

## **ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF SAFETY PRACTICES OF EMPLOYEES ON PERFORMANCE IN THE PRODUCTION UNIT OF SOME SELECTED HOTELS IN TAKORADI, GHANA**

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**ABSTRACT:** *It has become necessary for safety standards to be maintained and sustained in organizations so that frequent incidents or accidents are curtailed, breakdown of equipment are minimized and the life of employees and the life span of equipment are prolonged. This research work sought to explore employee's safety practices on performance in the production unit of some selected hotels in Takoradi aimed at achieving these objectives - Identify safety practices and policies in the production unit of hotels and determine the extent of compliance of the safety practices. The study examined 164 respondents using a proportionate stratified sampling to select respondents from the hotels while the hotels were sampled purposively. The results revealed that all the employees of the selected hotels had existing organizational policies ensuring safety at the workplace but some did not comply which could be quite dangerous to their safety and so some disciplinary measures were meted out to employees who did not comply with the safety measures laid down which ranged from written warning letters given to the employees (70%) with 10% having a month suspension without pay. However, those employees who demonstrated a higher degree of safety were either given outstanding employee plaques or their salaries and allowances were increased - 39% and 25% respectively.*

**KEYWORDS:** Hotels, Performance, Production unit, Safety Practices

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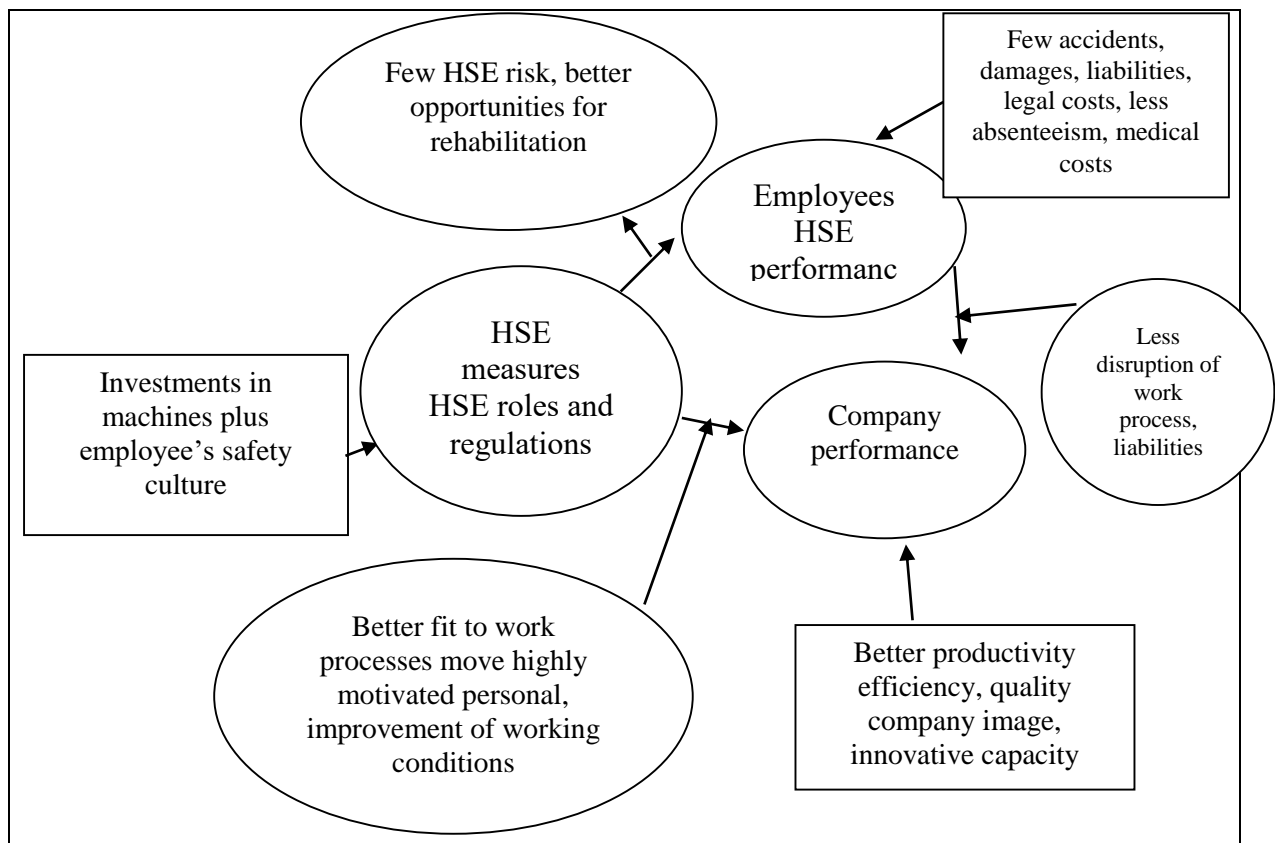
### **INTRODUCTION**

