

Implementation of Occupational Safety and Health Standards in Government Offices in the Province of Negros Occidental

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Introduction: Occupational Safety and Health Standards (OSHS) are crucial for ensuring the well-being of workers and was underscored by the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. While previous research has examined OSHS in various settings, studies on the public sector have been rarely explored. Despite the issuance of OSHS guidelines for government, policy and practices needs further investigation and action. This study assessed the extent of OSHS implementation in selected government offices in a highly urbanized city. Ultimately, this sought to develop an action plan for government offices to have an enhanced OSHS implementation.

Methodology: This descriptive-comparative study, utilizing a researcher-made survey questionnaire based on CSC-DOH-DOLE JMC No. 1 s 2020 assessed the implementation of OSHS across three levels of governance (national, provincial and city) within a highly urbanized city. It analyzed how the extent of implementation varies across these levels focusing on the areas of workplace safety, emergency preparedness, occupational safety and health programs, support facilities, working hours, breaks and leave privileges, and working environment. The respondents were the 340 permanent employees who have worked for at least three years and were selected through stratified random sampling. The employee profiles were analyzed using descriptive analysis, while mean, standard deviation, frequency count, and percentage distribution were utilized to analyze the responses and their variability. The implementation differences across the three levels were examined through comparative analysis.

Results: Results indicated that all areas of OSHS are often implemented in all levels of governance. Comparisons revealed that the national government offices differed significantly from both the provincial and the city government offices in all areas of the OSHS, being highest at the city level, followed by the provincial and lowest at the national level.

Conclusion: This study revealed the unexplored face of OSHS in the public sector. While its areas are often implemented in all levels which acknowledges the effort of the government in ensuring the well-being of employees, it should be given emphasis that there is still a need to push for a stronger implementation as all areas are not fully implemented. A significant difference emerged as the national level showed the lowest in their implementation. This confirms that city and provincial governments can quickly respond to policy issues involving employees' working conditions due to their absence of large bureaucratic systems. They can allocate resources quickly and adjust OSHS policies as needed due to their small size and focus.

Practical Value of the Paper: Improving the implementation of OSHS in the public sector lies in interventions that leverage more structured processes. This study encourages a holistic approach to protecting workers in the government. This identifies and delineates the roles of lead agencies, heads of offices, safety committees, and stakeholders, particularly in the implementation.

Directions for future research: Future research should examine the challenges that government offices face when implementing the OSHS. Future subjects as trends of research for OSHS could be rewards in safety incentivization programs; increasing information technology tools; production process automation; implementing proactive measures; integrating quality, environmental management systems and technological tools for employees.

Keywords: public administration, OSHS, descriptive-comparative, Philippines

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