

The Impact of Lack in Occupational Health and Safety Implementation in Small Businesses

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Abstract— Occupational health and safety has a major impact on the development and sustainability of small and medium business. The paper is indicating the effects that come with implementing the occupational and health safety act. The study was conducted in four industrial parks that are situated in Gauteng Province namely, Orlando Industria, Westo Park Industria, Lake Side Industrial Park and Majuba Park. Some of the name are not the exact names of the parks visited as the owners does not wants the real names of the parks to appear in the study. These parts have from 4 to 100 Small business in one industry and employees and employers in about fifty small businesses where interviewed and observed.

Keywords—Occupational Health and Safety,

I. INTRODUCTION (*HEADING 1*)

The SMMEs are very crucial through the contribution in employment in South Africa as people without jobs is one of the unrest less social-economic issues which contributes to poverty and unemployment, African Union (2014) states that SMEs represent up to 91 percent of formal businesses in South Africa, contributing between 52 and 57 percent to GDP and providing about 61 percent to employment. But the same interventions can be a life threatening issue because of OH&S not being practiced by both employees and employers in the work place. Occupational health and safety is known to be very crucial in the wealth and health of the workers. SMMEs most are not aware that the OH&S is beneficiary to all, according to OSHA 2005, African Union (2014) addressing safety and health issues in the workplace saves the employer money and adds value to the business, as is a tools and techniques of good business practice and quality management. The study focuses on OH&S international standards that address the benefits of both the employee and the employer. OSHAS 18001 is one of the international Standards that were developed by ISO, Integrating three systems that are equally important to ensure the Health and wealth of all the stakeholders and the business.

It seems like for years now the small, medium and micro enterprises SMME's are still struggling to work in a safe and healthy environments. According to Puplampu and Quartey (2012) most African countries are noted for poor occupational health and safety practices. The SMME's tend not to care much when it comes to the occupational health and safety of employees and other stakeholders (customers and people in surrounding communities). Ahasan (2001) states that unsafe and unhealthy workplace it is due to ignorance, illiteracy, economic constraints, and cultural characteristics, indifferent attitudes of the workers and greedy entrepreneurs not maintaining safe work standard in developing countries. Sustainable and well known corporate tend to take occupational health and safety very serious and their employees and stakeholders tends to understand the occupational health requirement. These companies remain profitable and sustainable because of implementing international work standard. Such aspects generate obvious benefits for entrepreneurs and employees, increasing an organization's competitiveness while decreasing social costs. According to Rebelo (2014) International standard such as Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems (OHSMS) companies are now implementing, creating sustainable competitive advantages, while also looking at the wealth and health of all the stakeholders. The OHSMS can be successfully implemented in an organization through introduction of integrated Management system (IMS) which consists of three international systems that depends on one another.

SMME's are very important to South African, in terms of economic development, alleviation of poverty, creation on employment and the distribution of the economy. According to Berry (2002) SMMEs as enterprises have some economic roles to fulfil. They contribute to a country's national product by either manufacturing goods of value, or through the provision of services to both consumers and/or other enterprises. National Planning Commission (NPC; 2014) states that (SMMEs) in South Africa contribute significantly to job creation and overall GDP, SMMEs contribute more than 40 percent of total GDP and account for more than 60 percent of all employment. Brosseau, L. M. and Yahui Li, S. (2005) states that employees in small and medium-sized manufacturing businesses experience higher levels of work-related injuries and illnesses than employees in large businesses. Rebelo (2014) states that large organizations are increasingly requiring this management policy from their suppliers, establishing specific requirements and performances that SMEs often find extremely difficult to accomplish. It is very crucial that SMME's should also consider the health and safety of all the stakeholders. Even though it is well known that the IMS can be quite expensive to small businesses it could be simply because not all the benefits that come with the system are being calculated. NSAI (2014) states that OHSAS 18001 has been developed to be compatible with ISO 9001:2008 (Quality) and ISO 14001:2004 (Environmental) IMS standards, in order to facilitate the integration of quality, environmental and occupational health and safety management systems by organizations, The SMMEs can actual take the IMS as a strategy that will place a business where it will deliver quality products while looking after its environment and ensuring the wealth and health of its workers. OSHA (2005) states that safety and health also make big reductions in indirect costs, increased productivity, higher quality products; increased morale; management relations; reduced turnover and better use of human resources.

