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JOB SAFETY AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN PORT HARCOURT.

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the relationship between job safety measures and employee performance in manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. Guided by three objectives, three research questions, and three hypotheses, the research adopted a survey design. The study's population comprised ten manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, with a target sample of 48 managers and supervisors. Due to the small size of the population, the study utilized the entire population as the sample. Data were collected through a well-structured questionnaire distributed randomly among employees, and instrument reliability was assessed using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient. Descriptive statistics, including measures of central tendency and dispersion, were employed to address the research questions, while t-statistics were used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings reveal significant correlations between safety training and task efficiency, safety awareness and adaptability, and safety incentives and work engagement. Specifically, safety incentives demonstrated a strong positive relationship with work engagement, indicating that effective incentive programs significantly enhance employee engagement and productivity. Based on these findings, the study concludes that robust safety measures are crucial for improving employee performance in manufacturing firms. Recommendations include implementing regular and comprehensive safety training programs to enhance task efficiency, fostering a culture of safety awareness to improve adaptability, and developing well-structured safety incentive programs to boost work engagement. These measures are expected to contribute to a safer and more productive work environment, ultimately benefiting organizational performance.

Keywords: Job Safety, Employee Performance, Safety Training, Safety Awareness, Task Efficiency.

INTRODUCTION

Employee performance in manufacturing firms is a critical determinant of productivity, efficiency, and overall business success. In recent years, there has been growing concern about the factors that influence performance, particularly within high-risk environments such as manufacturing. Employee performance is directly linked to not only the skills and motivation of the workforce but also to the working conditions, including job safety. Unsafe work environments can lead to accidents, injuries, and fatalities, which not only impact the physical well-being of employees but also hinder their ability to perform optimally.

In Port Harcourt, a hub for industrial activities in Nigeria, the issue of job safety has become increasingly prominent. The manufacturing sector, known for its hazardous conditions, presents significant risks to workers. These risks, if not adequately managed, can lead to a decline in employee morale, absenteeism, and a reduction in productivity (Smith & Eze, 2023). When employees perceive their work environment as unsafe, they are likely to experience higher levels of stress, which negatively impacts their focus and efficiency on the job. Furthermore, frequent accidents can lead to disruptions in the production process, as injured workers may require time off, and firms may face legal and financial consequences (Okoro & John, 2022).

The relationship between job safety and employee performance is therefore a critical area of concern for manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. While some firms have implemented safety measures, the effectiveness of these initiatives is often questioned. Inadequate safety protocols, poor enforcement of existing regulations, and a lack of safety culture within organizations contribute to ongoing safety challenges (Adebayo & Nwafor, 2024). These issues not only compromise the health and safety of employees but also threaten the overall performance and competitiveness of the manufacturing sector in the region.

Given the high stakes involved, it is imperative to investigate how job safety impacts employee performance in these manufacturing firms. Understanding this relationship can help in the development of more effective safety policies and practices that not only protect workers but also enhance their productivity and, by extension, the performance of the firms themselves. Despite the recognized importance of job safety in influencing employee performance, research on this topic within the context of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt remains limited. Previous studies have explored the general impact of workplace safety on employee outcomes, but many have focused on different sectors or regions, leaving a gap in understanding how these dynamics play out in the manufacturing industry in Port Harcourt.

For instance, Johnson and Obasi (2023) examined the correlation between safety practices and employee productivity in Nigerian oil and gas companies, highlighting that robust safety measures significantly reduce workplace accidents and improve employee morale. However, this study did not address the manufacturing sector, where the nature of risks and safety challenges differ significantly. Similarly, research by Adekunle and Amadi (2022) focused on construction firms in Lagos, emphasizing the importance of safety training in enhancing employee performance. While insightful, these findings cannot be directly applied to the manufacturing context in Port Harcourt, given the distinct operational hazards and job safetys prevalent in manufacturing firms. Moreover, existing literature often emphasizes the implementation of safety measures without sufficiently exploring how these measures are perceived by employees or how they influence day-to-day performance. Studies such as those by Uche and Bello (2023) have noted the importance of safety culture, but there remains a gap in understanding the specific relationship between safety perceptions and actual employee performance outcomes in manufacturing settings. This gap is particularly relevant in Port Harcourt, where rapid industrialization has outpaced the development of comprehensive safety regulations, leading to varied safety practices across firms.

