**THE IMPACT OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ON JOB PERFORMANCE: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE SMART SHIRTS (LANKA) LTD HARAGAMA SRI LANKA**

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**INTRODUCTION**

Organizations are strictly directed to attain their goals and they utilize different types of scarce resources such as human, material, machines, information, and time to achieve their goals (Akpan 2011). Although there are other resources, human resources are one of the most important resources in any organization (Mihiravi, D.P., and Perera, G.D.N. 2016). Further, human resources are the lifeblood of the organization (Guest 2002). Therefore, human resources management (HRM) is the efficient and effective utilization of human resources to achieve organizational goals through human resource management functions (Opatha 2012). Occupational health and safety function plays a critical role in the attainment of organizational success (Opatha 2009).

Organizations are supposed to have occupational safety and health, expecting that it will prevent and reduce the safety and health problems in the workplace (Hayes et al 1998). Occupational safety and health increase employee job satisfaction (Nankervis et al 2005). A healthy employee has a better physical, mental and emotional wellbeing that enables him to perform tasks, duties, and responsibilities of the job efficiently and effectively (Opatha 2010). Managing workplace safety is important for both company and its workers. Managing and improving firm health and safety conditions regularly reduce loss and cost of accidents and ill-health, and furthermore, it improves the workers’ performance (Oketunji, 2014). Therefore, managers should maintain a healthy and safety environment for an employee who works in a low or high-risk job (Oketunji 2014). Health and safety have become a critical issue in manufacturing firms these days than before (Makori 2012) because the workers just like any other resources require maintenance and care to maximize their productivity (Casio 1996). Firms in the apparel sector are also kind of manufacturing firms. Health and safety should be a broader initiative, not only a function in those factories (Osterman 2000). Providing safety to the organizational employees is a responsibility of managers as well as it is an investment in the organization as they are the driving power of the smoothly running organization (Apeksha 2015). This study is done to evaluate the impact of occupational health and safety on job performance of employees in Smart Shirts (Lanka) ltd Haragama Sri Lanka.

**OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS**

The primary objective of this study is to identify the impact of occupational health and safety on job performance: with special reference to the Smart Shirts (Lanka) Ltd Haragama.

Secondary objectives mentioned below were established to accomplish the primary objective of the study.

1. To identify the health and safety issues of the apparel industry in Sri Lanka.
2. To identify the health and safety practices imposed by management.
3. To explain the relationship between occupational health and job performance.
4. To explain the relationship between occupational safety and job performance.

The primary question of this study, what is the impact of occupational health and safety on job performance: with special reference to the Smart Shirts (Lanka) Ltd Haragama?

Secondary questions were established to accomplish the primary question of the study.

1. What are the health and safety issues of the apparel industry in Sri Lanka?
2. What are the health and safety practices imposed by management?
3. What is the relationship between occupational health and job performance?
4. What is the relationship between occupational safety and job performance?

**METHODOLOGY**

This study employed a descriptive research design to agree on the impact of occupational health and safety on job performance. As per the review of literature, the association of these variables is depicted in Figure 1,

**Independent variables** **Dependent variable**

Occupational Health (Maryjoan and Tom 2016).

* Mental health
* Physical health

Job performance

(Opatha 2015)

Occupational safety (Maryjoan and Tom 2016).

* Safety training
* Safety environment
* Personal protective equipment

Source: (constructed by author)

This study was conducted through a survey design. It was conducted in Smart Shirts (Lanka) Ltd Haragama Sri Lanka and the population was obtained from a selected division of that firm. Purposive sampling technique was used for selecting a sample for the research. The population of the study was 130 employees and according to the Morgan table, 97 employees are selected as the sample. This research is based on primary data. A structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data for the study. Secondary data were collected from research articles, internet resources, and company websites. For this study, the five-point Likert scale is used in the questionnaire to measure the variables. After gathering data they were analyzed using the computer-based statistical data analysis package, SPSS, version 21 for validity, reliability, and relationship testing. Univariate analysis and bivariate analysis are applied in data analysis.

**HYPOTHESES**

This is a correlation study and in this research two main hypotheses have been formulated for testing.

**H1:** There is a positive relationship between occupational health and job performance.

**H2:** There is a positive relationship between occupational safety and job performance.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

When analyzed the demographic factors, it was identified that, out of 97 respondents, majority of the respondents are females (64.6%) and the majority (43.8%) are from the age group of below 30 years, Most of the non-managerial employees in the selected apparel sector organization are married (58.3%). According to the collected data, most of the respondents' years of service are less than 5 years, it represents (42.7%).

Pearson correlation analysis was adopted for this research to determine the impact of occupational health and safety on job performance. According to the results of the Pearson’s correlation shown, there was a positive significance between occupational health and safety and job performance of non- managerial respondents. Pearson correlation between occupational health and safety and job performance was 0.687\*\* which is positive. It shows that there is a moderately positive relationship between occupational health and safety and job performance. The found relationship is statistically significant as correlation is significant at 0.01 (2-tailed). Thus, there is statistical evidence to claim that occupational health and safety and job performance are positively related.

There was a significant relationship between occupational health and job performance at 0.01 level (confident level- 99%), Pearson correlation between the occupational health and job performance was 0.577\*\* which is positive. It shows that there is a moderately positive relationship between occupational health and job performance. According to Pearson's correlation test, the Null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. Hence the data support the hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between occupational health and job performance. Pearson correlation between occupational safety and job performance was 0.712\*\* which is positive, it shows that there is a moderately positive relationship between occupational safety and job performance. According to Pearson's correlation test, the Null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. The data support the hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between occupational safety and job performance of non-managerial employees in selected apparel sector organizations in Sri Lanka.

**CONCLUSION AND RECCOMENDATION**

The findings from the study confirmed the relationship between occupational health and safety and job performance indicating a moderately positive correlation between the variables. According to the findings, 68% of the variation of the job performance of non-managerial employees are explained by occupational health and safety while the 32% of job performance depends on unexplained factors rather than occupational health and safety. The findings of this research study shall be important on the theoretical as well as practical scenario. These findings are important to increase the job performance of non-managerial employees as there is a positive relationship between occupational health and job performance. Furthermore, there is a positive relationship between occupational safety and job performance. As a major way of enhancing the job performance of the non-managerial employees in apparel sector the programs relating to the enhancement of occupational health and safety should be implemented successfully. Increasing mental health, developing physical health, safety training, personal protective equipment, safety environment are few ways of enhancing the occupational health and safety of the employee. The top management of the organization in the apparel sector should consider these factors and enhance the occupational health and safety of the non-managerial employees to gain the maximum contribution to achieve the organizational goals.

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