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Employers' role in implementing occupational safety and health (OSH) regulations in the industry

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Discussion points

1. Introduction

2. Conceptualizing and operationalizing safety culture in workplace

3. Safety roles of employers, operations managers and safety professionals

4. Industrial safety in SMEs

5. Support to address the safety concerns

6. Employee participation to address the safety concerns

7. Legislation to address the safety concerns

1. Introduction

- Employers play the key role in ensuring safety in the workplace
  - This is happened through ensuring 'safety culture' inside the factory

- The safety culture is the part of broader organisational culture
  - It affects the attitude and safety-related behaviour of the members of an organisation

- It is important to discuss employers' role in Implementing OSH Regulations in the Industry
  - Role of employers and their trade bodies (FBCCI, BEF, DCCI, MCCI, BPGMEA, BEIOA and other employer organisations)
  - Framework for 'impact monitoring' of government and employer safety interventions (information and database on different issues; monitoring progress of different safety-related activities; awareness raising of all stakeholders)
  - Collaboration with private sector on regulation
  - Role of safety committees, participation committees and trade unions in implementing OSH

- This session will discuss in detail about the above-mentioned issues through exchanging views among the distinguished panellists
  - With the objective of identifying the roles and responsibilities of the private sector in implementing future course of action on industrial safety

- This presentation will work as connector to make the session more targeted and focused

2. Conceptualizing and operationalizing safety culture in workplace

- **Safety culture** is defined as "employees' imaging of safety conditions in the workplace which images then affect organizational safety activities and safety results"
- Safety culture could be examined through three components
  - Employee safety participation
  - Perceived risk
  - Emergency response
- **Employee safety participation** refers to behaviours that help to create a safe environment
  - These behaviours include activities such as participating in voluntary safety activities, helping coworkers with safety-related issues, and attending safety meetings (Neal & Griffin, 2006)
  - Employee participation refers to employee participation in safety-related decision making and activities (Seo, Torabi, Blair, & Ellis, 2004)
    - It includes employee participation in setting safety policy and decision making to improve safety; accepting health checks; attending safety training, and so forth

2. Conceptualizing and operationalizing safety culture in workplace

- **Perceived risk** can be defined as employee perceptions of risk in the workplace environment
  - Risks include both physical and chemical risks

- **Emergency response** is the actions taken by employees in the case of emergencies such as fire, explosion, earthquake, and so forth
  - These include: understanding the emergency response plans, emergency response equipment, injury reporting procedures, and first aid

- There has been little discussion of the conditions that produce a positive safety culture

- **Safety leadership** is a causal factor for safety climate/culture
  - Safety culture is the organizational values and behaviour, shaped by the leader, that the organization's members accept
  - Excellent safety leadership is a key for any organization that wants to create a positive safety culture/ climate

- Different **grades of managers** play different roles in industrial safety under the directives of the safety leader
  - *Higher level managers* generally deal with safety policy and strategy
  - *Mid-level managers* mainly take care of safety procedure and tactics
  - *Low-level managers* work on safety practice and operations

3. Safety roles of employers, operations managers and safety professionals

3.1 Safety role of employers

- The higher the **status** of an individual in an organization, the more effect the individual's **actions** have on organizational outcomes (Reason, 1997).
  - Therefore, safety participation by the employer or top management has a major impact on safety
- Employers have three safety roles
  - Ensuring the **safety performance** of middle management (**accountability** function)
  - Ensuring the **quality** of safety management (**quality control** function)
  - **Personally** participating in safety activities (**visibility** function)
- Specifically, the senior management should approve and **publicize** safety policy, regularly **review** safety performance, and create **appropriate incentives** for middle management

3. Safety roles of employers, operations managers and safety professionals

3.1 Safety role of employers
- Those who are both **highly caring** and **highly controlling** are the most effective leaders (Cooper, 1998). Four main areas of responsibility on which leaders responsible for safety in the workplace (O'Dea and Flin (2001)
    - Visibility
    - Relationships
    - Workforce involvement
    - Proactive management
- In order to create a positive safety culture and achieve excellent safety performance, leaders must exercise safety leadership with three aspects
    - Safety caring
    - Safety coaching
    - Safety controlling
- **Safety caring** refers to the ability of the leader to see his/her subordinates as his/her children to achieve consensus in working practice, to respect and trust employees, and to care about employees' needs and empathize with their problems
    - If the employer respects and trusts his/her subordinates, they will respond to him/her in the same manner

