



THE DETERMINATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS LEVEL ABOUT OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY OF THE EMPLOYEE IN THE LANDSCAPING UNIT IN ATATÜRK UNIVERSITY

Atatürk Üniversitesi Çevre Düzenleme Birimi Çalışanlarının 'İş Sağlığı ve Güvenliği' Konusundaki Bilinç Düzeylerinin Belirlenmesi

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Çalışmanın Türü: Araştırma

Abstract

The conscious level of occupational health and safety of the employee in the landscaping unit, who are responsible for the university campus sites' being clean, healthy and tidy, has an important role in their being confident and successful in their workplace environment. This study has been planned and conducted to determine the conscious level of the personnel working in the landscaping unit. The personnel working landscaping unit in Atatürk University are included in the scope of study.(n=64) The data of the study was collected in October-November 2014. The personnel taking part in this study are male and 46,9% of them are in 41-50 age group. Employment duration of the personnel varies from 1 year to 26 years and 48,8% of them work for 26 years. At the end of the study, it has been determined that most of the personnel (84,4%) have taken the basic training of occupational health and safety. When the personnel's opinions on occupational health and safety is analysed, their expressions are as follow; the highest proportion state 'our workplace's institutive knowledge about occupational health and safety is insufficient' (48,4%), 'my workplace is in the least dangerous workplace class' (43,4%), 'our workplace wasn't arranged to protect our physical health' (70,3%), 'In the department I work, there isn't any technical substructure related to prevent occupational accidents and wounding (57,8%), 'sufficient safety precautions haven't been taken in the unit I work' (53,1%) ' some precautions have been taken to regulate the weakness on occupational safety by enterprise management' (71,9%), 'In our workplace, the factors threatening our health are being ignored' (50,0%), 'In the precautions of occupational accidents the biggest cause of the accident chain is insecure conditions' (67,2%), 'teamwork is the most important element in occupational health and safety' (65,6%), 'we should be more educated to play an effective role in occupational health and safety' (54,7).

Keywords: landscaping unit, occupational health and safety, occupational accident, management, inspection.

Öz

Üniversite kampüsündeki alanların düzenli, temiz ve sağlıklı olmasından sorumlu olan çevre düzenleme birimi çalışanlarının çalışma ortamlarındaki iş güvenliği ile ilgili bilinç düzeyleri

güvenli ve başarılı olmalarında önemli role sahiptir. Bu araştırma çevre düzenleme biriminde çalışan personelin iş güvenliği konusundaki bilinç düzeyini belirlemek amacıyla planlanmış ve yürütülmüştür. Araştırma kapsamına Atatürk Üniversitesi çevre düzenleme biriminde çalışan personel (n=64) alınmıştır. Araştırmanın verileri Ekim-Kasım 2014 tarihlerinde toplanmıştır. Araştırmaya alınan personelin tamamı erkek olup, % 46,9'u 41-50 yaş grubundadır. Personelin hizmet yılları 1 ile +26 yıl arasında değişmekte olup, çalışanların % 48,8 +26 yıldır. Araştırma sonucunda personelin tamamına yakınının (%84,4) İş Sağlığı ve Güvenliği temel eğitimi aldığı saptanmıştır. Personelin iş sağlığı ve güvenliğine ilişkin görüşleri incelendiğinde; en fazla oranda "İşyerimizin İş sağlığı ve güvenliği konusunda kurumsal bilgi düzeyi yetersiz" (%48,4), "Çalıştığım işyeri az tehlikeli işyeri sınıfındadır" (%73,4), "Çalışma mekânımız fiziksel sağlığımızı gözetecek şekilde düzenlenmemiş" (%70,3), "Çalıştığım bölümde yaralanmaları/İş kazalarını önlemeye yönelik teknik altyapı yok" (%57,8), "Çalıştığım birimde yeterli güvenlik önlemleri alınmıyor" (%53,1), "Kurum yönetiminiz tarafından iş güvenliğimiz konusundaki aksaklıkların düzeltilmesi konusunda bazı tedbirler alınmaktadır" (%71,9), "İşyerinde sağlığımızı tehdit eden etkenler gideriliyor" (%50,0), "İş kazalarının önlenmesinde kaza zinciri halkalarında en büyük önemi güvensiz koşullar oluşturmaktadır." (%67,2), "İş sağlığı ve güvenliği çalışmalarında en önemli unsur ekip çalışmasıdır" (%65,6), "İş sağlığı ve güvenliği konusunda daha etkin rol oynayabilmemiz için ilgili konularda eğitimli olmamız gerekir" (%54,7) ifadelerine katıldıkları belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çevre Düzenleme Birimi, İş Sağlığı ve İş Güvenliği, İş Kazası, Yönetim, Denetim.

