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Adetunji Kamoli
Phd Student, Department of
Quantity Surveying, Universiti
Teknologi Malaysia, Johor,
Malaysia.

Razali Adul Hamid
Associate Professor,
Department of Quantity
Surveying, Universiti
Teknologi Malaysia, Johor,
Malaysia.

Syamsul Hendra Bin Mahmud
Senior Lecturer, Department
of Quantity Surveying,
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia,
Johor, Malaysia.

Correspondence:
Adetunji Kamoli
Phd Student, Department of
Quantity Surveying, Universiti
Teknologi Malaysia, Johor,
Malaysia.

Benefits of Recording and Reporting Occupational Accidents in Construction Industry.

Adetunji Kamoli, Razali Adul Hamid, Syamsul Hendra Bin Mahmud

Abstract

Under-reporting of accidents is an extensive problem across sectors of economies but more notable in the construction industry. According to the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment of Nigeria, many organizations do not report accidents that occurred in the workplace. The absence of awareness about the benefits of recording and reporting accidents may also contribute to the issues of under-reporting of accidents likewise failure to put measures in place for the prevention of occupational accidents. This paper examines the benefits of recording and reporting accidents in the construction sector. Literature review of accidents under-reporting was conducted, thereafter, data for the study was collected through 300 questionnaires, distributed to the construction professionals in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria. 235 were returned, therefore considered for the analysis. Microsoft Excel and SPSS were used for the analysis of the data. The result of the survey found that promoting a healthy and safer workplace and statistical information of accidents can be used to forecast future burden of costs of accidents were among the benefits of recording and reporting occupational accidents. The need for collaborative efforts among the construction firms, workers, professionals, and regulatory bodies is imperative in addressing consistent occupational accidents along with underreporting in the Nigerian construction industry.

Keywords: Accidents, Health, Recording, Reporting, Safety.

1. Introduction

Reportable accidents can be classified into three: (1) when a worker is killed, (2) when a worker suffers a substantial injury, and (3) when a worker suffers an injury that resulted from being absent from work for more than three days consecutively (Davies, et al., 2007). Occupational accident under-reporting in the organization could be deliberate or due to the absence of understanding of reporting needs (Azaroff, et al., 2002; Wuellner, and Bonauto, 2014; Wuellner, and Phipps, 2018). Likewise, the failure of workers to report accidents could be attributed to fear of reprisal (Fan, et al., 2006; Resenman, et al., 2000). It is not amazing that workers that think no consideration will be given are less to report accidents (Lipscomb, et al., 2015). Personnel engaged as contract staff suffers from job insecurity likewise higher occupational accident risk with lower wages (Asad, et al., 2020; Olugbenga, et al., 2019; Wright, 2000). Temporary employees could be less inclined to report occupational accidents due to stigmatization and could be labeled as bad workers (Guadalupe, 2003).

Furthermore, many organizational injury record keepers do not adhere to regulatory requirements, as a result of the inadequacy of information (Klausen, and Iversen, 1979). The chain of reporting can be from two perceptive: (1) when an employee report accidents to the organization (2) when an organization incorporates occupational accidents records in the authorized injury log (Probsta, et al., 2017). Organizational under-reporting involves non accurately recording and reporting occupational accidents in a detailed method described by the regulatory bodies. According to (Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, 2016), many organizations do not report occupational accidents that occurred in their construction sites to authorities due to the notion they might be sanctioned by agencies of government if the records of their accidents are high. This paper focuses on the benefits that can be accrued from recording and reporting occupational accidents in the Nigerian construction industry.

This will raise the awareness and information for the employees, employers, and the regulatory bodies on the proper record keeping, reporting of accidents for policy formulation, and implementation of measures for accidents prevention.

2. Background

Data regarding occupational accidents in the Nigerian building industry are less reliable due to the non-reporting of occupational accidents that happened by construction organizations to the regulatory bodies (Agwu, and Olee, 2014). Lack of enforcement of H&S regulations by regulatory agencies of government creates opportunities for construction firms on non-compliance with the guidelines (Idubor, and Oisamoje, 2013), hence, a proper record of occupational accidents that happened in the construction sites was not kept by construction organizations. Likewise, (ILO, 2012) highlighted information on occupational accidents in developing nations does not reflect the true H&S situations because accidents were not recorded. Many reasons can be attributed to the under-reporting of occupational accidents which includes an absence of awareness of the need to reports accidents, measurement problems, arguments about accountability, problems of descriptions of H&S rules, and difficulties in establishing whether accidents truly happened in the workplace (William J. W., 2014). In instances where there is less information on H&S between teamwork and management could be resulted in underreporting of occupational accidents in the construction sites. Organizations that disallow discussion of OHS issues would likely support under-reporting of accidents employees and organizations levels.