II. LITERATURE

This paper defines the Occupational health and safety as the system that looks after the health and safety of employees, and stakeholders these are customers, suppliers and community where the business is operating. Each and every business no matter how big or small it is required to look after the health and safety of all that are affected by the operation of the business. Stephens al et (2004) defines the occupational work and safety as the avoidance of long-term (chronic) detriments to an individual's health, that are the result of repeated exposure to hazards that are generally, or always, present in their work place.

A. *Evolution of OHSAS 18000-2007*

OH&S have been there for quite some time now, being implemented in many organizations mostly to comply and follow instructions from government legislation. The ISO 14001 which concentrated on management quality system before is saw need to environmental and OH&S system. Rebelo (2014) states that the sequence of implementation will trail the publication of standards, namely ISO 9001 (ISO, 2008) based Quality Management System (QMS) would be introduced first, followed by an ISO 14001 (ISO, 2004) based on Economic Management Service (EMS). Then lastly be OHSAS 18001-2007 which is based on Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OHSMS).

Most of the small businesses do not apply all the safety health policy and regulation, this seem to be through negligence and lack of resources. Stephens (2004) states that Occupational Health is not given the attention it deserves in Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs). As much as the personal protection equipment (PPE) are expensive but not all some of the things are affordable like the dust mask, people who works with any kind of dust should protect their lungs by wearing dusk musk. It becomes frightening while people are working with timber every day and the sore dust that they breath almost every second, gets in freely in their lungs without the use of dust mask. According to Cidb (2009) At the organizational and site level, poor construction H&S performance is attributable to a lack of management commitment, inadequate supervision and inadequate or a lack of H&S training. Cidb (2009) further states that a lack of worker involvement, personal risk appreciation and work pressures also contribute to poor performance.

The minute one arrives in big companies, tend to find all the symbols and posters of the occupational health and safety, some companies goes as far as having the video clips that will be playing by the receptions and their canteens, where employee's during their rest time watches. Some big organization releases a videos safety clip every month so that all the employees can watch, the will be a meeting for just to go watch a monthly video safety clip. With small companies such is very rare. The employees are exposed to any dangerous hazardous aspects. Especially in the manufacturing companies, where they are producing physical products using the raw materials.

Works in the small business seems not to understand their rights and responsibility when it comes to occupational heal and safety aspects. One cannot mention health and safety without mentioning good housekeeping. This is defined by the WorkforceXS (2010) a fundamental to good safety. Trips, slips and falls can result from poor housekeeping. It is everybody's responsibility to ensure that their work areas are kept clean and tidy. The occupational health and safety does not only ensure that employees are safe, but it can be in a form of saving spending of the company. According to university of Dakota () Exercising good housekeeping practices can require no capital cost and usually entails implementing simple changes that results in reduced emissions, wastes, operational costs and increased productivity. Through housekeeping, a business can

actually cover lots of things that will ensure the sustainability of the business and the environment. The small business is making lots of as well as increased workplace safety.

III. CASE STUDY

Orlando Industria is an industrial park situated in a South African township of South Africa which has close to 100 small medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) that are in manufacturing and providing services. SMMEs in Orlando Industria mostly use waste materials and by-products from other companies to produce their products. There are companies that use pallets from big industries to make that they sell to local furniture shops and communities. These companies are producers and service providers with other materials that they need to buy to manufacture, the furniture, where they make wardrobes not all the materials that they are waste or by-products. So they need to also buy real materials and they only use the waste at the back of the wardrobe. The waste happens to be the waste product from big companies. These big companies are not geographically located with the Orlando industrial. The companies are far and they need to go there to collect so that they make their own products. Since these industries are too small and mostly owners are just doing a living hiring less than 10 employees in their business. Most dominated kind of business in the Orlando Industrial is carpentry. The main waste or by-product there and a health hazard is saw dust, not only the workers that are working in the carpentry business are to experience the health risk, but also the workers in other industries as the spaces are too near and mostly they are working outdoors. The business of panel beating is also dominated and they are the ones complaining most about the saw dust waste that they are experiencing. According to Morris (2014) small business safety challenges include a lack of resources and money to comply with the health and safety principles, but then there are small things that could not cost the company that much in order to save the company money. Each and every business no matter how big should comply with the legislation of its country concerning every aspect of running the business. According to Safe Work SA (2012), legislation is designed to ensure people are protected by creating safe systems of work to minimize the risks to health, safety and welfare of the employers, employees and others, such as manufacturers and suppliers of machinery or substances used at work, all have an important role to play.

