

# Health And Safety At Work In Companies In The Interior Of Rio De Janeiro.

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## Abstract:

The concern of organizations with occupational health and safety in the workplace is fundamental to reduce the risk of accidents at work. Although companies have concerns about the occupational health and safety of their employees, a management focused on strategies and measures is necessary to be effective in reducing accidents in the workplace. This study aims to observe and analyze the actions to reduce the risk factors that affect the occupational health and safety of its employees. It is characterized as a descriptive research due to the use of a questionnaire to discover the negative and positive factors in the perception of employees regarding occupational health and safety. Through the questionnaire, responses were obtained reporting some positive points such as concern with physical health as care with posture and safety required for the activities. On the other hand, on the negative points, stress and mental health problems are reported. Based on the questionnaires, it can be observed that the companies where the interviewees work have a certain level of concern with occupational health and safety, but they still need to identify the particular factors of each one so that they can improve their management.

**Keywords:** Occupational Health and Safety; Companies; Questionnaires; Employees

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Date of Submission: 09-09-2023

Date of Acceptance: 19-09-2023

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The employees are currently inserted in a scenario of high concern for their health and safety in the work environment, thus, companies are concerned about following the norms and ISO to prevent any accident at work. With this, the concern with occupational health and safety of its employees has been discussed and applied in management.

As Chiavenato (2014, pp. 408 and 409) assures us, occupational safety "(...) is the set of technical, educational, medical and psychological measures that are used to prevent accidents (...)". In this context, it is clear that companies are concerned about the physical and mental health of the employee and with safety as well, exercising measures that can reduce or eradicate the risk of accidents in their work environment, whether they are workers or visitors.

In general, occupational health and safety in the workplace are implemented through management, aiming at which strategies and measures should be used to zero or reduce occupational accidents. Thus, this paper focuses on studying the implementation of occupational health and safety, identifying its positive and negative points.

Given what was previously presented about occupational health and safety and its management, as well as its important implementation in companies to reduce or eliminate the risk of accidents, this study sought to gather data and information to answer the following research problem: Are companies concerned about occupational health and safety?

According to Barreto (2011), the Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OHSMS) controls and minimizes the risks at work, thus reducing the accident rates and losses caused, besides contributing to a healthier work environment. The author makes it clear that with the effective implementation of the OSHMS, it is possible to benefit the physical and mental health of employees and increases the feeling of working safely.

The general objective of this research is to observe and analyze whether companies are implementing or even observing these risk factors that affect the occupational health and safety of their employees. In this way, we can list similarities between companies in the implementation of the Management System and how they can deal with it so that there is an improvement in the health and safety of their employees.

In a highly competitive market where the company's image is associated with its preventive measures, the occupational health and safety of its employees become a concern for their work environment, because it is something that affects not only physically but also mentally. Therefore, in this context, there must exist in the company's management focused on concern for health and safety at work.

For the development of this work, both bibliographic and field research was used. The bibliographical research was through articles and books to guide occupational health and safety and its management within the company, whether small, medium, or large. The field research was carried out through a questionnaire applied through Google Forms to find out the positive and negative aspects that the interviewees ponder about occupational health and safety in their companies. Twenty questionnaires were sent to different companies in the interior of Rio de Janeiro.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Occupational safety presents as the main objective, the prevention of accidents and exclusion of any chance of occupational accidents. Prevention goes beyond the awareness of the worker in using personal protective equipment (PPE), but also in training, and in the company knowing how to identify unsafe conditions in the work environment (Freitas et al, 2016).

According to Mendes and Dias (1991, p.32), "the term occupational health and safety stems from the succession of the term occupational medicine in the period of the Industrial Revolution," since during this period, workers were subjected to unhealthy working conditions and had no rights such as sick pay and had to work even though they were not in healthy physical condition. Moreover, another example of what happened in this period is that children worked to help their families get food, a fact that today we can frame as child exploitation.

In this context, it is clear that this term - occupational health and safety - arose due to the need to obtain healthy conditions in the work environment, i.e., it is a sign that there is, finally, an advance over the years, showing that companies are currently concerned about the occupational health and safety of workers, in addition to the regulatory standards (NR).

