

# Perception of Employees in the Implementation of a Safe Workplace in the Municipal Offices of a Local Government in Zambales

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**Abstract**— The research study aimed to determine the perception of employees in the implementation of a safe workplace in the Municipal Offices of Iba. The study made use of the descriptive- survey research design with the aid of questionnaires as the main instrument in gathering the data. The respondents were the one hundred municipal employees of the offices in a local government unit of Iba in the Province of Zambales. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for the analysis and statistical treatment of the data.

The employees are generally female adult with bachelor's degree holder and have serve the office for some years with regular/permanent status commonly working as an Admin Aide position. They strongly agree that there is an implementation of a safe workplace in the office and strongly disagree that there are challenges in the implementation of a safe workplace. There was a significant difference of the employees' perception towards the implementation of a safe workplace when they are grouped according to sex and there were positive slow or slight correlations between respondent's perception on the implementation of the current safe workplace practices and the perceived challenges in the implementation of the current safe workplace.

Based on the findings of the study, the following are the recommendations: The office may consider desks and table's floor plan following the health protocols issued by the IATF. The office may consider innovations or new systems of tracking and tracing COVID-19 patients. The department may consider using strategies to ensure that workplace support measures are available to all and that all workers know, understand, and are comfortable with them. To maintain physical distancing, the office is suggested to continue alternative work arrangements and strictly follow the guidelines in wearing masks and shields in the office and observe the health and safety protocols.

**Keywords**— Challenges, physical distancing, safe workplace, tracking and tracing.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the issues related to the organizational workplace and management impact on safety performance particularly the function of safety management has started to gain attention from any organizations (Nor Azimah, 2009). Good occupational safety management can have a positive effect, on competitiveness variables and financial performance (Fernández-Muñiz, Montes-Peón, & Vázquez-Ordáz, 2009). It is crucial to measure employees' perceptions towards occupational safety workplace practices in the organizations for continual improvement development of occupational safety implementation.

In order to cultivate positive beliefs, practices, norms and attitudes among all in an organization, the role of management and the involvement of all employees play as important role in safe organizational culture (Mohd Saidin and Abdul Hakim, 2007). Nielsen (2013) stated that lack of management commitment to safety has resulted in poor safety performance in an organization. The lack of commitment for safety management is reflected by the absence of safety objectives, formal safety policies and systematic preventive effort. This situation will greatly influence the employees' perception towards occupational safety management in the organization. According to Fernández-Muñiz, (2009), policies, strategies and procedures should be included and be fully integrated into organization to establish a good safety management system. The dominant priority for the employees is productivity, whereas

occupational safety management does not seem to be part of organization. Nevertheless, today, safety management is no longer treated as secondary in the business context rather it is treated as a culture (Mohd Saidin and Abdul Hakim, 2007).

Workers' opinions of a safe workplace have long been considered a key indicator of safety performance, making it a useful proactive management tool. Consistent with this observation, researchers have noted that workers have a positive and negative perception of safety workplace. In an announce lockdown due to diseases like cholera, coronavirus, etc. tend to engage in unsafe areas, which in turn increase their susceptibility to discontinue the work. Similarly, workers who perceive job anxiety and stress have exhibited a drop in safety motivation and compliance. On the other hand, workers with a positive perception of their workplace safety have registered to accept to follow safety guidelines leads to continue their job. In turn, influence at safe work environment extent to which that the workers perceive their organizations as being supportive, concerned and caring about their general well-being of their employees.

Organizations have begun to pay attention to how organisational and management influences safety performance, particularly the role of health and safety management, according to current trends. Major disasters have sparked interest in health and safety management, highlighting management's failures to protect the health and safety of their employees and, as a result, to comply with occupational health and safety legislation in order to fulfil

their responsibilities as an employer to ensure that workers have a safe working environment (Hale, Heming, Carthey & Kirwan, 2007).

This study is associated with the existing theories, as such risk perception theory and social control theory. The risk perception theory provides a basic methodological approach to the identification and assessment of safety and security concerns by recognising threats, risk analysis, and risk management technique selection to the theory of safety and security. The basic terms of risk theory are applied to the theory of safety and security. Risk theory tries to explain why people make decisions when they are uncertain about the future. Typically, a situation in which risk theory can be used entails a number of possible world states, a number of possible decisions, and a result for each state and decision combination.

The notion of social control has a wide range of applications that go beyond safety and risk reduction. Hirschi (1969) proposed the social control hypothesis, which claims that being connected to organisations improves behaviour conformity, which can minimise the likelihood of high-risk conduct. The research in this area shows that an individual's connection to and affiliation with schools or workplaces has a positive influence on risk perception.

Employee involvement in volunteer or safety initiatives has been shown to increase risk awareness and reduce workplace risk taking. Participating in hazard identification and contributing to workplace safety improvement strengthens a person's connection to a company and leads to safer work practises (Clarke & Ward, 2006; Neal, 2000).

In addition, the need for research on the effectiveness of occupational safety management is vital to ensure continuous occupational safety performance improvement of the organization. The purpose of this study is to present the employees' perception on the implementation of the safe workplace.

#### A. Significance of the Study

Similar organizations would benefit from the study concerning the perception of employees on the implementation of a safe workplace in the Municipal offices of the Local Government of Iba and contribute the following:

*Employees.* The result of this study would help the employees to understand the significance of a safe workplace and its effect to the productivity of an employee in a public organization.

*Iba Municipal Office.* The study would give them an idea on how to improve or develop safety workplace practices in despite of the events like pandemic and workplace pressures.