The present study is therefore necessary to fill this gap by providing a focused examination of how job safety influences employee performance in the manufacturing sector in Port Harcourt. By addressing this gap, the study aims to contribute to both academic literature and practical interventions, offering insights that can help improve safety practices and, consequently, enhance employee performance in this critical sector.

Statement of the Problem

The unruly this study addresses is the persistent challenge of ensuring job safety in manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, which directly impacts employee performance. Despite the implementation of various safety protocols and regulations, many manufacturing firms in the region continue to experience high rates of workplace accidents and injuries, leading to a decline in employee morale and productivity (Okafor & Eze, 2023). Past efforts, such as mandatory safety training programs and the enforcement of occupational safety standards, have had limited success due to inconsistent enforcement and a lack of comprehensive safety culture within these organizations (Adebayo & Nwogu, 2024). Furthermore, many firms have focused on compliance rather than genuinely integrating safety into their operational practices, leading to gaps in both the perception and reality

of safety at work. This inadequate approach has left significant safety issues unresolved, particularly in how safety measures are communicated and perceived by employees, which can undermine their effectiveness (Johnson & Obasi, 2023). To address these shortcomings, it is crucial to adopt a more holistic approach that not only enforces safety regulations but also fosters a proactive safety culture that prioritizes the well-being of employees. This study aims to explore these issues in depth and provide recommendations for enhancing job safety to improve employee performance in the manufacturing sector in Port Harcourt.

Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of the tudy was to examine the relationship between job safety and employee performance in manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. The specific objectives of study were to:

i. examine the relationship between safety training and task efficiency of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt,
ii. ascertain the relationship between safety awareness and adaptability of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt,
iii. examine the relationship between safety incentives and work engagement of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

Significance of Study

This study is significant as it addresses the critical relationship between job safety and employee performance within manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, a sector that is vital to the region's economic development. By examining how safety practices influence productivity and employee well-being, this research will provide valuable insights that can inform both policy and practice. Manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt will be among the primary beneficiaries of this study. The findings can help these organizations identify gaps in their current safety protocols and offer practical recommendations for enhancing workplace safety. Improved safety measures are expected to lead to better employee performance, reduced accident rates, and lower associated costs, such as those related to medical expenses, legal liabilities, and downtime.

Employees: Employees in the manufacturing sector will also benefit from this study. By highlighting the importance of job safety and proposing strategies to improve it, the study aims to create safer work environments. This can lead to increased job satisfaction, reduced stress, and improved overall well-being for workers, which in turn can boost their productivity and job commitment. Policymakers and regulatory bodies will find the study valuable in refining and enforcing occupational safety standards. The research can provide evidence-based insights that support the development of more effective safety regulations and enforcement mechanisms tailored to the specific challenges faced by manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

Academic: The academic community will benefit from this study as it fills a gap in the existing literature on job safety and employee performance in the manufacturing sector. The study's findings can contribute to ongoing debates and provide a foundation for future research on occupational safety in similar industrial contexts.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Conceptual Review

Concept of Job Safety

Job safety, particularly in the context of manufacturing firms, is a critical concept that has garnered significant attention in both academic and industrial circles. The concept of job safety encompasses the policies, procedures, and practices put in place by organizations to protect their employees from workplace hazards and ensure a safe working environment. In manufacturing firms, where the nature of work often involves heavy machinery, exposure to hazardous materials, and repetitive tasks, the importance of job safety cannot be overstated. The concept of job safety in manufacturing firms includes several key components: the identification and mitigation of workplace hazards, the implementation of safety training programs, the enforcement of safety regulations, and the promotion of a safety culture within the organization. These elements are designed to minimize the risk of accidents, injuries, and fatalities, which are more prevalent in manufacturing settings due to the inherent dangers associated with industrial operations (Eze & Obi, 2023).

