

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY OF MALDIVES

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Abstract

This research will aim to determine the influence between workplace health and safety practices and employee performance in telecommunication industry of Maldives. Telecommunication industry of Maldives is evolving and the job opportunities in the industry is booming. There is limited research done in the Maldives to identify how OHS practices influence employee performance in the sector. Hence, the objective of this study is to determine whether there is a relationship between OHS practices and employee performance in the telecommunication sector of Maldives. To gain insight into the subject, a number of publications and journals were studied for the literature review. Researchers concurred that there are challenges with the topic that make it difficult to see the situation clearly. Quantitative research methodology will be employed for this study, and both primary and secondary sources will be consulted. Using stratified sampling, a sample size of 88 will be chosen for the primary research from a population of 113. A questionnaire will be employed in this study's correlative research design, and the HR teams of the participating firms will help disseminate it to participants in order to collect data. With the aid of SPSS, cross tabulations and correlation will be used to examine the data. This proposal includes introduction into the research, literature review and the proposed methodology for the research.

Introduction

Occupational health and safety issues in telecommunication industry is mainly caused due to electrical safety, optical fiber safety, confined space entry, fall protection, elevated and overhead work, electromagnetic fields and moto vehicle safety (EHS, 2012). Others include garbage, toxic substances, and noise. Occupational Safety and Health has recently risen to a considerably greater importance in the telecommunications sector. (Lyman, 2016), stated that telecommunications business is small, with about 15,000 to 20,000 field workers, therefore very little of the OSHA requirements apply to it, however with the new A10.48 standards and procedures the OHS of telecommunications industry started to evolve.

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The Communications Authority of Maldives regulates and oversees telecommunications in the Maldives (CAM). Three telecom companies—Dhiraagu, Ooredoo Maldives, and Raajjé Online—serve the Maldives. The telecom industry in Maldives started as a monopoly by Dhiraagu, however the industry became competitive with new organizations penetrating into the market and the industry has evolved with large workforce. Still the industry is relatively small and approximate field employees in Maldives telecom industry is reported to be 113.

Occupational Health and safety in telecommunication industry of the Maldives is currently governed by Maldives Telecommunication Act (Law no. 43/2015) and Maldives Employment Act (Law no:2/2008). However as (Rigoro, 2019, p. 77) stated the government legislations are very limited to cause a significant impact on employee performance, hence it is important for the industry to practice the best international practices.

The ILO estimates that more than 2 million had faced fatal from workplace diseases or accidents each year, and studies show that OHS-based management systems can boost productivity and business performance. Fernández-Muiz et al. (2012) argues that unsafe working conditions and occupational accidents harm human resources, material resources, productivity, and employee motivation.

There are studies; (Yusuf et al., 2012), Perera (2019), Türkmenoğlu (2016) which have been carried out to determine the relationship between OHS systems and employee satisfaction and performance in various sectors, and also similar researches were carried out by (Rigoro, 2019, p. 77) and (Durán et al., 2018) to determine influence of commencement and implementation of occupational safety programs on employee performance and health at work in the telecommunications industry and the findings shows that Implementation of sufficient occupational safety programs can positively impact Employee performance in the telecommunications industry. The impact of workplace safety and health practices, tactics, and compliance on the performance and productivity of the organization has been the subject of a number of prior research. Their conclusions have proven that occupational health and safety improve organizational performance. However, to the best of researcher's knowledge limited or no published study is carried out in Maldives telecommunications industry to evaluate how workplace safety initiatives affect improving employee performance. With this knowledge, the study aims to assess the impact of occupational safety and health initiatives on workers' performance in the Maldives' telecommunications sector by responding to the following: What impact does the occupational safety and health practices have on employees' performance in the Maldives' telecommunications sector?

The research aims to achieve the following objectives.

- i. To determine how much employee performance is affected by safety training programs in the telecommunications sector in Maldives
- ii. To investigate how current technology affects worker safety in the telecommunications sector in Maldives

- iii. To determine how safety gear affects workers' performance in the telecommunications sector, Maldives

The following research questions will be addressed in the study.