Introduction

People have encountered occupational accidents for thousands of years. Even in the 21st century working is three times more dangerous than a war, and working kills more people than alcohol, drugs or war; it is stated that while 650.000 people die in a year because of wars, 2 millions of people die because of occupational accidents and occupational diseases every year (Lloyd and Mitchinson).

With the seeking for solution of the problems occurring, safety concept has taken on a new dimension and occupational health and safety concept's having a new meaning has been discussed (Gülşen, 2004). On the one hand this beginning and seeking are at an international level; on the other hand they have developed in each country (Akbulut, 1994). At the end of the studies and researches, occupational health and safety term has risen, and it is started to approach to the topic scientifically (Akyüz, 1980).

Occupational health and safety right is a right arising from social state qualification; occupational health and safety regulations are important steps in life and health right's being implemented (Süzek, 1985). Occupational safety should have sufficient health and safety policy that the personnel are aware of. This policy should include education, the correct usage of materials and equipments, safety methods in work, individual safety, first aid and infection control.

In the world and our country, in connection with the advanced technology, some problems related to health and safeties of personnel have risen. Occupational safety is the whole of systematic study which is conducted to avoid from unhealthy conditions and dangers from the production in work life (Sabancı, 2001).

Because of technological advancement and industrialisation's being continuous, new business lines attending to work areas, chemicals, machines and equipments have increased the need of occupational health and safety (İSDB, 1998). In this content, preventing the personnel from falling occupational diseases and accidents, precautions for creating healthy and safety working environment is called as occupational health and safety (Kılınç, 2005).

Protecting the physical and mental health of the employee from the negative effects of workplace, taking measures for occupational accidents and diseases and arranging comfortable and safe environment for the employees constitute the aim of the workers' health and safety (Yüksel, 1998).

The personnel operating the service need to have sufficient basic knowledge and skill on their jobs and the personnel is required to take training on occupational safety and related topics (Şafak and Yertutan, 1992). The personnel who has sufficient knowledge on occupational safety can protect their occupational safety and also they can protect the customers' occupational safety. The aim of the occupational safety is to control the risks of occupational safety in the workplace and arrange a safety workplace environment for the employee, protect and improve the occupational safety of the employees. Employees should be aware of their unsafe behaviours and they should know what's going on around them in the sense of occupational safety. Occupational safety consciousness should be learnt by everybody and it should be a part of everyemployee's works (Topçuoğlu and Özdemir,2003). In conjunction with the workplace conditions getting healthy and safety, negative effects of workplace environments on employees health will be removed and it will be possible to protect the employees from negative effects of the health disability (Yertutan, 2000).

