

THE ROLE OF SECURITY AWARENESS AND EMPLOYEE BEHAVIOR IN CREATING A SAFE WORK ENVIRONMENT CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

It examines the role of security awareness and employee behavior in creating a safe workplace culture. Occupational health and safety consists of the measures and practices taken to ensure the safety of employees in workplaces. However, more than technical measures are needed; Employees' security awareness and behavior are also critical in maintaining a safe work environment. Safety awareness refers to the ability of employees to recognize risks in the workplace, take precautions against these risks, and exhibit correct behavior in the face of dangerous situations. Employees with high safety awareness actively prevent occupational accidents and strengthen the overall occupational safety culture.

The article discusses the impact of training programs, security communication, and leadership behaviors in improving security awareness. Regular safety training provided to employees increases their awareness of occupational safety and helps reflect this awareness in daily business life. Additionally, managers' and leaders' attitudes toward safety directly affect employees' behavior. A safety-focused leadership approach contributes to making safe behavior the norm in the workplace. Safety awareness and safe behaviors form the cornerstones of occupational safety culture. Strengthening these two factors enables the reduction of occupational accidents and the sustainability of a safer work environment.

Keywords: Safety awareness, Occupational safety culture, Safe behavior, Safety communication, Employee safety

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Introduction

Creating a safe work environment is one of the most fundamental elements of occupational health and safety culture. Occupational safety culture plays a critical role in preventing accidents and minimizing workplace risks by improving employees' safety awareness and safe behavior. Sustainability of safe work environments is possible not only with the existence of security procedures, but also with employees internalizing these procedures and integrating security awareness into daily business life. At this point, security awareness refers to the ability of employees to recognize the potential risks they encounter in their work processes and to exhibit the correct behavior to minimize these risks.

Turning security awareness into a permanent form of behavior in the workplace depends on the effectiveness of security communication and the dissemination of this communication among employees. Employers and managers must develop effective safety policies and create a safety culture that will encourage safe behavioral habits among employees. The basis of this security culture is that employees comply with security measures and actively integrate security awareness into their work processes.

This study aims to examine the role of security awareness and employee behavior in creating a safe work environment. In the process of creating an occupational safety culture, elements such as the effectiveness of safety communication, increasing safety awareness, and encouraging safe behavior will be evaluated in detail. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights into how to create a safer and more secure work environment.

Creating safe work environments directly relates to developing occupational health and safety culture. *Occupational safety culture* is a process created to increase employees' safety awareness, encourage safe behavior, and ultimately contribute to preventing occupational accidents (Reason, 1997). Creating a safety culture effectively depends not only on the existence of procedures determined by the management but also on the internalization of these procedures by all employees (Guldenmund, 2000). Employees' safety awareness refers to their ability to perceive potential hazards in the workplace and take appropriate precautions against them (Cooper, 2000).

The sustainability of security awareness in business environments is directly related to the effectiveness of security communication within the workplace. Effective safety communication not only ensures that both employers and employees are informed about risks but also facilitates the integration of security awareness into business processes (Clarke, 1999). In this context, employers should not leave their security policies only on paper but should actively strive to create a security culture among their employees. An effective safety culture becomes possible when employees adopt safe behavioral habits and prioritize safety in their daily workflows (Zohar, 2002).

Material And Method

It aims to investigate the role of security awareness and employee behavior in creating a safe work environment. The methods used for the purpose of the study include qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques.

Existing literature on safety awareness and occupational health and safety culture was scanned; Previous studies examining the relationship between security communication, security awareness, and safe behaviors were examined. At this stage, relevant academic resources and reports were reviewed. In particular, research on the development of occupational safety culture was taken into account (Reason, 1997; Guldenmund, 2000; Cooper, 2000; Clarke, 1999; Zohar, 2002). The literature review was carried out to understand the relationship between security awareness and employee behavior and to identify gaps in knowledge on this subject.

As part of the research, a survey was conducted among individuals working in certain sectors. The survey was designed to obtain participants' opinions on security awareness, security communication, safe behaviors and workplace risks. The survey form was created using a 5-point Likert scale containing criteria regarding security culture and awareness. The number of participants was determined as approximately 200, and the surveys were distributed through online platforms.

Following the survey, focus group interviews were held with security experts and employees in the sector. In these meetings, suggestions and application experiences were shared to increase security awareness. The purpose of the meetings is to gain in-depth information on improving safety communication and safety culture.