- i. How much does safety training programs affect worker performance in the telecommunications sector in Maldives?
- ii. How does current technology affect workers' safety in the telecom sector in Maldives?
- iii. What effect does safety gear have on workers' performance in the telecommunications sector in Maldives?

In this research the key variables are OHS practices in telecommunication Industry and Employee Performance in Telecommunication Industry. Indicators of OHS practices such as safety training programs, safety gear and technological advancements and indicators of employee performance such as employee satisfaction, employee engagement, absenteeism and turnover are some of other variables of this research. The following hypothesis was developed based on past study on the topic and an analysis of the literature review.

HO1

1. There is a positive statistical influence on Employee performance in telecommunication industry of Maldives due to safety training programs in telecommunication industry of Maldives.
2. There is a positive statistical influence on Employee safety in telecommunication industry of Maldives due to use of advanced technology in telecommunication industry of Maldives.
3. There is a positive statistical influence on Employee performance in telecommunication industry of Maldives due to use of safety gear in telecommunication industry of Maldives.

HO2: There is a positive impact on Employee performance in telecommunication industry due to Organizational health and safety practices.

This study aims to determine the relationship between worker performance and health and safety initiatives. It provides specific information about workplace accidents and illnesses on both the macro and company levels. The significance of this study can be seen in a variety of ways, such as creating efficient occupational health and safety guidelines, identifying individual involvement in the prevention of significant accidents, and providing recommendations for the creation of an efficient major accident prevention system. It can also be used as a resource by other scholars interested in this area, shedding light on problems in other sectors of the economy and globally. Although there are many different factors to consider in this regard, the current study will focus on three of them: technological advancements, safety gear and equipment, and training programs.

The scope of the study is limited to 88 field employees working in telecommunication industry of Maldives, and they are expected to fill out a questionnaire and the participants will be selected randomly.

Literature Review

A review of the literature pertinent to the research was offered in this chapter. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the subject, discover the methods that have been employed in prior studies, how to compare the procedures used to assess findings from earlier studies, and sample the current opinions offered, previous research studies have been examined. The chapter also described the empirical literature review and the conceptual framework of the proposed project study. The chapter was prepared in accordance with the research objectives to ensure that it was pertinent to the research topics.

Workplace health and safety practices and Employee Performance

The multidisciplinary discipline of occupational safety and health (OSH), sometimes known as occupational health and safety (OHS), occupational health, or workplace health and safety (WHS), is concerned with the welfare and safety of people at work, regardless of the industry or sector. It is focused on preventing accidents and reducing aspects of the workplace that could violently hurt personnel right away. Mejia (2010) claims that workplace safety and health is a global issue that encompasses both physical and mental health. A good definition of health and safety involves both physical capabilities and social and personal resources. Durán et al. (2018) stated that the first step is to create policies that encourage employees to take part in risk assessment and illness and accident prevention.

Safety Training Programs and Employee Performance

An occupational health and safety program's goal is to reduce the risk of accidents and occupational illnesses in a particular workplace. The occupational health and safety program may need to go above and beyond the legal standards outlined in Acts and regulations in order to do this effectively (Rigoro, 2019, p. 77). (Byun & Jung, 2021) also stated that regular education and training, a focus on the appropriate placement of tools and equipment for the job, and the dissemination of information on safety standards and compliance are all crucial safety measures that should be implemented by a company. As per (Shikdar, Sawaqed, 2003) inadequate training leads to workplace dangers, poor employee health, injuries caused by mechanical equipment, and disabilities lower worker productivity, lower the quality of their job, and raise the cost.