The aim of the study of occupational health is to take the health risks in the workplace under control and arrange a healthy and safety working place for the employee thus the employee's health will be protected and improved (Çopur at all, 2001). It is not easy to show a high performance and increase the productivity for the employees who aren't informed about the dangers of the work they do and negative effects of it on their health (Güler, 2003). The aim of the study of occupational safety is to protect the employees,

enable them to work in a comfortable and safe environment and remove the dangers for the safety of the business (Ünsar, 2003). Occupational health and safety is gradually becoming more important in accordance with economic, social and technical aspects. Many negative effects of occupational health and safety in view of government, employee and employer should be detected and the solution for these problems has to be analysed thoroughly. The studies on the views of the personnel who work in various departments in our country about occupational health and safety are quite limited in number. So, this study was planned and conducted with the aim of determining of consciousness level of the employees in the landscaping unit, Atatürk University about occupational health and safety.

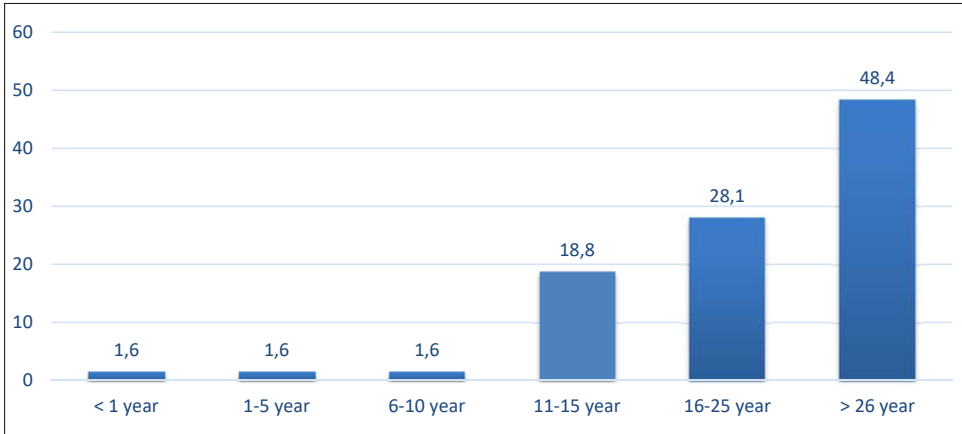
I. Methodology and The Equipment

The personnel who work in the landscaping unit in Atatürk University (n=64) took part in the study. The research data was gathered as a result of face to face interactions made with the personnel who work in the landscaping unit in Atatürk University between October and November in 2014 in accordance with the prepared survey form, and all the personnel were interviewed one by one, and with the help of management staff, we could reach to the related personnel. The questionnaire form used in this research consists of three sections. In the first section, there are such general information as the gender, age, service duration of the personnel and the utilities provided by the institution; in the second section, there are the situations of in-service training and taking measures against the accidents, and the knowledge related to the measures taken: and in the third section, there are questions about determining of the consciousness level occupational health and the belongingness to the job. The statistical analysis of the data gathered in the study was conducted with SPSS programme.

II. Findings and Discussion

2.1. General Information about the Personnel

It is detected that the personnel who attended the study are males. Among the personnel the most common age group is 41-50 (46,9%), second common age group is 51+ (31,2%), the following is 31-40 age group (17,2%), and the last one is 21-30 age group (4,7%). Employment duration of the personnel varies from 1 year to 26 years 31 of them works more than 26 years in the same workplace (48,4%)(Graph 1). It has been found out that the 93,8% of the personnel included in the study worked as the workers in this institution.

