

The Implementation and Sustenance of Employee Wellness and Ill-Health Prevention in Organizations.

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Abstract: Several work days are lost in organizations due to job accidents. Previous studies have focused on organizational productivity leaving out the employee wellness and ill-health prevention in Organizations. This study investigated the implementation of employee wellness and ill-health prevention in Organizations. The study was done in Mumias Sugar Company. It was taken as a case to represent the other organizations since it is the largest sugar company in Kenya which has to an extent shown indications of implementation of employee wellness and ill-health prevention. The study was guided by the systems theory of accident causation. The descriptive survey design and the conceptual framework depicting the implementation and sustenance of employee wellness and ill-health prevention in Organizations and Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used. Primary data was collected using questionnaires and secondary data got from the internet and libraries. Validity tests were done through test-retest. The collected data was analyzed and presented in forms of graphs and tables. The study may be beneficial to scholars and other stakeholders in the production industry. The study established that the employees were taken through the employee wellness and ill-health prevention trainings in Mumias Sugar Company. All Organizations need to ensure that their workers are working in a safe environment so as to have a comfortable workforce that will realize productivity and profitability in the firm.

Keywords: organization, implementation, employee wellness, accident, ill-health etc.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

The employee wellness and ill-health prevention are the activities, processes, or procedural strategies to protect and promote the health and safety of workers and welfare in the context of preventing accidents and ill-health to employees while at work (HaSPA 2012) [1]. It is also revealed that when employees are evaluated for their safety performance, they are included to seek and implement practical safety improvement ideas. A good practice of Occupational Health and Safety management in an organization should demonstrate better task performance which at the end of the day increases performance. The implementation and sustenance of employee wellness and ill-health prevention in an organization can offer employees with a clear accepted code of rules or procedures about the safe operation of machinery, various devices and appropriate likely actions in the event of an accident at the workplace.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Previous studies have found out that organizations that fully implement employee wellness enhance improved employee productivity. The researchers also realized that absence of employee wellness and ill-health prevention in organizations could easily result in absenteeism, high employee turnover, increased medical bill and insurance claims, injuries and frequent accidents. These studies did not consider that the implementation and sustenance of employee wellness and ill-health prevention in an organization affect organizational productivity. The objective of this study is to investigate the implementation and sustenance of employee wellness and ill-health prevention in organizations.

1.3 Significance of the paper

This study will be beneficial to the production industry, researchers, and other policy makers. Organizational human resource managers and other senior officials will also make future decisions based on and guided by these research findings. Other researchers will be encouraged to conduct further research on occupational health and safety practices and employee awareness in relation to productivity based on these findings.

1.4 Objective of the research paper

The main objective of this paper was to investigate the implementation and sustenance of employee wellness and ill-health prevention in organizations.

1.5 Hypothesis

H0: There is no significance in the implementation and sustenance of employee wellness and ill-health prevention in organizations.