Technology Advancements and Employee Performance

Since Francis Ronalds' use of static electricity to construct the first functional telegraph in 1816, telecommunications technology has advanced significantly. Notable advancements include Guglielmo Marconi's foundation of wireless communication in December 1901 and the invention of the telephone in the 1870s (Smith 2018). If the company makes an effort to apply the right technological improvements, the work of the employees can be made easier and more productive (Hester & Fusch, 2020). Megatrends in technology, such as the Internet of Things (IoT), which is expanding quickly and enables electronic devices to "integrate" with other everyday consumer goods, are already beginning to have an impact on how we can evaluate the working environment

in real time (Rigoro, 2019, p. 77). (Ribeiro et al., 2021) stated that with the high risks the employees are exposed in telecommunications industry such technological advancements will be a guide to assess and mitigate the possible accidents.

Safety gear and Employee Performance

Employers are required to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to employees and oversee its usage where engineering, work practice, and administrative controls are impractical or insufficiently protective. Wearing personal protection equipment (often known as "PPE") helps reduce exposure to a number of risks. Gloves, foot and eye protection, protective hearing aids (earplugs, muffs), hard helmets, respirators, and complete body suits are a few examples of PPE (Rigoro, 2019, p. 77). (Hester & Fusch, 2020) agreed that safety gear and other protective gear are intended to lessen workplace accidents and protect workers from harm. It facilitates faster task completion while safeguarding the health and wellbeing of the employees. The employees will be able to focus on the task at hand without being distracted by concerns for their safety if they are provided with sufficient PPE. PPE can thereby increase productivity.

Proposed Research Framework

In the study, employee performance will be considered as a dependent variable whereas safety training programs, Technology advancements and safety gear will be viewed as independent variables. Below is the proposed conceptual framework after referring to the literature review.