According to Adebayo and Nwafor (2024), the complexity and scale of manufacturing operations in Port Harcourt necessitate stringent safety measures to protect workers from potential hazards. One of the key aspects of job safety in manufacturing is hazard identification, which involves recognizing potential sources of harm in the workplace. This process is crucial in manufacturing environments, where workers may be exposed to a variety of risks, including mechanical hazards from machinery, chemical hazards from toxic substances, and ergonomic hazards from repetitive motions or heavy lifting. Eze and Obi (2023) note that effective hazard identification is the foundation of any job safety program, as it allows organizations to develop targeted interventions to mitigate these risks. Safety training is another vital component of job safety in manufacturing firms. Training programs are designed to equip employees with the knowledge and skills needed to perform their tasks safely and to respond appropriately in the event of an emergency. In Port Harcourt, where many manufacturing firms operate with limited resources, safety training can be challenging to implement consistently. However, studies have shown that regular and comprehensive safety training can significantly reduce the incidence of workplace accidents (Adekunle & Amadi, 2022). Such training typically covers topics such as proper machine operation, the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), and emergency response procedures.

Dimensions of Job Safety

Safety Training

Safety training is a crucial dimension of job safety, particularly in manufacturing firms, where employees are often exposed to various occupational hazards. The concept of safety training encompasses the systematic process of educating employees on how to identify, avoid, and respond to workplace hazards. This training is designed to equip workers with the knowledge and skills necessary to perform their tasks safely and to minimize the risk of accidents and injuries. In the context of manufacturing, where the use of heavy machinery, exposure to toxic substances, and engagement in physically demanding tasks are common, safety training is not only a regulatory requirement but also a vital component of operational efficiency and employee well-being.

Safety Awareness

Safety awareness is a critical dimension of job safety, particularly in the manufacturing sector, where employees are frequently exposed to various occupational hazards. The concept of safety awareness refers to the understanding and consciousness that employees have regarding potential risks in the workplace and the importance of following safety protocols to mitigate those risks. Safety awareness involves not only recognizing the existence of hazards but also understanding the correct procedures for avoiding them and knowing how to respond in case of an emergency. In manufacturing firms, where the work environment is often dynamic and filled with potential dangers, maintaining high levels of safety awareness is essential for preventing accidents and ensuring the well-being of employees.

Safety Incentives

Safety incentives are an important dimension of job safety, particularly in manufacturing firms, where the nature of work often involves significant risks. The concept of safety incentives refers to the rewards and recognition programs that organizations implement to encourage employees to adhere to safety protocols and engage in safe work practices. Safety incentives can take various forms, including monetary bonuses, recognition awards, additional time off, or other tangible benefits. The underlying goal of safety incentives is to motivate employees to prioritize safety in their daily tasks, thereby reducing the incidence of workplace accidents and injuries.

In manufacturing firms, where employees frequently interact with machinery, chemicals, and other hazardous materials, maintaining high safety standards is crucial. According to Eze and Obi (2023), safety incentives serve as a positive reinforcement mechanism, encouraging employees to consistently follow safety procedures. When employees know that their safe behavior will be rewarded, they are more likely to be vigilant about safety, which can lead to a reduction in accidents and associated costs for the organization. This is particularly important in manufacturing settings, where the financial and human costs of accidents can be substantial.

Concept of Employee Performance

The term "employee performance" refers to the effectiveness with which employees carry out their job responsibilities and contribute to the achievement of organizational goals. In the context of manufacturing firms, employee performance is often measured by factors such as productivity, efficiency, quality of output, adherence to safety protocols, and overall contribution to the company's objectives. Given the competitive and often resource-intensive nature of manufacturing, optimizing employee performance is essential for maintaining profitability, ensuring product quality, and achieving operational excellence. The significance of employee performance in manufacturing firms is underscored by the direct impact it has on production processes. Manufacturing firms rely heavily on the consistent and efficient performance of their employees to meet production targets and maintain product quality standards. According to Johnson and Obasi (2023), high levels of employee performance lead to increased productivity, reduced waste, and lower operational costs. Conversely, poor performance can result in production delays, increased defect rates, and higher costs due to rework or scrap. Therefore, the performance of employees is a key determinant of a manufacturing firm's ability to compete in the marketplace and achieve long-term success.

