

Impact of health and safety practices on attitudes of machine operators in apparel sector in Kaluthara District in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Business organizations are operating in a very competitive environment and the business practitioners have identified the need for having a sustainable competitive advantage. Human resource practices are one of the main sources of achieving sustainable competitive advantage. Apparel sector is a vital segment in Sri Lankan manufacturing industry and most of employees faced health and safety problems in Sri Lanka and other countries. The preliminary study found that health and safety practices affect mostly on the machine operators' attitudes. Consequently the objective of the current study is to identify the extent to which health and safety practices impact on machine operators' attitudes of apparel sector in Kaluthara District. The current study hypothesized that there is a positive impact of health and safety practices; its dimensions of safety equipment, safety management, safety requirement and hygiene facilities on machine operators' attitudes. A sample of 100 employees was selected using a simple random sampling technique among the population of apparel sector in Kaluthara district and data were collected using a standard questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha value ensured the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. The data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, correlation and regression analysis. Four dimensions of health and safety practices as a core construct had a positive relationship with machine operators' attitudes and especially weak positive relationship was highlighted with the hygiene facilities. Safety equipment, safety management and safety requirement of safety practices revealed a positive relationship with machine operators' attitudes. The machine operators in Kaluthara district have mixed feelings regarding safety equipment, safety management, safety requirement and hygiene facilities. In summary, the current study concludes that health and safety practices impacts on machine operators' attitudes of apparel sector in Kaluthara district.

Keywords: *Apparel sector, health and safety practices, machine operators' attitudes*