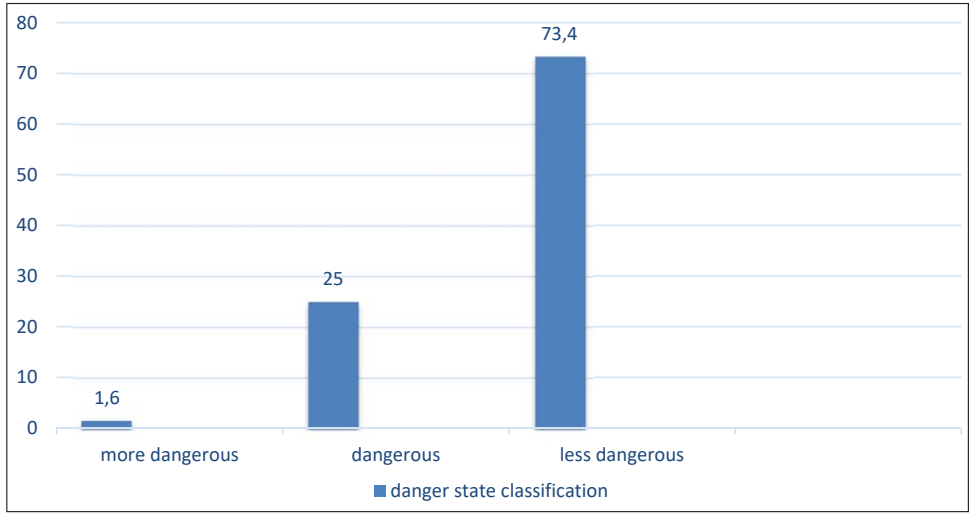


Graph 1: The distribution of the Landscaping Unit Employee according to the working duration in the workplace

2.2. The state of the Personnel of In-Service Training, Experience and Measures For Accidents

In the study, it has been detected from the training content that nearly all the personnel (84,4%) took part in the training and they were trained on the cleaning methods, the usage of cleaning materials, protection from the accidents, hygiene, maintenance of the equipment, infection control and first-aid respectively during these training within the scope of occupational health and safety. It was determined that 43,8% of the employee should be trained once a year and 37,5% of them once in 6-months. And the majority of the personnel who took part in these trainings (73,4%) regard their workplace as less dangerous in the emergency classification of the workplace (Graph 2).

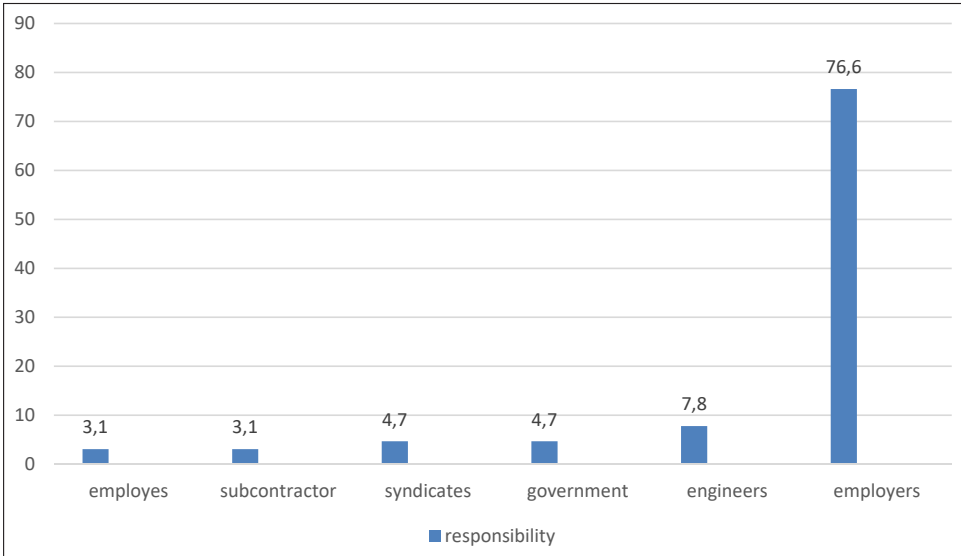
In a study carried out to detect the factors that are effective in the happening of occupational accidents, it was suggested that the fact that the employers do not give much importance to the training causes most accidents (78, 6%)(Çalık, 1989). As a matter of fact, the rate of the people who have not been exposed to any physical dangers in that workplace has been found as 99, 6%. This situation shows that there is an intense proportion in the relation between the increase in the accidents and the training.



