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### Effectiveness of the health and safety practices in enhancing the organizational performance of Kenya Seed Company.

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Date Published: **ABSTRACT**

02 November 2021 This study purposed to conduct research on strategies used on occupational health and safety practices on the enhancement of organizational performance at Kenya Seed Company, Kitale Kenya. Theory proposed a five factor accidents prevention sequence whereby one step would lead to the other. This is a mixed methods study guided by the concurrent triangulation design. The research instruments include the use of questionnaires, interview schedules and observation checklist as tools of data collection because they are descriptive in nature. The target population was 224 employees at Kenya Seed Company working in the selection, shelling, drying, mixing and packaging sections. Supervisors and managers of the sections/departments were also considered. The sample size for the study was 224. Stratified sampling was used to identify employees in different sections based on various characteristics. Random sampling was then used to refine the process and give each respondent an equal opportunity to take part in the study. Purposive sampling was used to identify supervisors and managers of identified sections. Data was collected by administering questionnaires, holding face to face interviews and making observations. The research concluded that allocation of financial resources, awareness of employees and effectiveness of occupational health and safety standards and equipment would be beneficial to Kenya Seed Company.

**Keywords:**  
*Employee  
Performance,  
Health,  
Safety Measures,  
Staff Preparedness,  
Kenya Seed  
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## INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary society where industrialization and manufacturing take a larger share of the country's economic activity, cases of occupational health and safety measures have not been keenly addressed hence influencing the performance of employees in respective firms. According to Bayram, Ungan and Kadir (2016), despite the high costs associated with managing accidents and paying for related cases, many manufacturing firms across the world have not yet shown an interest in enhancing health and safety measures, a move that has greatly influenced the performance of employees in their respective places of work in the realization of the ultimate goal of an organization. It is estimated that 2.78 million people die annually because of occupation-related diseases while some 374,000 people suffer fatal work-related injuries every year. This account for 86% and 14% of the workforce in manufacturing, processing, and industrial firms. This implies that every week, at least some employees absent themselves to manage work-related diseases or injuries. Some are demotivated by the working environment that seems to be prone to accidents, injuries, and toxic substances.

Veltri *et al.* (2017) note that occupational and safety measures in many manufacturing institutions in New York have been separated from operating performance because of the trade-offs that exist between the two. Notably, the practice of achieving social benefit as a regulatory requirement and the

high cost of installing the occupational and safety measures discourages many manufacturing firms to opt for non-compliance, which in turn lowers employees' performance. The authors insisted that most manufacturers failed to make decisions to invest in occupational and safety measures because of the failure to link with financial performance accrued from employee's productivity.

In another study, Kyalo (2016) narrowed down to the level of utilization of protective gear among employees of grains, oil and seeds milling companies, the author established that less than a half 45.1% did not adopt the practice of using protective gear whenever they were on duty, which inflicted injury on 40.3% of employees with physical injury and 31.2% with abrasions and related problems. It, therefore, confirms that cases of industrial accidents and illnesses are on the rise in most companies. As Bayram *et al.* (2016) report, most firms are incurring high costs to compensate employees because of the failure to enhance health and safety measures. It is for this reason that this study sought to assess health and safety measures on employees at Kenya Seed Company (KSC) in Kitale because it is one of the biggest seeds processing firms in East and Central Africa.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Makori *et al.* (2012) conducted a study to establish the influence occupational health and safety measures had on the performance of manufacturing firms. In their findings, the authors asserted that existing health and safety measures in the studied

manufacturing firms were few and that they negatively influenced the performance of manufacturing firms. Lack of enough health and safety measures was aggravated by little to no supervision in manufacturing thereby encouraging employees to work without considering health and safety measures, a move that was their productivity. Compared to this paper, the study by Makor *et al.* (2012) narrowed down on how existing health and safety measures influence the performance of employees while this study was going further to determine the effectiveness of health and safety measures, level of staff preparedness, and assess some of the challenges facing health and safety measures.

Veltri *et al.* (2007) sought to establish a data-based evaluation of the relationship between occupational health, safety measures and organization performance and used descriptive survey in their methodology. In their findings, the authors established that the number of existing occupational health and safety measures largely determined the performance of employees working in the respective departments. Relative to the study by Veltri *et al.* (2007), which only focused on establishing the relationship between occupational health, safety measures and employee performance, this study also determined the effectiveness of existing health and safety measures, level of staff preparedness and establish some of the challenges facing the implementation or utilization of health and safety measures in a seed processing firm. Veltri *et al.* (2007) added that perceptions on occupational health and safety measures sometimes determine the need by organizations to influence the number of existing health and safety measures. In some cases, many organizations fail to repair, maintain or replace health and safety equipment needed in the working environment.

Edem, Akpan and Pepple (2017) support the works of Veltri *et al.* (2007) by adding that manufacturing firms that have unsafe health facilities such as poor agronomical environment, unsuitable furniture, lack

of personal protective equipment, poor communication, poor supervision support, poorly designed workstations, excessive noise and exposure to toxic substances lead to increased occupational injuries and accidents. Such working conditions might lead to heat stress, ergonomic disorders, deafness, suffocation, and skin irritation among others. Employees exposed to the aforementioned conditions according to Edem *et al.* (2017) would frequently be absent from work, sickly, tend to work for short periods and utilize organizations' funds in case they had medical insurance, which in turn impacted negatively on the manufacturing firms' financial performance. Apart from assessing the working environment, this paper also established the effectiveness of existing health and safety measures, level of staff preparedness and challenges facing health and safety measures at Kenya Seed Company.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Generally, this design entailed concurrent but independent collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data with the goal of the researchers understanding the problem better. Through triangulation, the researchers were able to merge the two data sets. According to the Statistics given by the Office of the Human Resource and Administration at Kenya Seed Company, specifically, Seed Driers Section had an estimate of 224 employees. In the case of this study, structured questionnaires, interview schedules and observation checklist were used to collect information that was used to assess the state of health and safety measures at Kenya Seed Company and thereafter conclude and give recommendations.