Independent Variable

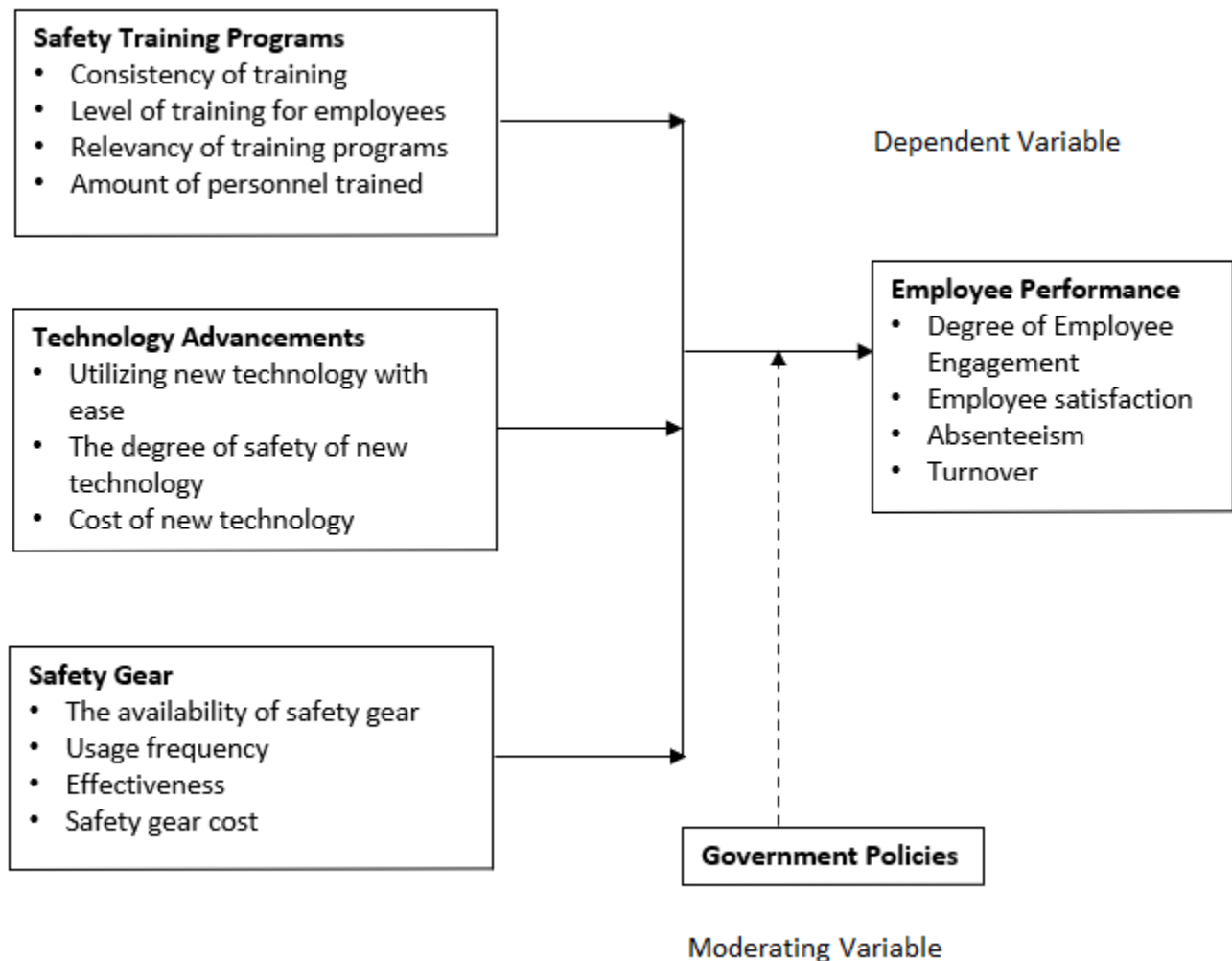


Figure 1 : Proposed Conceptual Framework

Gaps in Research

There are certain methodology gaps identified from the literature reviewed. The researchers have identified gaps such as lack of studies available and data limitations. Majority of the researchers have identified that since the research concentrates on a specific organization the generalization of the research findings would be difficult. Also, researchers have identified participant gap, limitation of the sample size which was a major gap in the most researches.

Methodology

The approaches considered to address the research issues will be covered in this chapter. The following sections—Research Method, Research Design, Population, Sample, and Participants, Instrument or tools, Procedure, Data Collection Method and presentation, Data Analysis Technique and Ethical considerations—provide an overview of the research's methodology. This study will use quantitative research methods, including primary and secondary research. A survey will be used to evaluate how OHS practices affect employee performance in the Maldives' telecommunications sector. Secondary research will be used to evaluate organizational reports, performance reviews, and OHS procedures. Statistics reports released by governmental agencies such as the Communications Authority of the Maldives (CAM) will also be used. To understand the relationship between OHS practices and employee performance, a quantitative approach is essential, as it is more acceptable, rapid, focused, objective, and scientific.

A research design is a framework, method, and plan for an inquiry created to find solutions to research questions and manage deviations. To determine the impact of occupational safety practices on employee performance in the Maldives' telecommunications sector, the study will use a Correlational research methodology with a survey. Correlational research is a solid place to start when researchers are first looking into a phenomena or relationship, as it enables researchers to ascertain the direction and intensity of a link in order to focus their findings in subsequent investigations and, if possible, establish causation experimentally (Filipowich, 2018). The research will be carried out by considering the variables explained in the conceptual framework using a correlational research design.

Maldives telecommunication industry consists of three organizations, Dhiraagu, Ooredoo and Raajje Online. The study will take only field employees into account therefore, the population for the study would be all the field employees working in the industry. As per the annual reports of the organizations Dhiraagu consists of 520 employees, Ooredoo has a workforce of 370 employees and ROL consists of 110 employees. As per the HR of the companies the approximate field employees in Dhiraagu is 77, Ooredoo has 26 and ROL has 10, hence the population for the survey is 113.

Probability sampling would be the sample method utilized in this study, and each employee would have an equal chance of being chosen. The sample will be drawn using stratified random sampling. Here's how the sample will be carried out:

The sample size considered for the study is 88, which calculated using Raosoft sample size calculator considering margin of error to be 5%, confidence level 95% and response distribution to be 50%. The stratified sample formula used to calculate the sample size from each stratum is; (Sample size of the strata= (Size of entire sample/population size) *layer size) to calculate the proportion from each group. (Glen, 2021)

According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2003), the stratified random sampling method proposed for this study entails choosing participants in a way that more or less replicates the subgroups that already exist in the population. The process begins with the subgroups being stratified, and then random sampling will be used.