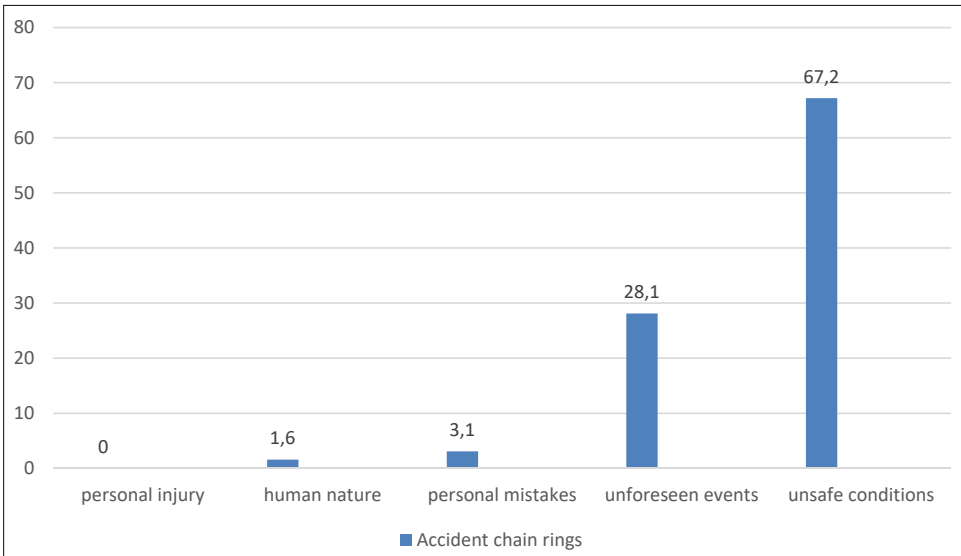
Graph 2: The distribution of the Landscaping Unit Employee according to the danger state classification in the workplace

It has been found out that 76,5% of the employee who work there have been working in the same work place for over 15 years. So, this situation helps the employee learn the dangers in the work place and how to protect themselves against them and leads to an increased sense of responsibility. Such factors as having little knowledge about the causes of arising accidents, lack of training on protection against accidents, being inexperienced for the duties being carried out are significant in the arising accidents (Erkal and Şafak, 1998). The studies conducted to find the causes of occupational accidents have suggested different results for the relation between the job experience and occupational accident. A large proportion of the studies conducted have suggested that the frequency of occupational accidents, among inexperienced employee is higher than that of experienced ones (Güney, 1990). In other words, the higher the job experience is, the fewer the accidents happen. Occupational inexperience is regarded as the causative factor for the accidents. Accidents rate for the inexperienced employees who have just started their jobs is higher, and accordingly they gain more tendency and practice to work once they have become more experienced (Gerek, 1998).

The personnel who took part in the study think that the responsibility mostly belongs to the employer (76,6%) in the arising occupational accidents, and they have come to the idea that the eliminating the unfavourable conditions has the biggest importance in preventing occupational accidents (Graph 3 and 4).



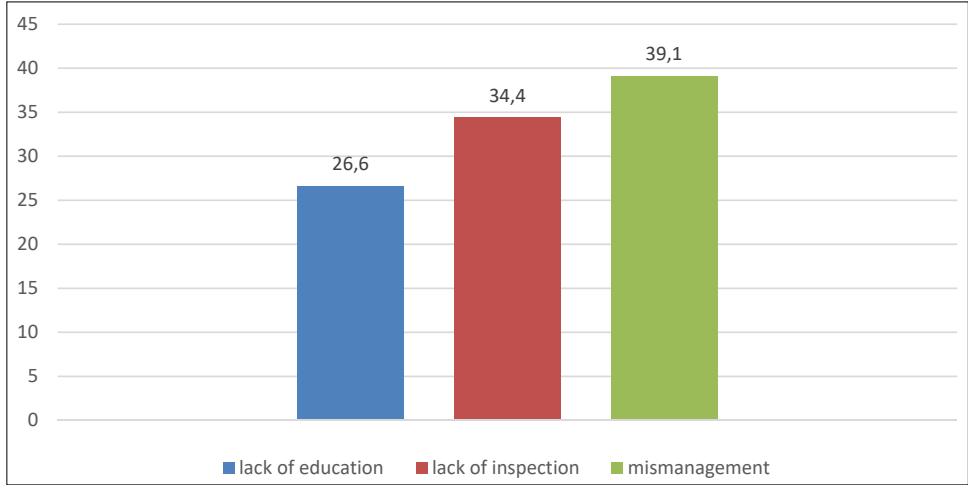
Graph 3: The distribution of the people who are found responsible for the arising occupational accidents