Measures of Employee Performance

Task Efficiency

Task efficiency refers to the extent to which employees can complete their assigned tasks within a specified time frame, using the least amount of resources while maintaining high quality standards. In manufacturing settings, where production processes are often standardized and time-sensitive, task efficiency is a key determinant of productivity, cost-effectiveness, and overall organizational performance. Task efficiency is integral to employee performance because it directly impacts the productivity levels of manufacturing firms. According to Johnson and Obasi (2023), task efficiency in manufacturing is often measured by the speed and accuracy with which employees can complete their tasks without compromising on quality. Efficient task execution ensures that production schedules are met, and resources are optimally utilized, leading to reduced operational costs and higher profit margins. For instance, when employees complete tasks efficiently, the firm can produce more units within the same time frame, thereby increasing output and meeting market demands more effectively.

Adaptability

Adaptability is increasingly recognized as a crucial measure of employee performance in manufacturing firms, reflecting an individual's ability to respond effectively to changes, challenges, and new demands in the workplace. The concept of adaptability encompasses a range of behaviors and attitudes that enable employees to adjust their work methods, skills, and thinking to meet the evolving needs of the organization. In the dynamic and often unpredictable environment of manufacturing, where technological advancements, market shifts, and operational disruptions are common, adaptability is essential for maintaining productivity and ensuring the long-term success of the firm. In manufacturing firms, adaptability is particularly important because the industry is subject to constant change. Advances in technology, such as automation and robotics, require employees to learn new skills and adapt to new ways of working. Johnson and Obasi (2023) argue that employees who are adaptable are better equipped to handle these changes, as they can quickly acquire new knowledge, adjust their work processes, and embrace new tools and technologies. This ability to adapt not only enhances individual performance but also contributes to the overall efficiency and competitiveness of the organization.

Work Engagement

Work engagement is a critical measure of employee performance, particularly in manufacturing firms where the demands of the job can be physically and mentally challenging. The concept of work engagement refers to the degree of enthusiasm, dedication, and involvement that an employee exhibits towards their work. It is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption, where vigor reflects high levels of energy and resilience, dedication denotes a strong sense of significance and pride in work, and absorption refers to being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work. In manufacturing settings, where employees often perform repetitive tasks in potentially hazardous environments, work engagement is essential for maintaining productivity, ensuring quality, and promoting safety.

Relationship Between Job Safety and Employee Performance

The relationship between job safety and employee performance in manufacturing firms is a critical area of study, given the inherent risks associated with industrial operations. Job safety refers to the practices, policies, and procedures that protect employees from workplace hazards, including physical

injuries, exposure to harmful substances, and unsafe working conditions. Employee performance, on the other hand, encompasses the effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity with which employees carry out their tasks. The link between job safety and employee performance is increasingly acknowledged as crucial, as ensuring a safe work environment can significantly impact the overall performance of employees and the organization as a whole.

A safe work environment is fundamental to sustaining high levels of employee performance. In manufacturing settings, where workers often operate heavy machinery, handle hazardous materials, and perform physically demanding tasks, safety concerns are paramount. When employees perceive their work environment as safe, they are more likely to be engaged, motivated, and productive. According to Johnson and Obasi (2023), there is a positive correlation between job safety and employee performance, as employees who feel secure in their work environment are more likely to focus on their tasks, leading to higher productivity and reduced error rates. Conversely, when employees perceive their work environment as unsafe, it can lead to stress, anxiety, and decreased performance.

The impact of job safety on employee performance is multifaceted. One key aspect is the reduction of workplace accidents and injuries. Manufacturing firms with strong safety protocols and practices are less likely to experience accidents, which can disrupt operations and reduce employee morale. Eze and Obi (2023) argue that reducing the frequency and severity of workplace accidents not only protects employees' well-being but also ensures continuity in production processes, thereby maintaining high levels of performance. Moreover, when employees are confident that their safety is a priority, they are more likely to be committed to their work, leading to improved performance outcomes.

Theoretical Review
This research paper is anchored on Social Exchange Theory.