Studies have documented some underreporting of occupational accidents occurred. (Rosenman, et al., 2006) revealed that 60-67 % of occupational accidents were recorded by OSHA. Also, (Resenman et al., 2000) still revealed that 5.1% of workers are of opinion that the occupational accidents that happened to them were not consequential to report while 35.9% of the workers studied said that inability to report occupational accidents was that they were not covered by the insurance schemes. According to (Silva, and Rathnayake, 2018), 80% of construction accidents that occurred were not reported. Similarly, (Wuellner, et al., 2016) study found that an estimated 70% of employees' remuneration claims were not reported. (Probst, et al., 2008) found that 78% of accidents were not reported by the organizations. Similarly, (Probst, and Estrada, 2010) highlighted that 71% of employees failed to an occupational accident to their firms. According to the report of (Davies et al., 2007) to the Health and Safety Executive, only 30% of reportable accidents could be accounted for when errors were taken into account. Furthermore, (Glazner, et al., 1998) found

that workers' compensation claims twice the information of Bureau of Labor Statistics in the Denver international airport constructions where 433 participated. (Dong, et al., 2011) point out that 75% of fewer fatal accidents that occurred to Hispanic workers were not recorded and 40 % of non-Hispanic personnel between 1992-2006. (Hadi, et al., 2017) revealed that nearly 94.7% of employees failed to report their occupational accidents. Occupational accident underreporting could be differed by organizational status. (Dong, et al., 2010; Glazner et al., 1998; Oleinick, et al., 1995) highlighted that under-reporting of occupational accidents was higher in the smaller enterprises and differs by industry. Also, occupational accidents data in multi-organizational could likely be missed than single organizations (Boden, 2014).

Support is needed from workers in the reporting of occupational accidents. Many organizations adopted confidential reporting approaches (Reynard W.D, 1986), whereas some have a non-blame concept of reporting accidents as a method for improvement of H&S (Turner, 1991). Management of OHS and occupational accidents is important, organizations are required to appraise hazards in the workplace and ensure appropriate measures to secure employees' H&S, reducing hazards through continuous surveillance and monitoring of the workplace particularly confined sites.

3. Methodology

This study explores the benefits of recording and reporting occupational accidents in the Nigerian construction industry. The review of the literature was conducted, thereafter the benefits of recording and reporting were drafted to form the questionnaire. Then, questionnaires were designed and distributed to solicit information used in this study. The respondents for the study were professionals in the built environment in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria. 300 questionnaires were distributed out of which 235 were returned. The respondents' selections of answers were arranged in a five-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

4. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed through SPSS software. The mean score was computed, then ranked accordingly. The factors put in rank, the top-ranked is more substantial than the next.

5. Result

The respondents' background for the study are: type of organization: Contracting (48.9%), Consulting (51.1%). Working experience 1-5 years (4.3%), 6-10 years (21.3%), 11-15 years (12.8%), 16-20 (19.1%), 21 and above (42.6%). Academic qualification: HND/BSC (36.2%), MSC (48.9%), PGD (4.30%), PHD (10.6%).

Table 1: Benefits of Recording and Reporting.

Variables	Mean	Rank
To promote a healthy and safer workplace	4.43	1
Statistical information of accidents to forecast future burden of costs of accidents	4.26	2
To evaluate the impact of health and safety performance	4.23	3
To identify bad work practices and unsafe workplace	4.21	4
For prioritizing accidents control and preventive measures	4.17	5
To ascertain root causes of incidents	4.13	6
The precise allocation of health and safety resources	4.04	7

An instrument for assessing the level of success attained in enforcement and compliance	4.04	7
As a parameter to develop OHSMS	4.02	8
To appraise the influence of interventions	4.00	9
To ensure workers get proper treatment	3.87	10
To understand the scope and nature of accidents	3.68	11
For juxtaposition accident frequency with other countries	3.55	12

6. Discussion

The Cronbach's Alpha of the instrument was tested and found to be .958, which indicates the instrument is suitable for the study. The data were analyzed through descriptive statistics with the mean score computed and ranked accordingly. In the analysis of the data, to promote a healthy and safer workplace ranked among the top benefits of recording and reporting occupational accidents (Table 1), aligned with the study of (Johnson, 2003) that accident reporting improves organizational safe work practices and H&S culture. Statistical information of accidents is fundamental to classify injury trends, pinpoint emerging hazards, and prevention efforts (S. Wuellner, and Phipps, 2018). It is also an important feedback mechanism for the monitoring of H&S performance and its influence on accident prevention (ILO, 1996). It helps in finding root causes of accidents and to apply preventive measures (ILO, 2013). Non-reporting of accidents has consequential effects which include insufficient allocation of resources, lack of proper planning and implantation policy in the prevention of accidents (Cherry, Galarneau, Haan, et al., 2019). Also, accident information could be used in the prioritizing of hazards, assessment of H&S programs and policies, and enlightening stakeholders in the building industry (S. E. Wuellner, Adams, and Bonauto, 2017). Accurate accident data gives a picture of H&S in the workplace, so, essential for ascertaining preventive needs (Aaltonen, Kauppinen, and Saalo, 2013). It also belongs to the indicator classes on H&S status and represents a foundation on which OHS policy activities in the nation depend. The reporting improves workers' learning from near misses (Mahajan, 2010). Figures of occupational accidents could support comparing trends across groups and authorities and building suitable injury prevention systems (Shannon, and Lowe, 2002). Accidents analysis and information accidents are generally accepted both for economics and prevention policies (Jacinto, and Aspinwall, 2004).

7. Conclusion

This paper explores the benefits of recording and reporting occupational accidents in the Nigerian building industry. Recording and reporting accidents are a method of discovering and responding to failure before growing into major occupational accidents. Hence, construction firms are advised to adopt a voluntary system of reporting in the management of H&S of organization and personnel. Accidents reporting systems deal with considerable insights into the problems of H&S and the implementation of important measures in the prevention of accidents. Improving communication among stakeholders in the construction industry to accomplish maximum merits of reporting and exchange of occupational accident data is important. Reporting of accidents can offer significant reminders concerning potential hazards.

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