Qualitative data collected using interview schedule was analysed using thematic analysis where views and opinions noted were summarized and organized in themes and sub-themes based on the research objectives and indicators. Data collected using observation schedule was analysed using Microsoft Excel Software where frequencies and percentages

were used in describing the state of health and safety measures at Kenya Seed Company, Kitale.

**DATA PRESENTATION**

The study had a sample size of 224 respondents. All were given questionnaires which they filled and the researchers picked after a week. At the end of the given period, only 196 respondents had filled in the questionnaires giving a response rate of 87.5%. The researchers made efforts to call other respondents to fill the questionnaires but were unsuccessful. Due to the constraints of time, the researchers continued with the analysis since according to Best and Khan

(2006), a response rate of 50% is considered adequate, 60% good and above 70% very good. Therefore, in view of this, the response rate was considered very good and exceeded the threshold postulated by Best and Khan.

***Usability of the right equipment for the right job motivates and reduces chances of accidents and injury***

The findings obtained were shown in the table below.

**R02 Right equipment for the right job motivates and reduces chances of accidents**

|       |                | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|----------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Undecided      | 42        | 21.4    | 21.4          | 21.4               |
|       | Agree          | 110       | 56.1    | 56.1          | 77.6               |
|       | Strongly Agree | 44        | 22.4    | 22.4          | 100.0              |
|       | Total          | 196       | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

From the table, 21.4% of the respondents were undecided on whether the right equipment for the right job motivates and reduces the chances of accidents. 77.5% of the respondents agreed that the right equipment for the right job motivates and reduces the chances of accidents. Majority of the respondents agreed that the right equipment for the right job motivates and reduces the chances of accidents. According to Njiwa and Nzulwa (2017), a good employee health and wellness program is determined by the availability of good equipment,

attitude and perception. Organizations should always put the safety of their staff first because they are the ultimate determiners of employee productivity. Ensuring that they are using the right equipment is a primary requirement.

***Adherence to policies and the rule of law enhances effectiveness and efficiency at work***

The findings obtained were as shown in the table below:

**R02 Adherence to policies and the rule of law enhances efficiency at work**

|       |                | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|----------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Disagree       | 12        | 6.1     | 6.1           | 6.1                |
|       | Undecided      | 31        | 15.8    | 15.8          | 21.9               |
|       | Agree          | 87        | 44.4    | 44.4          | 66.3               |
|       | Strongly Agree | 66        | 33.7    | 33.7          | 100.0              |
|       | Total          | 196       | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

From the table above, 6.1% of the respondents disagreed that adherence to policies and the rule of law enhances efficiency at work. 15.8% of the respondents were undecided on whether adherence to policies and the rule of law enhances efficiency

at work. 78.1% of the respondents agreed that adherence to policies and the rule of law enhances efficiency at work. Most of the respondents agreed that adherence to policies and the rule of law enhances efficiency at work. According to Katunge

& Mbogo (2016), the level of seriousness and or strictness to the rule of law of the regulator determines the effectiveness of the utilization of health and safety measures. Reasonable and effective rules and regulations that govern the organization must be set to ensure efficiency at

work. There should be equality in the implementation of these laws and regulations.

***Employees’ attitude determines the need to ensure health and safety measures are followed***

The findings obtained were shown in the table below:

**R02 Employees’ attitude determines the need to ensure health and safety**

|       |                   | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Strongly Disagree | 21        | 10.7    | 10.7          | 10.7               |
|       | Disagree          | 39        | 19.9    | 19.9          | 30.6               |
|       | Undecided         | 51        | 26.0    | 26.0          | 56.6               |
|       | Agree             | 73        | 37.2    | 37.2          | 93.9               |
|       | Strongly Agree    | 12        | 6.1     | 6.1           | 100.0              |
|       | Total             | 196       | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

From the table above, 30.6% of the respondents disagreed that employees’ attitude determines the need to ensure health and safety. 26% of the respondents were undecided on whether employees’ attitude determines the need to ensure health and safety. 43.3% of the respondents agreed that employees’ attitude determines the need to ensure health and safety. Majority of respondents agreed that employee attitude determines the need to ensure health and safety. According to Munuhe (2016), the move to develop a positive attitude instils a culture where all employees can be driven towards enhancing health and safety practices. All employees need to ensure that they instil positive mentalities because this will enable them to understand and practice health and safety measures thus improving their productivity and organizational performance.

employees need to ensure that they instil a positive mentality to improve their productivity and organizational performance.

The ministry of labour, social security and services should collaborate with the private sector and non-governmental organizations to ensure that occupational health and safety standards, practices and activities are observed in Kenya Seed Company and all other industries countrywide. Kenya Seed Company should seek to benchmark with organizations that have implemented and followed occupational health and safety standards and practices. Awareness should be spread across all staff regardless of their hierarchy.

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The organization should always put the safety of their staff first because they are the ultimate determinants of productivity. Ensuring that they are using the right equipment is a primary requirement. Reasonable and effective rules and regulations that govern the organization must be set to ensure efficiency at work. There should be equality in the implementation of these laws and regulations. All

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