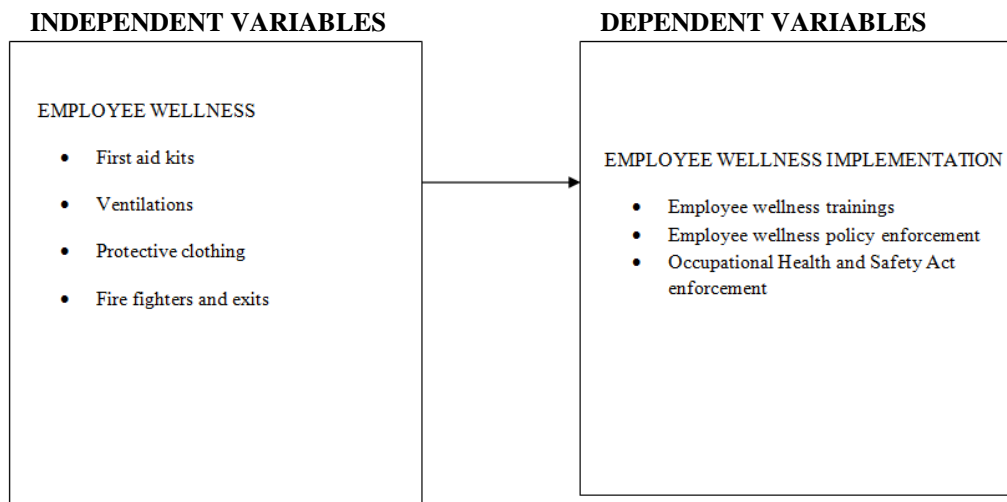


Figure.1: The Conceptual Framework.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The early safety engineers did not focus their energies on implementing intervention strategies in the workplace; they certainly laid the foundation for current approaches to reduce occupational illness and injury. As the machine age dawned with James Watt and Eli Whitney during the late 1700s, employers accepted industrial injuries and deaths as part of the working conditions without considering the economical ramifications. Employees were seen as volunteers, and were plentiful and replaceable (Leigh, 1998) [2]. Although the conditions in the early factories were horrendous, with two thirds of the employees being women and children working 12-hour days, people would risk disease, dismemberment and death for employment and a method for providing food for their families. Even if an employee suffered an illness or injury, they would seldom report the sickness because serious or frequent illnesses were cause for dismissal. The families of employees who died on the job had little legal recourse. At most they had their funeral expenses covered by the employer (Heinrich, et al, 1980) [3]. Factory inspections and the current laws increased employers' awareness of occupational safety, but it was not until the worker compensation laws were passed that industry owners finally began to realize the costs associated with occupation injuries.

Dezenzo (1998) [4] asserts that like human capital, occupational health and safety is gaining increased attention in organizations. People are the common element in every organization and they can be used to further to an organization's competitive advantage. An organization is nothing without human resources. They therefore must be taken care of by ensuring their health and safety at the workplace. Workers just like any other resources require maintenance and care in order to maximize their productivity (Casio, 1996) [5]. A safe workplace can be expensive but injuries from poor working conditions can end up costing the employer due to injuries or illnesses among the workers thereby losing on man-hours.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology that was used in the research. These are research design, population of study, sampling techniques, data collection procedure, data collection instruments and validity of research instruments.

3.2 Study Design

This study was conducted using descriptive survey design. The choice of this design was preferred on the ground that it is not only for collecting data, but also for investigating and attempting to establish the existence of certain relationships among dependent and independent variables which have already occurred. Descriptive survey is a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals, it can be used when collecting information about opinion, education or social issues. The study aimed at collecting information from respondents to find out how the effects of Occupational Health and Safety practices have impacted on the organization's productivity. Mugenda and Mugenda, (2012) [6] suggests that for descriptive research design 10-30% of the accessible population is enough.

3.3 Population Of The Study

The study was undertaken within a population of 1,755 employees who were the existing employees of Mumias Sugar Company by March 2016. Employees were sampled from those who were practicing then in the company's five departments. These are: Production department, Factory department, Personnel department, Finance department and Out growers department. The low cadre employees involved were 150 and 5 managers each from the five departments plus 5 union officials sampled from each department.

3.4 Sampling Techniques

Stratified sampling method was used followed by random sampling in order to obtain a representation of the general population. Simple random sampling was used to select employees from different departments for the study. It was preferred because it ensured that each member had an equal chance of being included in the sample.

Table 3.1 Sample Size

CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS	TOTAL POPULATION (N)	SAMPLED POPULATION (n)	SELECTED PERCENTAGE	SAMPLING TECHNIQUE
LOW CADRE EMPLOYEES	1000	100	10%	Simple random
UNION OFFICIALS	8	4	50%	Purposive
TOTAL	1008	104		

The different categories had different percentages depending on the population of employees they had in the respective cadres.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

Questionnaires were administered to the sampled low cadre employees from all departments. The employees were given the questionnaires to fill using the information they had without indicating their identity. Interview schedule were organized with the employees of managerial and supervisory status as well as the union officials in order to source for more information on the Occupational Health and Safety practices policy in Mumias Sugar Company. Secondary data was perused and analyzed to get the information on the policy of Occupational Health and Safety practices in the company.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

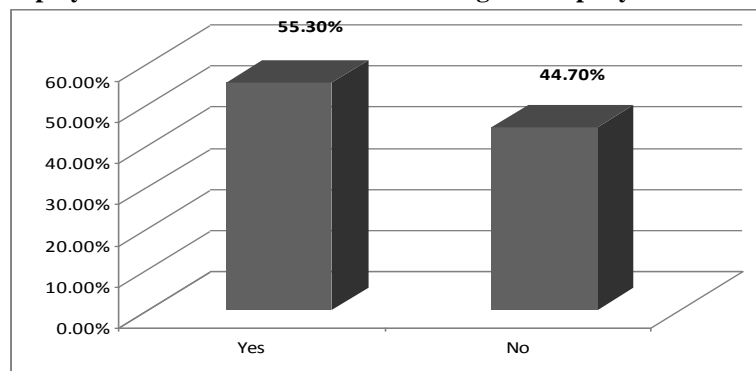
Questionnaires with both open ended and closed ended questions were used to collect data from low cadre employees. Interview schedule were organized with the managers and supervisors as well as the union officials in order to source for more information on the Occupational Health and Safety practices policy in Mumias Sugar Company. Secondary data was sourced from the existing information in the company was of significance during the data collection process. The company library and records were the main sources of secondary data. Document analysis was used to support questionnaire and interview schedule in data collection, analysis and presentation.