3. Safety roles of employers, operations managers and safety professionals

3.1 Safety role of employers

- **Safety coaching** refers to the ability of the leader to be a **role model** for subordinates, to stimulate employees' abilities, to share opinions, and allow employees to participate in decision making.
  - Stimulating employees' abilities is improving their awareness of issues and their ability to take different perspectives (Bass, 1985)
  - **Educating** employees is imperative for a leader wishing to achieve excellence in safety (Blair, 2003)
    - Leaders can educate or coach their employees, potentially leading to an improvement in safety knowledge and safety skills
  - Geller (1994) suggests that employees' safety **skills and knowledge** can be an important factor in creating a strong safety culture in the workplace

- **Safety controlling** refers to the ability of an employer to **set the rules** by which the organization runs, to use their power to give a reward or a punishment, and to review employee behaviour
  - Leaders can control their subordinates using both official rules and unofficial manipulation (Huang, 1995)
  - Employers should regularly review the safety performance of management, and require them to improve safety procedures where necessary

3. Safety roles of employers, operations managers and safety professionals

3.2 Safety role of operations managers

- If an organization wants to achieve excellent safety performance, the **safety management system** must emphasize the important roles to be played by the **middle management**
  - It must force middle management **to accept responsibility** for improving safety performance and quality
  - Middle management must also often **take action**, as a way of showing how important safety is
- Middle management should
  - Frequently **reiterate** the organization's safety policy, participate in meetings, **review** employee safety-related behavior, **perform** safety audits, **demonstrate** safety procedures, and **participate** in an injury investigation committee
- Tarng (2005) indicates that the management can play **three roles** in creating a strong safety culture in the workplace
  - Collection of information
  - Dissemination of information
  - Creating an open environment in which safety issues can be discussed

3. Safety roles of employers, operations managers and safety professionals

3.2 Safety role of operations managers

- **Safety interaction** refers to the **directions, guidance and advice** given by operations managers as they execute health and safety plans
  - There are three aspects: being a safety figurehead, safety leading, and safety communication

- **Safety training** can significantly improve an employee's safety related behaviour (Krause & Hidley, 1989) Operations managers can **provide training** to their employees in order to improve their safety related behaviour

- **Safety informing** includes three aspects
  - Safety monitoring, safety disseminating, and safety representing

- **Safety monitoring** means acquiring safety information through a monitoring system (Tarng, 2005)
  - Safety disseminating means continuously circulating information so that employees receive important updates

- A **safety committee** improves safety culture by enabling communication between management, safety representatives, safety professionals, and so forth, during the safety planning process (Cooper, 1998)
  - Operations managers are a necessary member of a safety committee
  - They represent the department, and make suggestion on safety policies, safety procedures, and safety practice

3. Safety roles of employers, operations managers and safety professionals

3.2 Safety role of operations managers

- **Safety decision-making** refers to the implementation of safety strategies through planning, resource allocation, and safety improvement
  - Safety planning is an important component of occupational health and safety management systems and is the way to achieve safety targets
- One aspect of safety culture is that safety is explicitly recognized as a value by members of the organization
  - Therefore, safety should be a major consideration when allocating resources (IAEA, 2008). Safety improvements derive more from attributions than from actual causes (DeJoy, 1994)
- The operations manager must go through an objective process of attribution, and applying the appropriate improvement strategy, in order to improve safety effectiveness and efficiency

3. Safety roles of employers, operations managers and safety professionals

3.3 Role of safety professionals

- When promoting an organization's safety culture, it is necessary to **select** appropriate people to be safety professionals, otherwise the safety culture will stagnate (Tweeddale, 2001)
  - Professional must have both technical and management skills