Social Exchange Theory
Social Exchange Theory, developed by sociologist George Homans in 1958, is a social psychological and sociological perspective that explains social behavior in terms of the exchange of resources, rewards, and costs between individuals or groups. The theory posits that human interactions and relationships are formed and maintained based on the perceived balance of these exchanges, where individuals seek to maximize rewards and minimize costs. In essence, Social Exchange Theory suggests that people engage in social interactions with the expectation of reciprocity, where positive actions are likely to lead to positive returns.

The central assumption of Social Exchange Theory is that human relationships are built on the principles of reward, cost, and reciprocity. Individuals weigh the potential benefits and drawbacks of any interaction and are motivated to maintain relationships that offer the greatest net rewards. When applied to the workplace, this theory suggests that employees' behavior and performance are influenced by the perceived fairness and value of the exchange between themselves and their employers. If employees feel that they are receiving adequate rewards (such as a safe working environment, fair compensation, and recognition), they are likely to reciprocate with positive behaviors, such as increased commitment, engagement, and performance. Conversely, if they perceive

the costs to outweigh the rewards (such as working in unsafe conditions or being undervalued), they may reduce their effort or withdraw from the relationship altogether.

In the context of job safety and employee performance in manufacturing firms, Social Exchange Theory provides a useful framework for understanding how safety practices impact employee behavior. Manufacturing environments often involve hazardous conditions, and employees place a high value on their safety and well-being. When employers prioritize job safety, they signal to their employees that they are valued and that their well-being is a priority. This creates a positive exchange relationship, where employees feel a sense of obligation to reciprocate by performing well, adhering to safety protocols, and remaining loyal to the company.

The implications of Social Exchange Theory for the study of job safety and employee performance in manufacturing firms are significant. First, the theory highlights the importance of ensuring that employees perceive the exchange relationship as fair and beneficial. If employees believe that their safety is being compromised or that their contributions are not adequately recognized, they may disengage, leading to lower performance and higher turnover. On the other hand, when employees feel that their safety and well-being are prioritized, they are more likely to exhibit higher levels of performance, commitment, and engagement. This reinforces the idea that job safety is not just a legal or ethical obligation but also a strategic factor that can enhance employee performance and organizational outcomes.

Furthermore, Social Exchange Theory suggests that fostering a positive safety culture in manufacturing firms can strengthen the exchange relationship between employers and employees. By investing in safety training, providing the necessary protective equipment, and creating an environment where employees feel safe and valued, employers can build trust and loyalty among their workforce. This, in turn, can lead to improved performance, as employees are more motivated to contribute to the success of the organization when they perceive that their safety and well-being are being prioritized.

Empirical Review

Adebayo and Nwafor (2022) this study investigates the impact of job safety on employee performance in the Nigerian manufacturing sector, with a focus on large-scale manufacturing firms in Lagos State. Using a mixed-methods approach, the researchers surveyed 500 employees across five major manufacturing firms and conducted in-depth interviews with safety managers. The data revealed that 76% of employees perceive a direct link between the safety measures implemented by their employers and their ability to perform optimally. Statistical analysis showed a positive correlation ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$) between job safety practices, such as the provision of protective equipment and regular safety training, and key performance indicators, including productivity and error rates. The qualitative findings further indicated that employees who felt their safety was prioritized reported higher job satisfaction and lower levels of stress, which contributed to enhanced performance. The study concludes that job safety is a critical determinant of employee performance in the Nigerian manufacturing sector, and recommends the implementation of comprehensive safety programs to improve overall productivity.

Eze and Obi (2023) this empirical study examines the effect of job safety on employee performance within manufacturing industries in Port Harcourt. Data were collected from 400 employees across seven manufacturing firms through structured questionnaires, focusing on their perceptions of

workplace safety and its impact on their job performance. The results showed that 68% of respondents agreed that the implementation of stringent safety measures, such as hazard identification and risk assessment, significantly improved their work efficiency. A regression analysis indicated a significant positive relationship ($\beta = 0.53$, $p < 0.05$) between job safety practices and employee productivity levels. Furthermore, the study found that firms with higher safety standards reported a 15% reduction in workplace accidents, which in turn led to a 20% increase in overall employee performance. The findings suggest that improving job safety in manufacturing industries not only protects employees but also enhances their performance, thus benefiting organizational outcomes.

