

Review

Relationship between Safety Management Practices, Trust and Safety Performance in Construction sector of Pakistan: A Conceptual Framework

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Abstract

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Safety performance is concerned to promote and maintain physical, mental and social health of employees. The condition in developing countries like Pakistan is worst relating to workplace safety. The objective of this study was to give the conceptual analysis of trust as moderator on the relationship between safety management practices and safety performance in construction sector of Pakistan. The framework suggested that organizations which provide safety management practices and workers which have trust on top management perform work safely and improve safety performance. The study illustrates the future directions and gives recommendations to organizations to improve safety at workplace.

Keywords: Construction, Safety management practices, Safety performance, Trust

INTRODUCTION

Injuries occurred at workplace have long-term consequences and its effects are in both social and economic terms to employees, employers, entities and also governments. International Labor Organization (2017) revealed that there were 2.78 million occupational deaths worldwide. Many occupational accidents liked Bhopal and Buncefield Oil Depot killed thousands of people at workplace (Broughton, 2005; Johnson, 2010). Many countries and organizations started taking interest in these kinds of occupational hazards as huge amount of cost involved in it (Ricardson and Impgaard, 2004).

The construction industry have worst condition regarding occupational accidents as it has high rate of workplace accidents ratio compared to other industries (Ahmed et al., 2017). Up to 25%, 40% and 50% workplace accidents were occurred in construction industries of United Kingdom, Japan and Ireland respectively (Haadir and Panuwatwanich, 2011). Pakistan is also facing the bad condition of occupational

accidents in constructions industry. Pakistan stands in the list of worst countries relating to workers and ranked four on five point scale (Dawn October 15, 2018). The occupational accidents of construction industry are high and it is still increasing. By comparing the occupational accidents of construction industry in 2009-2010 to 2014-2015 it rises from 14.3 % to 16.27% (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics).

The main cause of these occupational injuries is less awareness, no implementation of safety rules and procedures, lack of skills and co-operations from workers (Farooqui, 2012; Farooqui et al., 2008). The increasing percentage of occupational accidents clearly indicates the alarming situation of this industry and it is compulsory to find out the solution of this problem. Numerous studies have proven that safety management practices enhance safety performance (Vinodkumar and Bhasi, 2010; Subramaniam et al., 2016; Jaafar et al., 2017). But a few claimed different results (Huang et al., 2012; Froko,

Maxwell and Kingsley, 2015). Therefore, this study attempts to give a framework on the relationship between safety management practices and safety performance with moderating effect of trust in construction sector of Pakistan.

Literature Review

Safety Performance

Safety performance is a major issue in construction sector of Pakistan. According to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, the number of occupational accidents in construction sector is increasing rapidly. Only 4% of construction firms in Lahore, Pakistan have accidents reporting system, 19% have first aid facility and only 20% of laborers have personal protective equipment (Dawn October 15, 2018). Previously safety performance was a uni-dimensional concept (Peters, 1991). Although, many studies revealed that it has two (Andriessen, 1978), three (Pousette et al., 2008), four (Burke et al., 2002) and five (Tucker and Turner, 2011) dimensions. The current study following the concept of Griffin and Neal (2000), that safety performance has two dimensions: safety compliance and safety participation. Safety compliance is a behavior relating to safety tasks that is following regulations to safety and wearing safety shoes, gloves etc (Griffin and Neal, 2000). Whereas, safety participation is a voluntary participation of employees in safety related matters (Griffin and Neal, 2000). Therefore, relating to this study, construction workers are expected to wear safety shoes, gloves, safety glasses, safety helmets, masks and voluntary participation in safety activities to avoid fatal or non-fatal accidents.

Safety Management Practices

In organizations, safety management practices is used as tools to reduce workplace accidents (Labodova, 2004). According to Gershon et al. (2000), safety management practices minimize fatality rate using effective policies. Similarly, these are the procedures, regulations and activities to focus on safety of the workers (Vinodkumar and Bhasi, 2010). Therefore, six dimensions of safety management practices (Management Commitment, Safety Training, Workers Involvement, Safety Communication and Feedback, Safety Rules and Procedures and Safety Promotion Policies) are used in this conceptual analysis. Management commitment plays a key role in safety of organizations. Commitment of management is the actions to attain certain goals (Cooper, 2006). Previous studies revealed the relationship between management commitment and safety outcomes (Zohar, 1980; Yule, Flin and Murdy, 2007). Organizations should give training to their

employees if they want them to participate in the safety programs. According to Vinodkumar and Bhasi (2010), safety training is the major component to predict safety performance. Farooqui et al. (2008) argued that workers relating to construction industry must attain training for their safety. Similarly, workers involvement can influence worker's performance (Zheng et al., 2006). It is an involvement of worker to take responsibility and make workplace free from hazards (Geldart et al., 2005). Vinodkumar and Bhasi (2010) argued that workers involvement had direct relationship with safety performance. In addition, safety communication and feedback is a key predictor by giving information to organization's safety. Many studies (Vinodkumar and Bhasi, 2010; Griffin and Neal, 2000) revealed that safety performance is influenced by safety communication and feedback. Moreover, safety rules and procedure are the set of regulations given by the management to work safely in the organization. Safety rules and procedures is the important factor in promoting safety performance in employees (Diaz-Díaz-Cabrera et al., 2007; Lu and Yang, 2011). At last, safety promotion policies, like incentives and rewards motivate workers to accomplish their work safely. Previous studies revealed direct association between safety promotion policies and safety related outcomes (Keffane and Delhomme, 2013; Ali et al., 2009). There should be a proper reward system for workers that can enhance them to work safely.

Trust

Trust plays a very crucial role in safety studies (Mosher, 2013; Cheng et al., 2015). Conchie and Donald, (2009) argued that trust put a positive influence on safety of subordinates. Trust has an impact in safety models but it has been examined rarely in safety climate studies (Burns et al., 2006). Reason, (1997) reported that trust is necessary in reporting process between managers and workers. Trust creates a better safety attitude and it has effects on safety in high risky organizations (Conchie et al., 2006). Lazányi, (2016) revealed that trust influence organization's safety both directly and indirectly. In view of this study individuals in construction have to work safely, following the safety practices to avoid any unsafe act and there should be an element of trust between top management and subordinates to enhance safety at workplace.

Theoretical and Practical Implication

Theoretically, this study adds in literature by providing trust as a moderator in relationship between safety management practices and safety performance in construction sector of Pakistan. Practically, this study also has some benefits by guiding, practitioners,

bureaucracy and researchers to improve workplace safety. Trust could play an important role practically, by strengthening the relationship between top management and worker in construction sector.

CONCLUSION, LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The study provides the moderating effect of trust in relationship between safety management practices and safety performance in construction sector of Pakistan. Due to increasing rate of injuries in construction there is a need to test these relationships as individuals with high trust are expected to work safely and improve safety performance. This study also has some limitations and as a result provides opportunities for future research. Future study needs empirical investigation by expanding scope on the relationship between safety management, trust and safety performance as most studies were conducted in developed and other Asian countries. There is need to conduct research in Pakistani context.

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