

Relationship between Institutional Perspective and Safety Performance: A Case on Ready-Made Garments Manufacturing Industry

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Abstract : Bangladesh has encountered several industrial disasters (e.g. fire and building collapse tragedies) leading to the loss of valuable human lives. Irrespective of various institutions' making effort to improve the safety situation, industry compliance and safety behaviour have not yet been improved. Hence, one question remains, to what extent does the institutional elements efficient enough to make any difference in improving safety behaviours? Thus, this study explores the relationship between institutional perspective and safety performance. Structural equation modelling results, using survey data from 256 RMG workers' of 128 garments manufacturing factories in Bangladesh, show that institutional facets strongly influence management safety commitment to induce workers participation in safety activities and reduce workplace accident rates. The study also found that by upholding industrial standards and inspecting the safety situations, institutions facets significantly and directly affect workers involvement in safety participations and rate of workplace accidents. Additionally, workers involvement to safety practices significantly predicts the safety environment of the workplace. Subsequently, our findings demonstrate that institutional culture, norms, and regulations enact play an important role in altering management commitment to set-up a safer workplace environment. As a result, when workers' perceive their management having high level of commitment to safety, they are inspired to be involved more in the safety practices, which significantly alter the workplace safety situation and lessen injury experiences. Due to the fact that institutions have strong influence on management commitment, legislative members should endorse, regulate, and strictly monitor workplace safety laws to be exercised by the factory owners. Further, management should take initiatives for adopting OHS features and conceive strategic directions (i.e., set up safety committees, risk assessments, innovative training) for promoting a positive safety climate to provide a safe workplace environment. Arguably, an inclusive public-private partnership is recommended for ensuring better and safer workplace for RMG workers. However, as our data were under a cross-sectional design; the respondents' perceptions might get changed over a period of time and hence, a longitudinal study is recommended. Finally, further research is needed to determine the impact of improvement mechanisms on workplace safety performance, such as how workplace design, safety training programs, and institutional enforcement policies protect the well-being of workers.

Keywords : institutional perspective, management commitment, safety participation, work injury, safety performance, occupational health and safety

Conference Title : ICOSHW 2017 : International Conference on Occupational Safety and Health at Workplace

Conference Location : Stockholm, Sweden

Conference Dates : July 13-14, 2017