Uche and Bello (2023) this study evaluates the relationship between workplace safety and employee efficiency in Nigerian manufacturing companies, with a specific focus on firms located in Abuja. The researchers conducted a survey of 350 employees across five manufacturing companies and analyzed the data using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The findings revealed a strong positive relationship ($\beta = 0.67$, $p < 0.01$) between workplace safety practices, such as regular safety audits and employee safety training, and employee efficiency. The study also found that firms with rigorous safety protocols experienced a 25% increase in employee task completion rates and a 30% reduction in error margins. Qualitative data from interviews with safety officers highlighted that consistent communication about safety measures and the visible commitment of management to safety played a crucial role in enhancing employee performance. The study concludes that workplace safety is a key driver of employee efficiency in Nigerian manufacturing companies, and recommends that firms invest in ongoing safety training and regular safety audits to sustain high performance levels.

Okafor and Eze (2022) this research explores the role of safety culture in enhancing employee performance in manufacturing firms in Enugu. The study employed a cross-sectional survey design, collecting data from 450 employees working in four different manufacturing firms. Using factor analysis, the study identified key components of safety culture, including management commitment to safety, employee involvement in safety decisions, and continuous safety training. The analysis revealed that these factors collectively accounted for 52% of the variance in employee performance. Moreover, the study found a significant correlation ($r = 0.71$, $p < 0.01$) between a strong safety culture and high levels of employee engagement, which directly influenced productivity and quality of work. Employees who perceived their workplace as having a strong safety culture were more likely to report higher job satisfaction and demonstrate a proactive approach to their tasks. The findings suggest that fostering a robust safety culture is essential for improving employee performance in manufacturing firms.

Adekunle and Amadi (2022) this study investigates the impact of safety training on employee performance in the manufacturing sector, with a particular focus on firms in Ibadan. The researchers conducted a quasi-experimental study involving 300 employees from three manufacturing companies. The participants were divided into two groups: one received extensive safety training, while the other group did not. The results demonstrated that the group that received safety training showed a 35% improvement in performance metrics, such as task accuracy and speed, compared to the control group. Additionally, the trained group reported a 20% decrease in workplace accidents and a 25% increase in job satisfaction. The data analysis also indicated a significant positive relationship ($r = 0.64$, $p < 0.05$) between safety training and employee performance. The study concludes that safety

training is a critical factor in enhancing employee performance in the manufacturing sector and recommends that companies invest in regular and comprehensive safety training programs.

Johnson and Obasi (2023) this study assesses the link between job safety practices and employee productivity in manufacturing firms in Kano, Nigeria. The researchers conducted a cross-sectional survey of 370 employees from six manufacturing firms, using both quantitative and qualitative methods to gather data. The results indicated that 72% of employees believed that job safety practices, such as the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and regular safety drills, had a direct impact on their productivity. A path analysis showed that job safety practices accounted for 45% of the variance in employee productivity, with a significant positive effect (β0.58, $p < 0.01$). The qualitative data further revealed that employees who felt protected by their safety equipment and practices were more focused and less likely to make errors, leading to higher productivity levels. The study concludes that job safety practices are crucial for maintaining high productivity in manufacturing firms and recommends that management continuously review and update safety protocols to align with best practices.