One of the industrial that is situated in the Ekurhuleni area, all the businesses that are running in this industry are small and medium businesses, the business works with still, to make the containers of the electricity, big oil in the tanks. These businesses are exposed to lots of dangerous health-threatening equipment, but most of these businesses, the employees including the employers do not put on the PPE, protective clothes. First of all the employees are wearing the shoes that they do for themselves, the shoes they are wearing are not suitable to the work they are doing. They do lots of welding but only a few are wearing the protective glass and the gloves, there is a lot of NOISE IN THE FACTORY but it looks like the employees only wear the noise plugs when they feel like it, according to Verbeek and Ivanov (2013) there is still a considerable burden of occupational diseases and injuries in the world.

IV. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper recommends that government implement the WHO system in assisting the small and medium enterprises with the occupational health and safety, where the government looks at implementing the organizational safety interventions. Burton (2010) defines the WHO as a healthy workplace which workers and managers collaborate to use a continual improvement process to protect and promote the health, safety and well-being of workers and the sustainability of the workplace by considering the following, based on identified needs: health and safety concerns in the physical work environment; health, safety and well-being concerns in the psychosocial work environment; personal health resources in the workplace and ways of participating in the community. According to Verbeek and Ivanov (2013) the interventions can be categorized as preventive and treatment interventions, wherein preventive interventions are usually offered to persons unsolicited and without symptoms urging them to seek help. These will assist many SMMEs to prevent any harm that can happen to any person who enters their workplaces. These interventions are in three categories namely

There is a business case from the one developed by the Burton 2010 that shows all the impacts that come with the unhealthy and unsafe business places, figure 1 illustrates all the cases and the results of not taking the health and safety methods into consideration. The unsafe work place can cause work-related stress that can be experienced in the work place and also in the worker's personal work style.

Within the workplace there are unexpected injuries and accidents that can just occur and this can happen to all the stakeholders that are surrounded or are in the flow of the workplace. Workers, employers, and communities can be the ones experiencing the accidents and injuries that are caused by the negligence of health and safety in the work place, like with the SMMEs in the Orlando industries who are working with timber and making a lot of saw dust waste material, the health risks affecting workers, suppliers, nearby businesses and the visitors. Through such dust workers may be diagnosed with work-related diseases that come from the breathing of the saw dust. It is not every time those workers are not aware that they are not safe in their work place, most workers just keep quiet, which results in workers being unsatisfied with their daily duties.

When workers are unsatisfied with their daily duties they are likely to have a lack of job commitment, where workers can have many faults in what they are producing, lack of commitment most of the time is caused by job dissatisfaction. When one is not satisfied with what is doing within the work place, the internal customer satisfaction, might not be communicated among the workers of the same firm. And one cannot practice internal customer satisfaction without involving health and safety. When a company produces a quality product at an adequate required quantity, must also consider the safety of the semi-finished product as well as there and finished products that have to go to the end user.

One can find that workers do not really care of how their internal customer receives the semi-finished product and how to handle it. Other workers will start to experience the burnout and depression as not feeling safe in the workplace and also being worried being in danger at any time, or getting some certain diseases that occur as he results of the kind of daily task. If one worker is not delivering good product to the second worker and that might also be exposed to the danger, workers can then start to have fights, as one might think that the other wants to put him or her in danger. This are the results of the unsafe and the unhealthy workplace that can affect the daily operational productivity of the business. The unhealthy and unsafe workplace can also affect a worker personal, through the stress that the workers are exposed to in the workplace, they are likely to be involved at unhealthy life style like smoking, drinking and lack of exercise. These are some of the work related stress that a worker can find themselves in the situation, because of the thing that occurs in their workplace. With the OSHAS it also looks in to the personal health of the workers in their personal life styles and even within their families. Being taught of the safety one can also be careful with household equipment. The health and safety can look into the activities that are happening in the workplace that can accuse such behaviors of unhealthy personal health practice. These may results in many different diseases that that will actually cause, death, disability and a lot of sick leave, while workers are not coming to work the company tend to experience a loss as the productivity declines. The company will have to also pay for the medical bills and also early pension this cause another if expense to the company. Replacing a worker with a new worker in expensive and time consuming, as a new person will need training and more time to understand their daily task. Because of poor performance employers may take a decision of retrenching unproductive works, only to find out that the workers lodge a complaint and the company ends up paying for union grievance. The turnover of the company because of all that the company is experiencing becomes very low.