Graph 4: The distribution of accident chain rings in preventing the accidents

The reasons which are effective in arising the occupational accidents are specified as lack of education (26, 6%), mismanagement (39, 1%), lack of inspection (34, 4%), (Graph 5). This situation has led to the idea that the operations of training, management

and inspection should be conducted in a coordinated way in preventing occupational accidents.



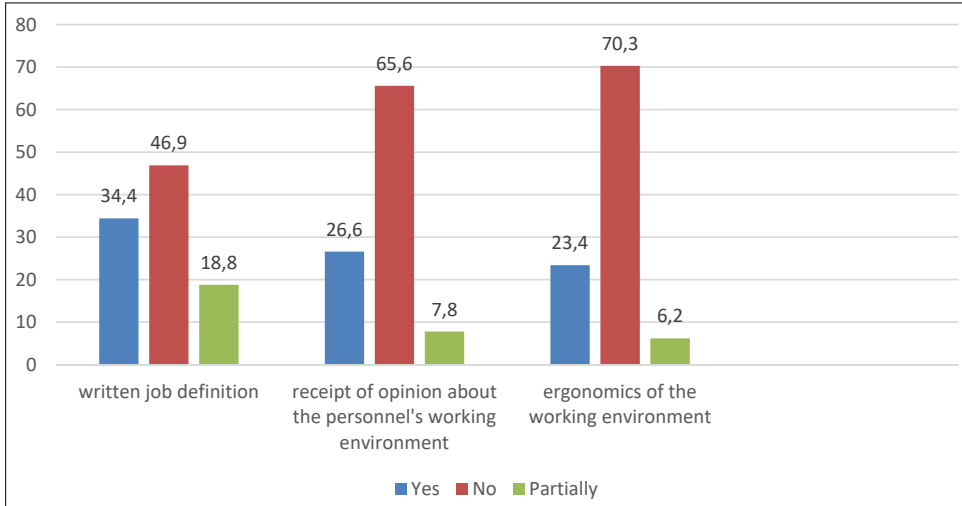
Graph 5: The reasons for the arising occupational accidents

2.3. Personnel's Workplace and Administrative Relations

Personnel's opinions on their workplace as follow; 'I don't have any written job definition which is clear, bordered and related to the things I need to do'. (46, 9%) 'They do not ask our opinions about our workplace and the arrangements on our working conditions'. (65, 6%) 'Our working place wasn't arranged to protect our physical health. (70, 3%) Sufficient safety measurements aren't taken to in the unit we work. (53, 1%). (Graph 6) However 56, 2% of the personnel think that the unit they work in is threatening their health. There is a significant relationship between workplace order and in the arising the accidents. When the working order and workplace's environment is bad, occupational accidents arise more frequently. The coordinate of the workplace and adaptation in the workplace have affected the motivation and morale of the employees positively (Camkurt, 2007).

The opinions on management are as follow; 'we can't find the opportunity to tell our problems to the enterprise management' (45, 3%). However most of the personnel have thought that enterprise management take measures about the occupational safety of the personnel. The studies have shown that the increase of the knowledge arriving to the personnel has a positive effect on satisfaction of the personnel and perception of fairness. In this respect, the organisation bodies and issues interacting between the employees and the senior staff are not only communication means but also a strong

strategy that triggers the development of eagerness to work and job satisfaction and the justice among the employee (Putti and Aryee, 1990).



