Results of Response on Impact of Occupational Health and Safety on Productivity at Olam Rice Nasarawa

Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The categories defined by Question 1 = Strongly agree and Agree occur with probabilities 0.5 and 0.5.	One-Sample Binomial Test	.343	Retain the null hypothesis.
2	The categories defined by Question 2 = Strongly agree and Agree occur with probabilities 0.5 and 0.5.	One-Sample Binomial Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
3	The categories of Question 3 occur with equal probabilities.	One-Sample Chi-Square Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
4	The categories defined by Question 4 = Strongly agree and Agree occur with probabilities 0.5 and 0.5.	One-Sample Binomial Test	.246	Retain the null hypothesis.
5	The categories of Question 5 occur with equal probabilities.	One-Sample Chi-Square Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
6	The categories of Question 6 occur with equal probabilities.	One-Sample Chi-Square Test	.002	Reject the null hypothesis.
7	The categories of Question 7 occur with equal probabilities.	One-Sample Chi-Square Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
8	The categories defined by Question 8 = Agree and Strongly agree occur with probabilities 0.5 and 0.5.	One-Sample Binomial Test	.073	Retain the null hypothesis.
9	The categories defined by Question 9 = Strongly agree and Agree occur with probabilities 0.5 and 0.5.	One-Sample Binomial Test	.246	Retain the null hypothesis.
10	The categories defined by Question 10 = Strongly agree and Agree occur with probabilities 0.5 and 0.5.	One-Sample Binomial Test	.343	Retain the null hypothesis.
11	The categories defined by Question 11 = Agree and Strongly agree occur with probabilities 0.5 and 0.5.	One-Sample Binomial Test	.002	Reject the null hypothesis.
12	The categories of Question 12 occur with equal probabilities.	One-Sample Chi-Square Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

3.3 Details of Frequencies of Response on Impact of Occupational Health and Safety on Productivity at Lake Rice Kebbi State

Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The categories defined by Question 1 = Agree and Strongly agree occur with probabilities 0.5 and 0.5.	One-Sample Binomial Test	.171	Retain the null hypothesis.
2	The categories defined by Question 2 = Agree and Strongly agree occur with probabilities 0.5 and 0.5.	One-Sample Binomial Test	1.000	Retain the null hypothesis.
3	The categories defined by Question 3 = Agree and Strongly agree occur with probabilities 0.5 and 0.5.	One-Sample Binomial Test	.916	Retain the null hypothesis.
4	The categories of Question 4 occur with equal probabilities.	One-Sample Chi-Square Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
5	The categories of Question 5 occur with equal probabilities.	One-Sample Chi-Square Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
6	The categories of Question 6 occur with equal probabilities.	One-Sample Chi-Square Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
7	The categories defined by Question 7 = Agree and Strongly agree occur with probabilities 0.5 and 0.5.	One-Sample Binomial Test	.752	Retain the null hypothesis.
8	The categories of Question 8 occur with equal probabilities.	One-Sample Chi-Square Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
9	The categories of Question 9 occur with equal probabilities.	One-Sample Chi-Square Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
10	The categories of Question 10 occur with equal probabilities.	One-Sample Chi-Square Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
11	The categories defined by Question 11 = Agree and Strongly agree occur with probabilities 0.5 and 0.5.	One-Sample Binomial Test	.461	Retain the null hypothesis.
12	The categories of Question 12 occur with equal probabilities.	One-Sample Chi-Square Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

3.4 Review Summary

This study is to reveal the possible impact of occupational health and safety on productivity of employees and the objective were achieved via the data gotten from questionnaire analysis from Olam rice and Lake Rice factory. Workers were urged to share their practical experience on how occupational health and safety practices have been beneficial in enhancing productivity at the various level and department of the organisation. Majority of the respondents were of the opinion that safe work practice in the selected case study organisation has drastically reduced cases of injury leading to partial or permanent disability at work and for long time now fatality has not been recorded at the workplace which were seen to have direct impact on the rate of massive target achievement by the company in term of productivity.

3.5 Recommendations

Occupational safety and health programmes must aim at both prevention and protection. Efforts must be focused above all on primary prevention at the workplace level. Workplaces and working environments should be planned and designed to be safe and healthy. Continuous improvement of occupational safety and health must be promoted. This is necessary to ensure that company health and safety policy, regulations and technical standards to prevent occupational injuries, diseases and deaths are adapted periodically to social, technical and scientific progress and other changes in the world of work. It is best done by the development and implementation of activities that align with the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

Awareness through regular toolbox talk, emergency drill and regular workplace inspection will be vital for the development and implementation of effective standards. The collection and dissemination of accurate information on hazards and hazardous materials, surveillance

of workplaces, monitoring of compliance with policies and good practice, and other related activities are central to the establishment and enforcement of effective policies. Health promotion is a central element of occupational health practice. Efforts must be made to enhance workers' physical, mental and social well-being at Olam rice and Lake rice factory. Compensation, rehabilitation and curative services must be made available to workers who suffer occupational injuries, accidents and work-related diseases. Action must be taken to minimize the consequences of occupational hazards.

Education and training are vital components of safe and healthy working environments. Workers and employers must be made aware of the importance of establishing safe working procedures and how to do so. Information is needed for prevention as well as the treatment of occupational injuries and diseases. It is also needed for the creation of effective policies and to ensure that they are enforced. Education and training demand information.

Workers, employers and competent authorities have certain responsibilities, duties and obligations. For example, workers must follow established safety procedures; employers must provide safe workplaces and ensure access to first aid; and the competent authorities must devise, communicate and periodically review and update occupational safety and health policies.

Policies must be enforced. A system of inspection must be in place to secure compliance with occupational safety and health measures and other labour legislation. The responsibilities of top management, middle-level management, supervisors and workers at all levels should be seen as complementary and mutually reinforcing in the common task of promoting occupational safety and health to the greatest extent possible within the constraints of company conditions and practice. Because occupational hazards arise at the workplace, it is the responsibility of top management to ensure that the working environment is safe and

healthy. This means that they must prevent, and protect workers from hazards and occupational risks. But top management's responsibility goes further, entailing knowledge of occupational hazards and a commitment to ensure that management processes promote safety and health at work. For example, an awareness of safety and health implications should guide decisions on the choice of technology and on how work is organized. Management should allocate sufficient resources (financial and human) for the proper functioning of the occupational safety and health programme. Dynamic management strategies need to be developed and implemented to ensure the coherence, relevance and currency of all the elements that make Olam rice and Lake rice Occupational health and safety standards.

Cooperation in the field of occupational safety and health between management and workers or their representatives at the workplace is an essential element in maintaining a healthy working environment. It may also contribute to the establishment and maintenance of a good social climate and to the achievement of wider objectives. The establishment of joint safety and health committee and of workers' safety delegates is now common practice and can help to promote workers' active involvement in safety and health work.

3.6 Conclusion

From the findings and discussion, most occupational safety and health standard were found to have been adopted by the organizations while employee performance was a continuous and flexible process that involved all levels of management staff at Olam rice and Lake rice.

Although, occupational safety and health to a great extent determine employee performance which the company has put much effort into establishing few standards. The respondents were in agreement with many of the company's occupational safety and health standards which were found to be strongly agreed on the scale while others were moderate agreed. The research established that Occupational Health and safety standards bring about measurable

improvements in safety and health in work environment and the applications of preventive strategies to unsafe acts and condition at work, therefore, resulting to significant human and economic benefits. Total commitment on the part of management to making safety and health a priority is essential to a successful Occupational health and safety standards in the workplace.

It is only when management plays a positive role that workers view such standards as a worthwhile and sustainable exercise.

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