Because of all that the company will experience low productivity, increased cost, dissatisfied customers due to decreased customer services or quality products. Some employees can also face fines and imprisonment from law as due to not complying with the health and safety of their workers. If it can be found out that the workers are suffering from the diseases that are caused by the kind of activities that they are doing at work. All these challenges may result in a business failure.

The owners or employers when it comes to a health and safety they must not only look into what the environment or workers will benefit from the OSHAS but it must be considered for the survival of the business. Because is not only about the people and environment, it is also about their business. Looking after the business in terms of health and safety can also reduce costs of the business and also generate income for the business.

Figure 1.1 The Business Case in a Nutshell

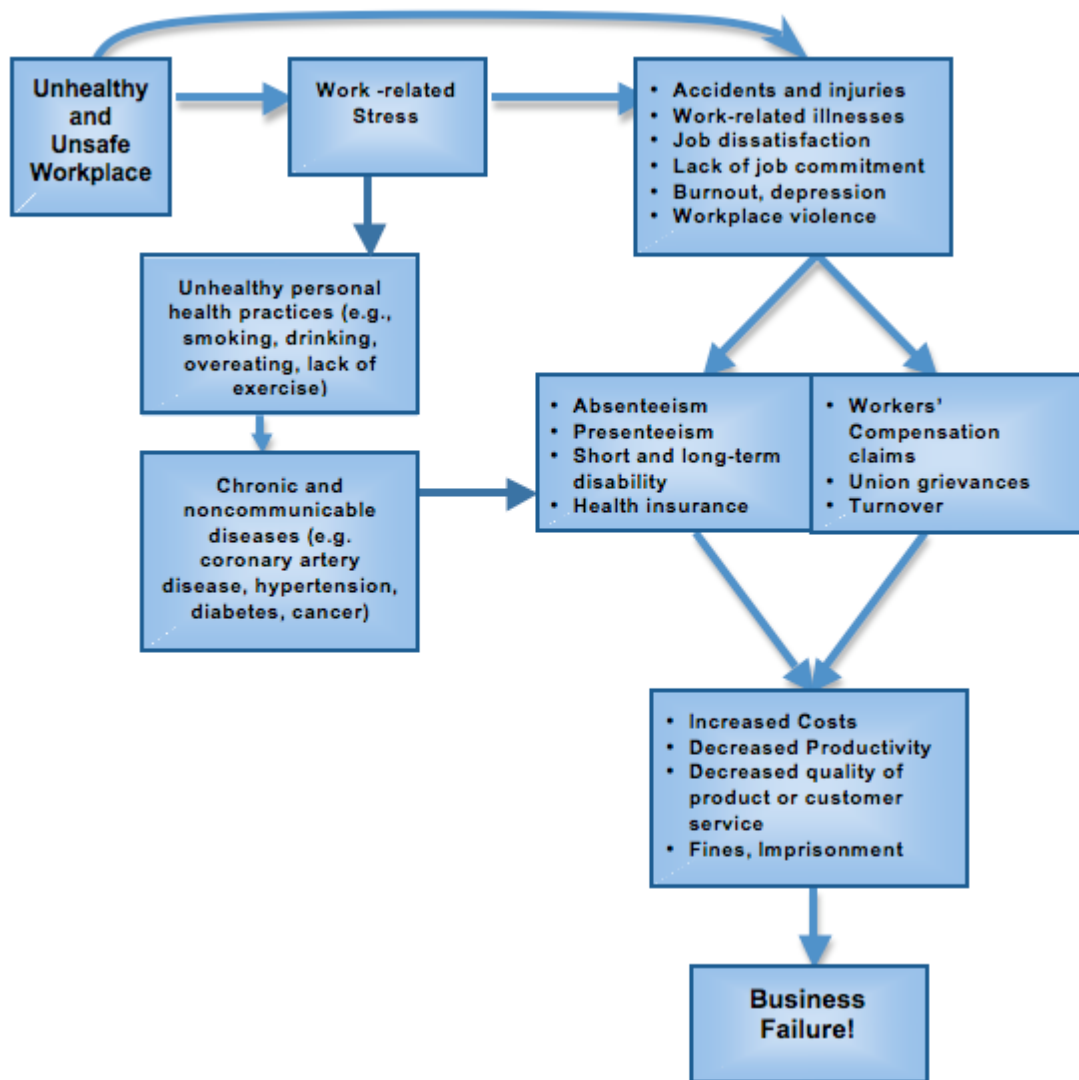


Fig. 1. Example of a figure caption

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