Safety precautions generally outline the dos and don'ts that are carried out by workers or employees and their management to safeguard life and property in an organization. The management of an organization makes provision for safe working conditions while employees obey simple rules and regulations that are within the organization. By so doing, personnel and equipment are not exposed to the risk of harm, injury or damage (Hugen, 2009).

It is the responsibility of every organization or employer to ensure the safety of employees and other people who are either directly or indirectly affected by activities of their organization. But it is not enough by just complying with the minimum legal requirements for safety at the workplace, it is very necessary for safety standards to be maintained and sustained in organizations so that frequent incidents or accidents are curtailed, breakdown of equipment are minimized and the life of employees and the life span of equipment are prolonged (Say, 2010). The hotel industry in the world over is noted for its labour intensiveness for several reasons. The hospitality industry contains many of the characteristics of service industries with the added complications of the production process as it focuses on production and delivery often within a set period of time hence the need to provide the appropriate environment.

Ceserani, Kinton and Fosket (2007) asserted the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) makes rules covering the safety of kitchen staff using machines or equipment. According to them, the production unit is prone to safety risks due to the physical environment of the work, nature of the production work operations, production methods, production materials, heavy equipment used, and physical properties of the production unit itself. Sadly, though it appears that the issues of safety in our production units have been relegated and are not given the necessary attention probably because of the supposed cost associated with implementing tried and tested safety policies to ensure safe working environments.

Management of the production unit, most probably do not understand the implications and consequences of their failure to ensure the safety of their employees. The general public is also equally exposed to the safety risks posed by the production unit in the hotel industry in the process of executing their projects. According to Mossink and DeGreef (2002), the inculcation of safety culture in employees at the company level has positive effects on safety performance of employees as well as productivity and this theory is illustrated diagrammatically in the figure below.



**Figure1: Economic Effects of Inculcation of Employees' Safety Culture at the Company Level**

The figure above indicates that, if a company incorporates employees' safety culture into its investment in machines and technology (socio-technical investments) through behavioural-based safety (BBS) and better man/machine design (ergonomics), this situation will lead to employees' obedience to safety rules and regulations since the awareness has been created through training, enforcement and management commitment. The employees and management obedience to safety rules and regulations will make for better safety measures which will result

in better safety performance of employees, the management and the company as a whole and the better performance of employees will lead to fewer accidents- which have very damning consequences for the production unit, damages, liabilities, legal costs, medical costs through reduction of safety risks and creation of better opportunities and rehabilitation for employees after injury. It therefore behooves management to take appropriate measures to prevent accidents in the production unit by ensuring the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and encouraging safe working environment

Employee safety is widely accepted as a panacea for effective employee output on an assigned job and hence the overall attainment of corporate objectives. The continuous assessment of an employee's safety programmes in order to ensure the employee working conditions and to preserve the human resource base will enhance the organization's production capacity (Stone, 2005). Despite the usefulness of safety programmes to both employees and management, it is realized that some supervisors and managerial heads charged to put certain safety precautionary measures in place are not professional safety workers which tends to make the safety programmes ineffective.

Again due to seemingly insufficient budgetary allocation of resources to the safety department for the implementation of safety programmes, employers resort to only educating employees on the relevance of adhering to safety practices at the work place to the detriment of provision of the safety materials. The problem therefore is, even though the management of safety measures or practices and the provision and use of safety materials is necessary in enhancing organizational output, it seems these have not been considered seriously in many organizations which the hotel industry is no exception. It is in this light that this work seeks to evaluate the employee safety practices on performance in the production unit (Kitchen) of some selected hotels in Takoradi.

