

Occupational Health & Safety Issues Affecting Worker Performance in Omani Industries

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Abstract

Occupational health and safety (OHS) are often neglected in industries, especially in small and medium industries. Investing on OHS is considered a cost rather than investment due to lack of knowledge, personnel and resource constraints. A healthy workforce and a safe workplace could positively affect worker performance. Improving OHS and worker performance are major concerns of industries, especially in developing countries. Application of Ergonomics or Human Factors Engineering in industries has been found to improve occupational health and safety and worker productivity. This has both direct and indirect effects on overall performance of an industry. Although the application has gained significant momentum in the developed countries, it remains largely unaware in the developing countries. The application of ergonomics to improve OHS and worker productivity needs to be investigated in the Sultanate of Oman.

The main objectives of this research are to: (1) study the current OHS regulations, practices, and data in industries, (2) identify and assess occupational health and safety issues and worker performance, (3) develop ergonomics strategies to improve OHS, (4) implement these strategies in participating industries, (5) evaluate the effects of the interventions, (6) correlate OSH and worker performance, and (7) develop OHS guidelines for Omani industries.

Oman can significantly benefit from this research, as it has investigated current status of OHS and worker productivity, ways to improve OHS and worker productivity and implement improvement strategies in industries. In the long run, OHS regulations and guidelines will be in place, industries will be in compliance with national and international standards and these will make Omani industries more productive and competitive in the region and globally. A detailed in depth study has been completed in SME's in Oman. Besides that a separate pilot study has been done on productivity determinants of construction industries in Oman. Also major workforce in Omani MSE's (Omani male, female and Bangladeshi Male) anthropometric data has been developed during the study.