It can be said that occupational health and safety aims to protect employees through norms within the work environment. In this context, it is clear that there are nowadays, concern from companies regarding mental and physical health and safety in the work environment so that accidents and absences do not happen. As mentioned by the author Chiavenato (2014) Quality of Life at Work involves the physical, environmental and psychological aspects, where it is taken into account the well-being of employees, but also their productivity.

In theory, the company should be concerned with the well-being and safety of the worker, because if this does not happen, the worker is protected by ISO 45001 and also by the various regulatory norms (NRs) to protect him. In other words, it is not only about the use of PPEs, but also about the mental well-being of each worker. The inspection, for example, of PPEs is fundamental, because the non-use or incorrect handling can unfortunately cause serious accidents and even the death of an employee.

"The positive effects resulting from the organization of occupational safety and health systems for organizations in terms of reduction of hazards and risks, as well as productivity, are being recognized by governments, companies and workers. These OHS management system guidelines established by the ILO have been addressed and defined at the international level by these groups representing the industry chain". (MORAES, 2005, p. 65)

The author makes it clear in the previous quote, that the benefits that occupational health and safety offer to both workers and companies is fundamental in preventing accidents and eliminating the risks of tragedies or light and serious accidents happening within the work environment.

For all these reasons it is evident how important occupational health and safety management is, taking into consideration the physical and mental health of employees. To have a good implementation, companies are guided by regulatory standards and ISO 4001 to create their internal policies.

## **III. METHODOLOGY**

According to Gil (2008), research is a formal and systematic process that aims to develop the scientific method, intending to discover answers to problems through scientific procedures.

Data analysis in experimental research and surveys is essentially quantitative. This is not the case, however, with research defined as field studies, case studies, action research, or participant research. In these, the analytical procedures are primarily qualitative in nature (Gil, 2008).

Due to the use of questionnaires with predominantly closed questions for data collection, this research had a quantitative approach to data treatment. Due to the nature of the study of stressors, it seeks to identify and list how the interviewees deal with them.

Souza, Santos, and Dias (2013, p.31) characterize applied research as generating "knowledge for practical application directed to the solution of scientific problems". To better explore this research, it was observed that it is classified as descriptive research. This is due to the use of a questionnaire to discover the

negative and positive factors concerning occupational health and safety.

Descriptive research, according to Prodanov and Freitas (2013, p.15) is "when the researcher only records and describes the facts without interfering in them. It aims to describe the characteristics of a certain population or phenomenon or the establishment of relationships between variables".

The instrument for the collection used in this article was the questionnaire, Prodanov and Freitas (2013, p.17) characterize it as: "The questionnaire, in a research, is an instrument or program for data collection". Thus, aiming at collecting data in a clear way to obtain a better and deeper analysis and thus get the answer sought by the questioning raised in the research.

The selection of the interviewees occurred by chance, where a link to the questionnaire was sent to employees from different companies and sectors. The questionnaire took into consideration whether people work in the public or private sector because this way we can identify if there are different stressors in the most diverse environments.

Concerning the academic education of the interviewees, all of them have completed higher education in the most variable areas of study, and some have completed a Master's degree.

After applying the questionnaires, the data were analyzed and organized, some in tables, for better analysis. Using the qualitative method, which according to Creswell and Creswell (2021. p.25), defines the process as: "data is collected with an instrument that measures attitudes, and this information is analyzed using scientific procedures".

In general, the questions aimed to observe and analyze, among other things, how the respondents deal with the factors that cause stress in their work, and to identify these factors. In this way, we were able to find both negative and positive factors in the management of occupational health and safety in companies.

#### **IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE DATA**

In this topic, the analysis of the information obtained through the questionnaires applied will be exposed. The results described aim, primarily, to achieve the objective of this work, which is to list the positive and negative factors that employees observe about occupational health and safety in their work environment. The data collected were enumerated and tabulated using Excel spreadsheets.

Initially, the employee profile data is presented, taking into consideration categories such as gender, age group, education, position, time in the position, and how long each participant has been with the company.

Regarding the gender of the volunteers, from the eight completed questionnaires, the following result can be pointed out: the characterization by gender is unequally divided, that is, 87% identify themselves as male and only 13% as female.