- Hale (1995) observes that in a complex occupational health and safety environment, the relationship between safety professionals and line managers is complex and dynamic
  - Safety professionals can play **three roles**: the expert, the coordinator, and/or the controller
  - **Safety controlling** has been defined as "the process of monitoring safety performance, comparing it with safety goals, and correcting any significant deviations" (Robbins & De Cenzo, 1998; Wu, Chen, et al., 2008)

3. Safety roles of employers, operations managers and safety professionals

3.3 Role of safety professionals

- **Safety performance measurement** allows an organization to understand its safety performance at the organizational and departmental levels
  - This is a necessary condition for action to improve safety
  - Organizations must therefore rely on the expertise of safety professionals for valid and reliable safety performance measurement
- Safety coordination involves safety policy development, safety information management, and safety communication
- The process of developing **safety policy** must take into account both the external environment (legal environment, technology, economic features) and the company's status (size, nature, opinions of employees, etc.)
- The **coordination** of safety professionals helps to maintain a dynamic balance in the drafting and implementation of policy, and this promotes a harmonious safety culture.
  - The gathering, sharing, and use of safety information is an important part of safety management (LSHOASR, 2008)
  - Organizations with a positive safety culture can be characterized as: organizations in which formal and informal lines of communication are open in both directions throughout
- Safety professionals must complete the **safety communication** at the appropriate time, and reduce friction between organizational levels

3. Safety roles of employers, operations managers and safety professionals

3.3 Role of safety regulations

- **Safety regulation** involves safety inspection, safety audits, and safety incentive systems.

- The government carries out labor inspections, but to prevent injury, **companies can carry** out their own safety inspections

- Safety professionals can be part of an **audit team**, and assess the safety policy, procedures, and practices of each institutional level of their organization

- The results will have great **reference value** when determining how to further improve safety

- **Incentives** could play an important role in improving industrial safety
    - Geller (1998) argues that incentives **cannot** be based on safety **performance alone**, but must include **participation on** safety activities
    - When safety professionals put the incentive system into practice, they must consider participation as well as injuries

4. Industrial safety in SMEs

4.1 SMEs Characteristics on Safety Issues

- SMEs have significantly **different characteristics** from large businesses in terms of their financial, expertise and staffing capabilities
  - These issues affect the **performance of SMEs** in terms of compliance with safety regulations
  - These issues have generated substantial on-going debate between practitioners about designing regulatory and enforcement strategies that optimize compliance levels
- One of the many challenges that SMEs face is the **high workplace accidents** rate
  - These may reflect **negatively** to workers' wellbeing and safety and eventually company's **goodwill** as a potential partner
- Researches have shown that accidents at workplace can be **reduced** if employees and employer are more **sensitive** or have good safety **behaviour** (Makin and Sutherland 1994; Christian et al. 2009).

4. Industrial safety in SMEs

4.1 SMEs characteristics on safety issues

- An **effective** implementation of the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) practices could **reduce** accidents thus decrease compensation paid
  - Studies (Jaselskis and Suazo 1993; Teo and Phang 2005) have found that safety measures taken in the workplace can lead to better safety performance and Laukkanen (1999) also emphasised on safety as being part of a skilful job performance

- In order to generate **higher returns** by reducing cost incurred to pay out to **compensation**, it is important for the SMEs to **acknowledge** the importance of OSH
  - If safety problems and health risks in the work environment is **reduced**, the country's economic competitiveness will eventually **improve**

4. Industrial safety in SMEs

4.1 SMEs characteristics on safety issues

- SMEs and **large** companies are very **different** in many aspects
  - These differences have huge impact when it comes to the implementation of OSH and this raises several issues
  - The **size** of the company plays a big part in the **effectiveness** of OSH implementation (Cook 2007; Hong 2011; Saksvik et al. 2003)
- Large companies often have the **financial** muscle and structure to **effectively** implement a good occupational and safety (OSH) system
  - They have the financial capability which in most cases, lacking in SMEs in committing and developing a safety program inside their organisation
- Implementing OSH can consume a huge amount of **financial resources** and it represents a considerable investment by the company
  - When such an amount of financial resources are **invested**, the company expects it to **benefit** every **employee** inside the organisation
  - In this case, large companies with bigger number of employees lead OSH program to benefit more people thus spreading the cost per person much **thinner**

