

Non-Usage of Personal Protective Equipment and Occupational Health and Safety Problems: A Study of Sewing Machine Operators in the Apparel Industry of Sri Lanka

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Today we are living in a knowledge economy where people became the most important asset of a company. Unlike physical assets, human assets can be developed, improved and motivated to achieve the goals and objectives of an organization. Employee health and safety management is carry out in every organization to protect their employees from harm. Motivating employees to use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is done by many organizations to secure their employees' health and safety. PPE is the equipment worn by employees to minimize exposure to variety of hazards. Most employees are aware of the benefits of PPE as well as negative outcomes of non- usage of PPE, but only few employees tend to use PPE. This study empirically evaluated two types of factors (individual factors and organizational factors) for non-usage of PPE and their likely impact on occupational health and safety problems in a leading garments manufacturing organization in Sri Lanka. The sample consisted of 92 sewing machine operators and the data were gathered by self-administrated structured questionnaires. The results indicated that individual factors for non-usage of PPE was positively and significantly correlated with occupational health and safety problems while organizational factors for non-usage of PPE was positively correlated but not significant. Results of regressing the individual and organizational factors for non-usage of PPE on occupational health and safety problems showed that individual factors for non-usage of PPE is a strong predictor of arising occupational health and safety problems.

Keywords: *Personal Protective Equipment, Occupational Health and Safety Problems, Individual Factors, Non-usage of PPE, Organizational Factors*

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