The main objective of this article is to determine the safety practices and policies in the production unit of hotels and also to determine the extent of compliance of the safety practices.

## METHOD

Questionnaire administration was mainly employed for this study to investigate employee's safety practices on performance in the production unit of some selected hotels in Takoradi, Ghana. Using the statistical formula for sample size determination by Puopiel (2010), with a 92% confidence interval, 164 respondents were selected for the study. A proportionate stratified sampling was then employed to select samples from the hotels in Takoradi; Respondents were then selected randomly from each stratum. Using the proportionate stratified sampling (Freund and Wilson, 1993), the sample size obtained were **40, 34, 32 30 and 28** respectively.

The sample size for the study was determined using the standard formula for selecting sample size based on population proportion. It is given by

$$n \geq \frac{Z_{\alpha/2}^2 p(1-p)}{d^2}$$

Where

$n$  = The size of the sample to be selected

$Z_{\alpha/2}$  = The standardized two-tailed value for  $(1 - \alpha)$  confidence level

$p$  = The proportion based on the population

$d^2$  = The tolerable error for the study

$\alpha$  = The significance level of the study

So with

$p = 0.5$  (chosen to maximize the sample size)

$d = 0.08$  (that is, 8% margin of tolerable error)

$\alpha = 0.05$  (that is, 5% significance level)

It implies that  $Z_{\alpha/2} = Z_{0.05/2} = Z_{0.025} = 1.96$  (from standard statistical table)

Therefore, to achieve 95% confidence level for the study a sample of

$$n \geq \frac{1.96^2(0.5)(1 - 0.5)}{0.08^2} = \frac{1.96^2(0.5)(0.5)}{0.08^2} = 150.0625 \approx 150$$

$n \geq 150$  (thus the sample size should not be less than 150)

In stratified sampling, one begins by dividing the population into subsets, called strata. Sampling is then carried out independently in each stratum. This strategy reduces the sampling error, this is because the elements of the same characteristics are grouped together and each group is distinct as possible. For example, in a living standard survey, if one were to classify households into upper-income, middle-income, and lower-income, the sampling error would be reduced for such a variable as household expenditure, which is of course correlated with income. Stratified sampling is either proportionate or disproportionate. In proportionate stratified sampling, the sample that is drawn from each stratum is made proportionate in size to the relative size of the stratum in the total population.

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative method for data collection. This approach was similar to the view of Flyvbjerg (2004) that, more often than not, a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods will do the task best. A distinctive characteristic of case study research is the use of multiple data source, a strategy which also enhances data credibility (Yin, 2003). Interviews, observation, surveys and key informants were sources of data and tools used for data collection. The study utilized these tools in order to gain insight into employee's safety practices and its impact on performance in the production unit. Secondary data were obtained from the Ghana Tourist Board and the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly. The research employed both descriptive and inferential statistics in analyzing both the secondary and primary the data using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results and the discussions of the analysis based on the objectives of the study are presented under this chapter of the report. The chapter discusses the demographic characteristics of the employees of the hotels, the safety practices and policies in the production unit and the extent of employees' compliance to safety practices.

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

Characteristics	N	Frequency	Percent
<b>Gender</b>	164		
Male		51	31
Female		113	69
<b>Age</b>	164		
20 - 29		107	65
30 - 39		38	23
40 - 49		13	8
50 - 60		6	4
<b>Duration of employment</b>	164		
1 - 5		101	62
6 - 10		44	27
11 - 15		13	8
Above 15		6	3
<b>Staff Category</b>	164		
Management		25	15
General staff		139	85

The sample was skewed towards the female population (See Table 1) with 69% of the respondents being female and 31% were male. The respondents varied in age, ranging from 20 to 60. The highest proportion of the respondents fell into 20-29 age group. They accounted for 65% of the total respondents. This was followed by 30-39 age groups (23%) This implies that, expectedly, most of the employees in the hotels were relatively young.