4. Industrial safety in SMEs

- In the case of SMEs, OSH is often perceived as **irrelevant** as they do not have a huge workforce
  - OSH implementation cannot be translated into direct monetary gain for the company
  - Thus seems as unimportant for companies' **survival** (Lahm 1997; McKinney 2002)
- SMEs are **unique** in their set up should be subjected a different **OSH management** than for those used to evaluate general establishments (such as MNCs and local business conglomerates)
  - In order to ensure that SMEs do follow the health and safety requirements that could ensure that workers' safety is not compromised

5. Support to address the safety concerns

- **Safety incentive** is positively significant towards OSH implementation
  - Past studies have found a significant positive relationship between giving out monetary rewards and frequency of 'other accidents' (Lai, Liu and Ling, 2011)
- The more monetary rewards are given out to workers when there are fewer accidents, the frequent 'other accident' happened on sites
  - Haines and others (2001), Hong, Surienty, and Daisy (2011), Khor and Surienty (2017), and Vredenburgh's (2002) studies in Canada, Malaysia and the US discovered that monetary reward has **no effect** in reducing injuries at workplace or encouraging safety performance
- Teo and others (2005) have found that monetary rewards lead to better firm's safety performance
  - This suggests that monetary reward is **not a stable incentive** for safety management outcomes

6. Employee participation to address the safety concerns

- Employee participation is positively significant towards OSH implementation

- Walters and Nichols (2006) have found that **joint arrangement** that involves consultation with employees on safety and health issues lead to improved employees' awareness on safety and health issues and consequently, safety performance
  - The study by Dillard (1997) confirmed that **employee participation** leads to better safety performance and the reduction of worker compensation cost as results of decreased accident cases

- Latham and Yukl (1975) also found that if employees are allowed to participate in **setting safety goal**, they exhibit greater performance and improves safety participation in OSHMS (Khor and Surienty 2017)
  - This suggests that safety performance through safety implementation can be improved if employees participate in the decision-making and goal-setting of health and safety

- Finally, Fuller (1999) had found that the creation and implementation of a **consensus program** leads to the improvement of workplace safety
  - Specifically, it is suggested that management and employees works together in the assessment of safety issues and identification of strategies to solve safety problems faced by them

7. Legislation to address the safety concerns

- Legislation **moderates** the relationship between management practices and OSH implementation
  - According to the reinforcement theory, negative reinforcement is theorised to **reduce unwanted** behaviours
  - **Legislation** which is conceptualised as guiding rules that could act as a negative reinforce to **reduce unsafe practices** (behaviour)
  - Studies have shown that effective enforcement of the legislation influences observance of rules and regulations as shown in Norwegian companies that showed increasing adoption safety practices (Saksvik et al. 2003)
- It is found that legislation that in place encourages implementation and adoption among companies and even showed improvements
  - In this case, it is the health and safety requirements at the workplace (Cooke & Gautschi III, 1981; McQuiston, Zakocs and Loomis, 1998)

7. Legislation to address the safety concerns

- Cooke and Gautschi III (1981) found that the **inspections** on workplaces carried out by the authority managed to **reduce** workplace accidents
  - If rules and regulations are followed to the letter then it is concluded that OSH is implemented
  - Furthermore, Eakin and Weir (1995) have found that SMEs lack both the resources and motivation to deal with OSH issues

7. Legislation to address the safety concerns

Key ILO instruments on occupational safety and health
- Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187)
- Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155) and its Protocol of 2002
- Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 (No. 161)

Health and safety in particular branches of economic activity
- Hygiene (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1964 (No. 120)
- Occupational Safety and Health (Dock Work) Convention, 1979 (No. 152)
- Safety and Health in Construction Convention, 1988 (No. 167)
- Safety and Health in Mines Convention, 1995 (No. 176)
- Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184)

Protection against specific risks
- Radiation Protection Convention, 1960 (No. 115)
- Occupational Cancer Convention, 1974 (No. 139)
- Working Environment (Air Pollution, Noise and Vibration) Convention, 1977 (No. 148)
- Asbestos Convention, 1986 (No. 162)
- Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170)

Codes of practice

Thank you.