Summary of Literature Review

The literature review reveals a strong consensus on the critical role of job safety in enhancing employee performance within manufacturing firms. It highlights that various dimension of job safety, such as safety training, safety awareness, and safety incentives, are essential in fostering a secure work environment that directly influences employee productivity, task efficiency, and overall job satisfaction. The review also underscores the importance of a well-established safety culture in promoting employee engagement and reducing workplace accidents. Furthermore, it suggests that when employees perceive their safety as a priority, they are more likely to exhibit higher levels of performance, adaptability, and commitment to organizational goals. Overall, the literature emphasizes that job safety is not only a fundamental right of employees but also a strategic tool for improving organizational performance in the manufacturing sector.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive research design in obtaining data needed for this study. Given that the study focused on job safety as stimulant of employee performance in manufacturing companies in Rivers state, the survey method is considered appropriate to realize the goal of the research exercise. The population of study in this research consist of managers and supervisor of the selected manufacturing companies i.e. Berger Paint, La Sien Bottling Company, Demcok Paints Limited, Brightway Glove Ltd. Moreover, the study made use of purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is adjudged most suitable because respondents were selected to take part in the study must met the following criteria: Possession of minimum of O'level certificate; they have used digital banking platform for the past one year; and they have attained the age of 16years and above Also, the population was considered small, the researcher thus used the whole population as the sample size.

Presentation of Questionnaire Distribution

Particulars of questionnaire	Frequency	Percentage
Copies of questionnaire administered	48	100
Copies of questionnaire retrieved	45	93.7

Copies of questionnaire not returned	3	6.3
Copies of unusable questionnaire	2	4.1
Copies of usable questionnaire	43	89.6

Research survey, 2024

From table 4.1, it is observed that out of 48 questionnaire that were administered to respondents, 3 questionnaire representing 6.3 percent were not returned. The 45 questionnaire returned represent 93.7 percent. Furthermore, 43 representing 89.6 percentage of the retrieved questionnaire were suitable for data analysis, while 2 copies of questionnaire representing 4.1 percent were not suitable for data analysis.

Relationship between Job safety and measures of Employee Performance of manufacturing companies Table 4.16 Correlations between Job safety and measures of Employee Performance

		Employee Performance	Task Efficiency	Adaptability	Work Engagement
Job Safety	Pearson Correlation	1	.372**	.691**	.691**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	45	45	45	45
Safety Training	Pearson Correlation	.372**	1	.120*	.120*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.037	.037
	N	45	45	45	45
Safety Awareness	Pearson Correlation	.691**	.120*	1	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.037		.000
	N	45	45	45	45
Safety Incentives	Pearson Correlation	.691**	.120*	1.000**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.037	.000	
	N	45	45	45	45

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Research Data 2024, (SPSS output version 26.0)

Ho$_1$: There is no significant relationship between safety training and task efficiency of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt***.***

The correlation table presents the relationship between job safety and various measures of employee performance in manufacturing companies. The Pearson correlation coefficient for safety training and task efficiency is **.120** with a significance level (Sig.) of **.037**. Although the correlation coefficient is positive, indicating a weak relationship between safety training and task efficiency, the significance level is below **.05**, meaning that the relationship is statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

However, when interpreting the relationship between safety training and task efficiency, it's important to consider the strength and practical significance of the correlation. A correlation of **.120** suggests a weak positive association, implying that any changes in safety training are not strongly associated with changes in task efficiency. While the statistical significance indicates that there is a relationship, the strength of the relationship is not substantial enough to conclude that safety training has a significant impact on task efficiency in practical terms. Therefore, from a practical standpoint, the statement that there is no significant relationship between safety training and task efficiency is justified, given the weak correlation coefficient, despite its statistical significance at the 0.05 level.

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between safety awareness and adaptability of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt***.***

The correlation data presented in Table 4.16 illustrates the relationship between job safety and various measures of employee performance in manufacturing companies. The table shows Pearson correlation coefficients and significance levels for different variables, including job safety, task efficiency, adaptability, and work engagement, alongside dimensions such as safety training, safety awareness, and safety incentives.

The correlation between safety awareness and adaptability is .120, with a significance level (Sig. 2-tailed) of .037. Given that the significance value is below the threshold of 0.05, it indicates that there is a statistically significant relationship between safety awareness and adaptability at the 5% significance level. This contradicts the statement that there is no significant relationship between safety awareness and adaptability of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

Ho_3: There is no significant relationship between safety incentives and work engagement of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt***.***

The data presented in Table 4.16 shows the correlation coefficients between job safety and various measures of employee performance, including task efficiency, adaptability, and work engagement in manufacturing companies. The table indicates the Pearson correlation coefficients along with their significance levels (2-tailed) and sample size (N=45) for each variable pairing.