A survey will be done as the major research method, and the tool that will be utilized is a questionnaire created with the goal of achieving the study's objectives and gathering data. The questionnaire's questions are generally close-ended because we are undertaking a quantitative study. Multiple choice, scale, and rating questions will all be included in the survey.

The questionnaire will be divided into two portions, with the first section intended to ascertain the respondents' demographics and the second section focusing on the three independent variables under investigation. The respondents will be provided the assurance of confidentiality, the time to react to all the questions, and encouragement to express their opinions regarding how they perceive the issue under examination. The questionnaire will be created as a google form. Hence, it is affordable and simple to use, this method is regarded as being beneficial for the study.

Both primary and secondary data will be considered in this study. By using questionnaires, all of the respondents from the sample were included in the data collection. After it is created, the questionnaire will go through a pilot test with 10 different people, and any necessary changes will be made. With the assistance of the HR team of the organization, the questionnaire for this study will be emailed and distributed to participants using viber groups, whatsapp groups, and numerous other social media platforms. Since it would be challenging to physically survey, the survey will be conducted online. Additionally, an online survey would be more efficient, quicker, and less expensive. The outcomes of the participants will be automatically updated and recorded when using a google form. Employee performance can also be determined by the data from performance appraisals of the organization and OHS practices can be determined by the data from reports maintained by the organization such as safety protocols, accident reports and training reports.

After the data is collected cross tabulations and Pearson Correlation will be used to analyze the data. The data will be analyzed to determine the objectives of the study and it will consider each organization separately. The researcher will be able to analyze relationships in the data that might not be immediately evident when studying all of the survey responses if a cross tabulation method with tables representing data from the full group of respondents is used. It is much simpler to personalize and make numerous charts and graphs to help by analyzing the data in this way. The software SPSS will be used to analyze the data, generate charts and scattered diagrams and to determine the statistical relationship between the two variables using cross tabulations and Pearson Correlation.

The majority of sector employees can have irregular or unfavorable work schedules, which could make data collecting challenging and time-consuming. Another restriction may be the unwillingness of the participants to divulge information out of concern that it would be made public and used against the firm or industry. The participants will receive the appropriate information, be made aware that the study will only be used for academic purposes, and be guaranteed that the information they provide will be kept confidential.

While the direct impact of OHS procedures on employee performance in the Maldives telecom industry is little understood and has limited documentation, the purpose of this study is to

comprehend how workplace health and safety procedures affect workers' performance in the Maldives' telecommunications sector. Although there are many different factors to consider in this regard, the current study will focus on three of them: technological advancements, safety gear and equipment, and training programs. The study's scope will include operational level workers / field workers in the Maldives' telecommunications sector.

The following ethical concerns will serve as basis for this investigation. First, the research participants will be given the option to decide for themselves whether or not to take part in the study. These suggested that the respondent would not be coerced or forced to participate in the research procedure. Second, the answers provided by the respondents will be regarded as anonymous; this suggests that they will not be forced to provide their names on the questionnaires they must complete. Given that the study is on a very sensitive health and safety matter and calls for an unmatched degree of confidentiality, this will avoid victimization. Thirdly, before beginning the process of data gathering, the researcher will obtain approval from all research stakeholders, including the engaged telecommunications organizations. All relevant research stakeholders must be informed of the study's conclusions by the researcher.

Conclusion

The study concluded that safety programs can be used to assess workers' knowledge of how to carry out routine tasks safely. These training sessions should be frequent, pertinent, and contextual, which means that OSH training programs should be specifically tailored to each employee rather than being a generalized training that runs the risk of omitting department- specific employee performance risks in relation to health and safety. In addition to OSH training programs, issues like employee weariness and the amount of time spent working between breaks should be taken into account in order to improve workers' performance.

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