Regarding the age range of the interviewees, about 50% of the interviewees are in the 26 to 31 age group, generally, this employee profile is in a period of fixation in the company. The age range of 20 to 25 years presents 37%, this age group is usually at the beginning of their career and maybe a trainee. In the 32 to 37 age bracket, 13% are found, this bracket presents some time of experience and consequently greater demands because they have a greater notion in identifying a possible risk of accident in the workplace.

We can observe in the interview answers that 100% of the interviewees present the marital status of single. In addition, none of them have children. Thus, the profile found is that they are single men and women without children having an average age of approximately 28 years (average of 27.75 years).

The interviewees have a variety of positions in their companies, they are: Teachers; Educational Designers; Diagramming Managers; Laboratory Analysts; MEI, and Marketing Analysts. In this way, we can have a broad view of various sectors of the companies and how they approach occupational health and safety.

It is observed the time that the interviewees are exercising their position, about 13% are with more than three years of performance in the position, in this range are the employees who have more experience and knowledge about the activities performed and how to perform the activities safely. Below one year and one to three years, 37% and 50%, respectively, and less than one year may not present enough knowledge to identify and report a possible risk of an occupational accident.

We can observe that with time in the company, 50% have been with the company for four to eight years, i.e., in this range are the employees who have more experience and knowledge of the company and have more ease in identifying and reporting to those responsible a certain risk of an accident. Those with less than one year and those with one to four years have respectively 12% and 38% of the interviewees. On the other hand, 17% are the interviewees that have less than one year in the company and may not find it easy to identify the occupational health and safety management present in the company.

The questionnaire also included two questions referring to the positive and negative factors that the interviewees identify in their work environment. It is worth mentioning that, as discussed in the theoretical reference, occupational health represents both mental and physical health, so each person interprets it differently.

The first question was: "What are the main positive aspects of occupational health and safety in your company?" as answers, several different factors were cited by the interviewees, as we will report below: "The

company provides footrests and comfortable chairs"; "Regular breaks"; "University structure"; "Coexistence with research peers"; "Work via home office"; "Provision of necessary PPE's"; "Specific health plan for servers"; "Clean environment, air-conditioned and illuminated".

The factors mentioned above are perceived by the interviewees in their work environments, generating comfort so that they can carry out their activities safely.

The second and final question was, "What are the main negative aspects of occupational health and safety in your company?" and several different factors were cited by the interviewees, these are: "There is no protection from the sun or refrigeration of the rooms, in this period of January it is necessary to reduce the working time to try to minimize the impact of the heat, which negatively affects those who cannot make the established schedule"; "High workload in the same position, often leading to physical problems"; "High need for productivity, bringing a heavier and sometimes negative mental load"; "None at the moment"; "Violent communication between peers, lack of school structure"; "Noisy fans, bad acoustics of classrooms, too many students in one classroom"; "Excessive workload"; "Scrapping"; "Lack of emergency exits"; "Ergonomics"; "Sedentarism, mental and emotional stress".

From the reports presented above, some show a lack of concern for mental health as well as physical health. Thus, companies need to observe and analyze how to work on and correct these weaknesses in their occupational health and safety management.

## V. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The development of the present study enabled an understanding of which are the positive and negative factors concerning occupational health and safety that the interviewees identify in their work environment, and, in this way, we were able to analyze how they deal with them.

In general, the interviewees were able to list both positive and negative factors. It is possible to observe that some respondents have been in the job and the companies for a long time, so they are exposed in the long term to the factors that were listed by them as stressors.

In addition, we can notice that the employees present a vision that occupational health and safety management occurs, but not covering all the biases, such as mental and physical health, as well as mental safety (financial stability, for example) as well as physical (accident prevention).

The application of the questionnaire provided an understanding of the stress factors of the interviewed employees. Given the importance of the topic, it becomes necessary to develop actions in companies to be able to solve these negative factors and make the environment safer. Identifying these measures and adapting them to the reality of each company would be an interesting approach to take.

One factor that caused some companies to deny the application of the questionnaire is that it would be done by someone from outside the company. In addition, another factor that limited the research was the employees' fear of being interviewed.

In this sense, we can notice that the interviewed companies have some level of concern with the occupational health and safety of their employees. Thus, for a low level of stress and good physical and mental health, companies must improve their occupational health and safety management.

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