3.7 Validity

Validity is the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences, which are based on the research results (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2012) [6]. To test the validity of the research instruments were pre-tested through a pilot study to ascertain their effectiveness in soliciting information regarding the study and their clarity to respondents. The respondents used during piloting did not constitute the final sample population. From their responses it was necessary to restructure some questionnaire items.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Awareness Of Employee Wellness Policies In Mumias Sugar Company.



Source: Research data

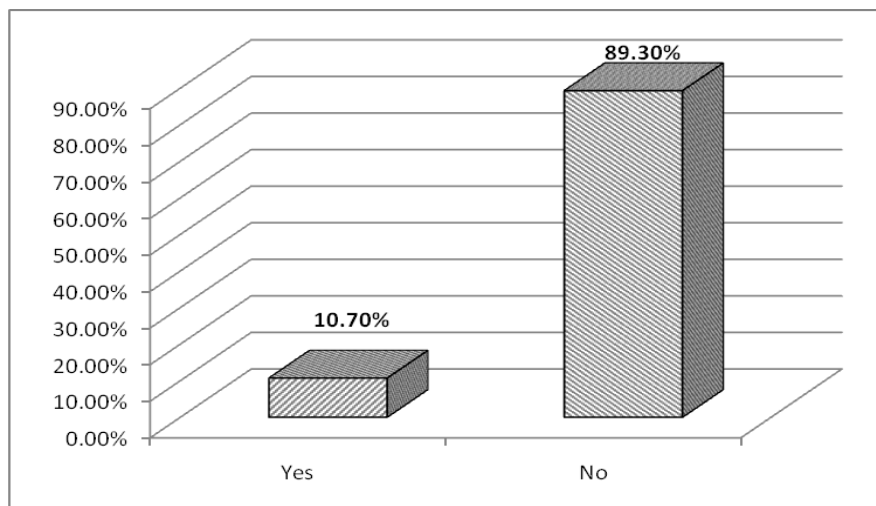
Figure 4.1 Employee understanding of employee wellness Policy:

The study sought to find out whether the employees of Mumias Sugar Company understood the employee wellness policy. The findings in figure 4.1 show that 55.30% of the employees understood the policy while 44.70% did not know anything about the policy.

Most of those employees who understood the employee wellness policy were those on managerial and supervisory levels. The low cadre employees had no idea what the policy entails. This put them to a kind of risk in the event of an emergency the employees may not be able to know what exactly should be the course of action.

4.2 How Employee Wellness Are Done In Mumias Sugar Company:

The researcher sought to find out how the process of employee wellness training is carried out in Mumias Sugar Company. Respondents were asked; if the exercise is done basing on status of employees in the firm, whether the process is a one on one involvement with the Human Resource Manager Representatives.



Source: Research data

Figure 4.2 One on one involvement with Employee and a Human Resource Representative.

Respondents were asked whether the process of employee wellness training of the staff is a one on one involvement with the Human Resource Manager Representatives. 10.7% of the respondents said yes while 89.3% said no as shown in figure 4.3 above.

This indicates that the employees were taken through the sessions of employee wellness training. However most of the employees were not taken through the process via the one on one involvement with the human resources department. The employees were kind of taken through the process as a group and therefore some missed out on certain essential issues.

The managers through interview schedule insisted that they had one on one involvement with the employees during the programme. They said that they hold training sessions with each of the employees whenever they join the company as new members.

V. CONCLUSION

The main objective was to investigate the implementation and sustenance of employee wellness and ill-health prevention in organizations. The study established that the employees of Mumias Sugar Company were trained on the practices that are undertaken in the Company. However most of the employees were not taken through the process of employee wellness practices via the one on one involvement with the human resources Managers. The employees were kind of taken through the process with little or no knowledge as well as consent. It was however established that the employees went through various sessions of training including guidance and counseling.

5.3 Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were made: that the employees were trained on the employee wellness in the Company including guidance and counseling. There are significant efforts being made by the management of Mumias Sugar Company to improve employees' morale by undertaking the employee wellness training process. The workers need to be made aware of the employee wellness in the organization. This can be either through employee training or having a clear employee wellness policy or both.

5.1 Recommendations

The following recommendations were made basing on the findings and the conclusions in this research paper:

1. Employees should be encouraged to get more information on developments on employee wellness and ill-health prevention in organizations through radios and television newscasts as well as newspapers and journals to improve their knowledge on the current trends.
2. The workers need to be empowered with the necessary knowledge that can enable them to survive in the event of an accident at the workplace.

5.2 Suggestion For Further Study

A similar research should be carried out in other manufacturing firms to establish the implementation and sustenance of employee wellness and ill-health prevention in those firms.

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