Graph 6: Personnel’s views on working environment

2.4. The Personnel’s Views on Occupational health and safety

When the views of the personnel on occupational health and safety are analyzed, they are as follow; “I do not have any idea about when the institution that I work for will be subject to the Occupational health and safety law no. 6331.”(98, 4%), “Institutional knowledge level is very low on the issue of Occupational health and safety.” (48, 4%), “A doctor should be assigned to work in our institution within the scope of Occupational health and safety.” (68, 8%), “The employee should be given the right for denial to work in the safety-critical duties with regard to labour act.” (64, 1%), “What is important in the issue of occupational health and safety is the teamwork.” (65, 6%), “The employee should be trained in order to play more active roles in Occupational health and safety”. (54, 7%), “The biggest factor triggering the increased awareness on Occupational health and safety in Turkey is the public backlash to the occupational accidents.” (56, 2%), “The weakest point of Occupational health and safety in Turkey is the labour inspection.” (93, 9%), “The priority for the Occupational health and safety laws should be given to the tight inspection measures.”(65, 6%), “The fact that the employee that have low income become organised (union activities) and stand for their rights will help the level of occupational health and safety increase.”(76, 6%).

III. Conclusion and Suggestions

Occupational accidents and diseases whose number is reaching non-negligible dimensions have become a very important issue for employee, organisation, government and society. The conclusions obtained from this study aiming to determine the consciousness level on occupational health and safeties of the personnel working in the landscaping unit are as below:

- Although nearly all the personnel were trained on occupational health and safety, more than half of the personnel still state that they want to be trained on occupational health and safety on a regular basis.
- More than half of the personnel state that the mismanagement and the lack of inspection are the biggest causatives in occupational accidents.
- More than half of the personnel think that the workplaces are not ergonomic and security measures are not taken enough.
- More than half of the personnel emphasize that they are not informed of the vision of the foundation by the foundation itself.
- Nearly half of the personnel accept that the foundation has a low knowledge level on occupational health and safety.
- The personnel regard the teamwork as an important part of occupational health and safety.
- The personnel think that the tight control is the key factor on occupational health and safety.
- Nearly all the personnel are in the opinion that the weakest point is 'Labour Inspection' in occupational health and safety.
- The personnel think that the union activities will be helpful in increasing the level of occupational health and safety.
- It is seen that the employee do not have enough knowledge on the regulations of occupational health and safety.

In accordance with these conclusions;

The department of human resources should be trained in order to get the expected efficiency from public institutions. The employee should be informed by means of in-service trainings while starting the job or when they change their occupations, the knowledge acquired during the training should be inspected on whether they are

applied while working or not, and any kinds of measures required for occupational health and safety in the workplaces should be taken;

The institutions that ignore their employee and regard them as only simple employee cannot be successful. So, the participation of the employee in the issues that are related to them should be allowed at a certain level and their ideas and suggestions on labour/operation should be taken into consideration.

- Job definitions of the employee should be expressed clearly.
- Medical services given by office doctors should be increased.
- Occupational accidents happening in the institution should be inspected and analyzed in terms of quality and quantity, and necessary measures should be taken accordingly.
- The managing staff should learn modern management techniques and work up a positive connection with the personnel.
- In order to ensure the health and safety of the personnel, the working environment provided by the institution should be made suitable for them and the tools and materials that are used should be ergonomic.
- Legal reforms should be made in a way to satisfy the demand of the employee.
- The personnel should be assigned to the duties that they can do.
- The personnel should be taught to get into the habit of using the tools and materials that are necessary for protecting themselves.
- The employee should be more informed about the changes in law and regulations.
- Also it is suggested that the training programmes that are being provided within the body of Atatürk University with the aim of adopting the occupation safety culture in the institutions be continued at regular intervals and the permanence of the training be enabled.

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