Looking at the relationship between safety incentives and work engagement, the Pearson correlation coefficient is 1.000, which suggests a perfect correlation between these two variables. The significance level (Sig. 2-tailed) for this relationship is 0.000, indicating that the correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This result implies that safety incentives and work engagement are highly related in the context of the studied manufacturing firms.

The statement that "there is no significant relationship between safety incentives and work engagement of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt" is not supported by the data. On the contrary, the correlation coefficient of 1.000 and its associated significance level confirm that there is a significant and strong relationship between safety incentives and work engagement. This suggests that as safety incentives increase or improve, there is a corresponding increase in work engagement among employees in the manufacturing sector in Port Harcourt.

Discussion of Findings

The analysis of the correlation between job safety and measures of employee performance in manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt reveals significant relationships across several dimensions. Job safety, as represented by safety training, safety awareness, and safety incentives, shows a strong correlation with measures of employee performance such as task efficiency, adaptability, and work engagement. The Pearson correlation values indicate that there are significant positive relationships between these variables, suggesting that enhancing job safety practices can positively influence employee performance in manufacturing firms. Job safety demonstrated a moderate positive correlation with task efficiency ($r = .372$, $p < .01$), indicating that when job safety

practices are improved, employees tend to perform their tasks more efficiently. This finding aligns with the study by Griffin and Neal (2000), who argued that a safer work environment reduces the likelihood of accidents and interruptions, thereby enhancing employees' task efficiency. Similarly, safety awareness is highly correlated with work engagement ($r = .691$, $p < .01$), signifying that employees who are more aware of safety protocols are more likely to be engaged in their work. This is consistent with the findings of Tucker, Chmiel, and Turner (2008), who noted that employees who perceive their workplace as safe tend to be more committed and engaged.

The data also reveal that safety training has a positive yet moderate correlation with adaptability ($r = .120$, $p < .05$), indicating that safety training programs may contribute to employees' ability to adapt to changing situations in the workplace. This result is in line with the work of Mearns, Whitaker, and Flin (2003), who found that continuous safety training enables employees to adapt better to changes, thereby improving overall organizational performance. Moreover, the findings show a very strong correlation between safety awareness and safety incentives ($r = 1.000$, $p <$ .01), as well as between safety incentives and work engagement ($r = .691$, $p < .01$). This suggests that implementing safety incentives, such as bonuses or rewards for adhering to safety standards, enhances employees' awareness and engagement in the workplace. The correlation values imply that safety incentives are not just motivational tools but also crucial for fostering a culture of safety, which in turn, contributes to higher levels of engagement among employees. These findings resonate with the research conducted by Zohar (2002), who highlighted that safety incentives can create a positive safety climate, leading to greater employee involvement and improved performance outcomes.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The data indicates a strong positive correlation between job safety, particularly safety incentives, and work engagement. This relationship suggests that when employees perceive that their safety is prioritized and rewarded, they become more engaged, motivated, and committed to their work roles. Safety awareness and training also show positive correlations with employee performance measures, highlighting the importance of continuous safety education and consciousness in maintaining high levels of task efficiency and adaptability among employees. Overall, the study concludes that job safety is a significant determinant of employee performance in the manufacturing sector. Organizations that prioritize safety and implement effective safety measures are better positioned to enhance employee engagement, efficiency, and adaptability, leading to better overall organizational performance. These findings underscore the importance of integrating safety as a core component of human resource management strategies to achieve sustainable growth and productivity in the manufacturing industry.

Based on the findings, the following are the recommendations of the study;

1. Manufacturing firms should prioritize regular and comprehensive safety training programs for their employees. These training sessions should focus on equipping employees with the necessary skills and knowledge to identify, manage, and mitigate potential hazards in the workplace.
2. Manufacturing firms to foster a culture of safety awareness at all organizational levels. This can be achieved through regular safety awareness campaigns, workshops, and communication strategies that reinforce the importance of safety in day-to-day operations.
3. Manufacturing firms should implement or enhance safety incentive programs. These incentives can be in the form of financial rewards, recognition programs, or non-monetary benefits such as additional time off for employees who demonstrate exemplary safety practices.

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