The research findings are reported in a way that reveals the relationship between security awareness and employee behavior. A report sharing the results will be presented to professionals and relevant stakeholders in the field of occupational health and safety. This methodological approach aims to provide the necessary data to understand and improve the impact of security awareness and employee behavior in creating a safe work environment. The study aims to contribute to the determination of the strategies required to develop security culture.

Results

The survey was conducted to understand the role of security awareness, security communication and safe behavior in creating a safe work environment. The survey results provide important data on the security culture, awareness levels and behavioral habits of the participants. A detailed analysis of the results is presented below.

Participant Demographic Characteristics

The survey consisted of 200 participants in total, the demographic characteristics of these participants are as follows:

Gender:

- Woman: %45
- Man: %5

Age Range:

- 18-24 age:%20
- 25-34 age:%30
- 35-44 age:: %25
- 45 age and above: %25

Working Time:

- 0-1 year:%15
- 1-5 year: %35
- 5-10 year:%30
- 10 year and above: %20

Sector:

- Building: %30 - Manufacturing: %25 - Service: %20 - Other: %25

Security Awareness

The level of security awareness was measured through the answers given to the participants about the "ability to understand and apply security procedures". The results are as follows:

- **I Strongly Disagree:** %10
- **I disagree:** %15
- **I'm undecided:** %25
- **I agree:** %30
- **I Totally Agree:** %20

It is seen that 50% of the participants stated that they understood and implemented the security procedures, but 25% were undecided. This situation reveals the necessity of training programs to increase security awareness.

Security Communication

To evaluate the level of security communication, "Do I receive sufficient security information from employers and managers?" The question was asked. The results are as follows:

- **I Strongly Disagree:** %8
- **I disagree:** %12
- **I'm undecided:** %18
- **I agree:** %40
- **I Totally Agree:** %22

It is seen that 62% of the participants are satisfied with security communication. However, 20% stated that they did not receive sufficient information, indicating that security communication needs to be strengthened.

Safe Behaviors

Prevalence of safe behaviors “Do I use safety equipment consistently?” It was evaluated with the question: The results are as follows:

- **I Strongly Disagree:** %5
- **I disagree:** %10
- **I'm undecided:** %15
- **I agree:** %45
- **I Totally Agree:** %25

The fact that 70% of respondents used safety equipment indicates that this behavior is significantly ingrained in the workplace. However, the 15% undecided segment points out the necessity of education and awareness activities for behavioral change.

Relationship with Work Accidents

Participants were asked: "Have you had a work accident in the last year?" The question was asked. The results are as follows:

- **Yes:** %15 - **No:** %85

It was observed that 85% of the survey participants did not have a work accident in the last year, but 15% had a work accident. It is thought that the causes of accidents may be due to insufficient safety awareness and communication.

Conclusions

This study revealed the importance of security awareness, security communication, and safe behavior in creating a safe work environment. The survey results show that the majority of participants understand and follow security procedures. However, the deficiencies and instability in security communication reveal that the security culture needs to be further strengthened. In addition, it was concluded that the safe behavior habits of the participants were generally positive, but continuous training and awareness studies were needed to further reinforce these behaviors.

The low rate of occupational accidents shows that safety measures are effectively implemented, but 15% of accidents indicate areas where safety awareness and safety communication need to be strengthened. As a result, it is critical for managements to develop strategies that will increase the security awareness of employees in order to create a safe work environment.

Regular and systematic training programs should be implemented to increase employees' security awareness. In these trainings, topics such as security procedures, risk management and emergency plans should be addressed. Employers should establish an open and ongoing communication channel to make safety communication more effective. Employee feedback should be taken into account, and security policies should be updated to address this feedback.

Reward systems and safety performance evaluations should be implemented to encourage safe behavior. Employees should be rewarded when they demonstrate safe behavior. In order to create a safety culture in workplaces, it is important to make the leadership and management approach sensitive to security. Top management should promote the safety culture among employees by supporting the demonstration of safe behavior.

Surveys and evaluation studies should be conducted regularly to monitor the development of security culture, and improvements should be made in line with the results obtained.

Implementing these recommendations will play an important role in the process of creating a safe work environment and will contribute to the sustainability of the occupational health and safety culture. It is aimed to increase the safety awareness of employees, increase their safe behavior in the workplace and, as a result, minimize work accidents. As a result,

survey data reveal that security awareness in workplaces should be increased, the effectiveness of security communication should be ensured, and safe behaviors should be encouraged. In order to strengthen the occupational safety culture, it is essential for managements to develop strategies to eliminate deficiencies in these areas. Reducing occupational accidents and creating a safe work environment will be possible not only by applying existing safety procedures, but also by internalizing these procedures by employees and integrating them into daily work processes.

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