**Table 2: Some Existing Organizational Policies ensuring Safety at the Workplace-**

Policies	Policies Frequency	Policies Percentage	Total Percentage
Workers do not work without protective clothing	88	54	29
Have equipment regularly maintained and inspected	95	58	32
Ensure all machines are isolated from power when not in use	69	42	23
Have lifting equipment properly examined and inspected and maintain records	50	30	16
Total	398	184	100

*Number of respondents = 164*

Table 1, further indicates that 85% of the employees interviewed were general staff members with the rest (15%) being members of the hotels' managerial team. It further reveals that a little over 60% of them had worked with the hotels for between 1 and 5 years though over a quarter (27%) had worked for between 6 and 10 years. This indicates that most of the respondents were general employees with most of them having worked with the hotels for less than six years.

It can be observed from Table 2 that out of the 164 respondents interviewed, 88 representing 54% of the policy percentage and 29% of the total percentage were of the view that workers do not work without protective clothing.

It can also be seen that 50 of the respondents representing (30% and 16%) of the policy and total percentage respectively indicated their hotels have lifting equipment properly examined and inspected and maintained.

**Table 3: Employees' Safety Precautionary Measures Practiced to Avoid Injuries and Accidents**

Precautions	Precautions Frequency	Percentage of Precautions	Total Percentage
Wearing of protective clothing	113	69	40
Do not open cookers and steam ovens that are under pressure	50	30	18
Organize your work area to avoid contact with hot objects and flames	57	35	21
Follow the manufacturer's operating instructions of tools and equipment	57	35	21
Total	277	169	100

*Number of respondents = 164*

From Table 3, it can be observed that 113 (69%, 40%) of the percentage of precautions and the total percentage of the employees asserted that they wear protective clothing whilst working. However, 57 of the respondents representing 35% of the percentage of precautions and 21% of the total percentage reported that in order to avoid injuries and accidents, they organize their work area to avoid contact with hot objects and flames and also followed the manufacturer's operating instructions of tools and equipment.

**Table 4: Measures Ensuring Tools and Equipment Maintenance to Prevent Accidents**

Measures	Measures Frequency	Percentage of Measures	Total Percentage
Periodic inspection of tools and equipment	76	46	30
Replacement and servicing tools and equipment	120	73	47
Lubrication and cleaning equipment	57	35	23
Total	253	154	100

*Number of respondents = 164*

Table 4 reveals that to ensure proper maintenance of the tools and equipment at the hotels to prevent injuries and accidents, the employees replace and service periodically, inspect and, lubricate and clean their tools and equipment. This is because over 70% of the respondents indicated that they replace and service their tools and equipment to ensure that they function properly (about 73%). Also, quite a number of them indicated that to ensure their tools and equipment function properly to avoid injuries and accidents, they periodically inspect (about 46%) and, lubricate and clean them (about 35%).

**Table 5: The Kind of Treatment given to Injured Employees**

Treatments	Treatment Frequency	Percent of Employees	Total Percentage
Medical care	107	65	47
Life insurance	32	20	14
Sick leave	88	54	39
Total	227	139	100

*Number of respondents = 164*

It can be seen from Table 5 that majority of the employees (107 representing 65% of employee and 47% of the total percentage) indicated that medical care were given to injured employees. Also 88 representing 54% of employee percentage and 39% of the total percentage were of the view that they are given sick leave when injured whilst the minority (32 representing 20% of employee percentage and 14% of the total percentage) postulates life assurance is given to injured employees.

**Table 6: Disciplinary Measures of Hotels against Employees Neglecting Safety Measures**

Measures	Frequency Measures	Percentage Measures	Total Percentage
A one month suspension without pay	38	23	20
An employee's contract will be terminated	19	12	10
A written warning will be issued to the employee	133	81	70
Total	190	116	100

*Number of respondents = 164*

It can be observed from Table 6 that majority of the employees (133 (70%)) indicated that when employees flout the precautionary safety measures laid down by the hotels they were given a written warning, 38 representing 23% of the percentage measures and 20% of the total percentage indicated a one-month suspension without pay whilst 19 representing 10% of the total percentage said an employee's contract will be terminated.

**Table 7: Employees' Awareness on Safety Training Programme to Avoid Injuries and Accidents**

Response	Yes	
	Frequency	Percent
Once in a year	38	23
Twice in a year	113	69
Others	13	8
Total	164	100.0

*Source: Field Work, 2014*

According to Pinsser and Dresser (2008) employers that provide workplace safety training and enact safety policies empower workers to do their best work in a safe manner. Employees who thoroughly understand the potential dangers of their work are more likely to perform tasks with confidence and up to standard than those who do not, thus support the study's finding as observed in Table 7, that all the employees interviewed were aware of their safety duties to avoid injuries and accidents. From the table, 113 (69%) of the respondents indicated they did have safety training programmes twice in a year whilst 38 (23%) and 13 (8%) indicated once in a year and others respectively.

Table 8 presents rewards for demonstrating higher degree of safety. It can be observed from the table (Table 8) that the hotels rewarded employees who ensured high degree of safety in their work in various ways such as giving them outstanding-employee plaques (39%), increasing employee's salary and allowances (25%), promoting them to higher ranks and cash motivation (18%). These according to them went a long way in motivating employees to follow the hotels' laid-down safety policies

**Table 8: Rewards for Demonstrating Higher Degree of Safety**

Rewards	Frequency	Percent of Rewards	Total Percentage
Increase employee's salary and allowances	44	27	25
Promoted to higher rank	32	20	18
Outstanding-employee plaque	69	42	39
Cash Motivation	32	20	18
Total	177	109	100

*Number of respondents = 164*

The management members of the hotels indicated that employees of the hotels were taken through some safety induction training. Regarding the content of the training, about 63% of them reported that they bring in Fire and Safety officers to educate staff members on fire safety. Also, over one-third of them indicated that they provide members of staff with safety materials and handbooks (37%). These suggest that employees are given safety induction training after being appointed and encouraged to report any safety concerns, attend safety meetings, participate in facility walk-through, and share their ideas for improvement in safety measures with their supervisors. This according to Norman (2009) has a far greater impact than just

asking employees to follow the safety rules by helping them realize why safety in the workplace is important for their job, careers and ultimately their families. Kenson (2011) also posited that holding safety trainings at work is a good way to make sure employees are properly trained and educated about their company's safety policies and standards.

## CONCLUSION

On the existence of organizational policies ensuring safety at the workplace, we found out that all respondents indicated they had policies at their work place aimed at ensuring safety ranging from provision of protective clothing without which one cannot work, regular maintenance and inspection of equipment, ensuring that all machines are isolated from power when not in use, among others. Again, it came to bear that, there were safety precautionary measures to avoid accidents in the production unit of the hotels such as use of protective clothing, organizing work areas to avoid contact with hot objects and flames as well as following the manufacturer's operating instructions of tools and equipment. About 46% of respondents indicated that by way of ensuring that tools and equipment were maintained to prevent accidents, they periodically inspected their machines to ensure they were safe each time for use.

From our analysis we found out that the kind of treatment given to employees when they get injured, it showed that majority of the employees (107 representing 65% of employee and 47% of the total percentage) indicated that medical care were given to injured employees. Also 88 representing 54% of employee percentage and 39% of the total percentage were of the view that they are given sick leave when injured whilst the minority (32 representing 20% of employee percentage and 14% of the total percentage) postulates life assurance is given to injured employees. From Table 7, it is evident that all the employees interviewed were aware of their safety duties to avoid injuries and accidents. From the table, 113 (69%) of the respondents indicated they did have safety training programmes twice in a year whilst 38 (23%) and 13 (8%) indicated once in a year and others respectively and this buttresses the assertion of Pinsser and Dresser (2008) that, employers that provide workplace safety training and enact safety policies empower workers to do their best work in a safe manner. It was also found out that the disciplinary measures for not complying with the safety measures ranged from written warning letters given to the employees (70%) with 10% having a month suspension without pay. However, those employees who demonstrated a higher degree of safety were either given outstanding employee plaques or their salaries and allowances were increased - 39% and 25% respectively.

According to Jordan (2007) the continuous assessment of an employee's safety and health programmes in order to ensure the employees' working conditions and to preserve human resource base would enhance the organization's production capacity.

In conclusion, although the findings or result seem positive, there is still much to be done to improve safety in the production unit of hotels, especially where some of the workers did not really adhere to the safety policies set for them at the workplace.

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