*Province of Zambales.* The study is significant to the Local Government Offices throughout Zambales, piloted to the capital, LGU- Iba, concerning the safety workplace practices of the units.

*Researchers,* it would provide answers to the question and problems that the researcher is achieving to know. Finally, it would be able to determine the effect of employees' perception to establish a safe workplace practice in a pandemic situation.

*Future Researchers,* this study would serve as a reference for the future researchers, who would conduct similar or

related studies about employee perception on the implementation of a safe workplace practices.

#### B. Statement of the Problem

The main purpose of the study conducted is to assess the perception of employees on the implementation and challenges of a safe workplace in the Municipal Offices, in the Local Government of Iba, Zambales. Specifically, it aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographics profile of the respondents in terms of:
  - 1.1 Age;
  - 1.2 Sex;
  - 1.3 Highest Educational Attainment;
  - 1.4 Number of Years in Service;
  - 1.5 Employment Status;
  - 1.6 Position of Employment;
2. How do the employees perceive in the implementation of the current safe workplace practices as to:
  - 2.1 Facilities, Building, and Operations
  - 2.2 Tracking and Tracing;
  - 2.3 Physical Distancing;
  - 2.4 Wearing Face Masks and Shields;
  - 2.5 Scheduled Sanitation and Disinfection;
  - 2.6 Government Policies and Guidelines
  - 2.7 Administrative Support
3. How do the employees perceive the challenges in the implementation of the safe work practices as to:
  - 3.1 Facilities, Building, and Operations
  - 3.2 Tracking and Tracing;
  - 3.3 Physical Distancing;
  - 3.4 Wearing Face Masks and Shields;
  - 3.5 Scheduled Sanitation and Disinfection;
4. Is there a significant difference on the employee's perception on the implementation of the safe workplace when they grouped according to their profile?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the perception of the respondents in the implementation of the current safe workplace practices and the perceived challenges on the implementation of a safe workplace?

## II. METHODOLOGY

This study made use of the descriptive type of research. This is used to determine the perception of employees in the implementation of safe workplace practices in the Municipal Offices in the Local Government of Zambales, particularly at the capital, LGU-Iba. The instrument used to gather data is the questionnaire which consists of 2 parts. These respondents were chosen using a convenience stratified sampling technique based on the availability of the respondents that were used in this study.

#### A. Materials and Methods

The data collected from the questionnaire were tallied, analyzed, interpreted and summarized accordingly.

Listed below are the following statistical tools used in interpreting the gathered data:

1. Frequency and Percentage
2. Weighted Arithmetic Mean

3. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)
4. Pearson-r
5. 4- point Likert Scale

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

TABLE I. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents According to Profile Variables.

Age	Frequency (f)	Percentage %
56-65	13	13%
51-55	10	10%
46-50	13	13%
41-45	7	7%
36-40	12	12%
31-35	13	13%
26-30	18	18%
18-25	14	14%
Total	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>
Mean of Age = 39.32		
Sex	Frequency (f)	Percentage %
Male	45	45%
Female	55	55%
Total	100	100%
Highest Educational Attainment	Frequency (f)	Percentage %
Doctorate Degree	0	0%
Doctorate Degree with Doctorate Units	0	0%
Master's Degree	6	6%
Master's Degree with Master's Units	2	2%
Bachelor's Degree	75	75%
Vocational Course	10	10%
High School Graduate	4	4%
High School Level	1	1%
Elementary Graduate	0	0%
Others/ Specify	2	2%
Total	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>
Number of Years in Service	Frequency (f)	Percentage %
41 years and above	2	2%
36 - 40 years	0	0%
31 - 35 years	13	13%
26 - 30 years	7	7%
21 - 25 years	5	5%
16 - 20 years	14	14%
11 - 15 years	5	5%
6 - 10 years	22	22%
1 - 5 years	25	25%
Below 1 year	7	7%
Total	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>
Employment Status	Frequency (f)	Percentage %
Regular/ Permanent	63	63%
Probationary	4	4%
Contractual	10	10%
Job Order	23	23%
Total	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>
Position of Employment	Frequency (f)	Percentage %
Supervisory Level	23	23%
Administrative Assistant	10	10%
Admin Aide	37	37%
Rank and File	28	28%
Others/ Specify	2	2%
Total	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Evidently, on age variable signifies that majority of the respondents are aged 26-30 years old with 18%. According to

the Philippine Statistics Authority's January 2019 Labor Force Survey, the age group 25-34 years old had the highest number of employed people, with the majority working in the service and government sectors.

Table 1 implies that majority of the respondents/ employees across various offices in the Municipal offices in the Local Government of Iba in the sex variable were female with 55%. The data presented contrasts with the National Economic and Development Authority (2019) study, which found that women's labor force participation rates are consistently lower than men's across all levels of education. This is a strong indication that the Municipality of Iba constantly addressing gender disparities in terms of employability.

Majority working in the Municipality of Iba were bachelor's degree holders with 75%. Schudde and Bernell (2019) states that those with more education-particularly those who attain bachelor's degree or higher experience fewer unemployment spells over the course of young adulthood.

The respondents working in the Municipality of Iba had 1-5 years of service with 25%. The respondents were employed under a regular/ permanent position with 63% and were under Admin Aide level of position of employment with 37%. According to the International Labor Organization's (2019) study titled "COVID-19 Labor Market Impact in the Philippines," the majority of the high-risk sectors consist of industries/ offices that are likely to remain operational with containment measures in place, such as those who work in a government, particularly those with a regular or permanent status.

TABLE II. Summary of Responses towards Perception of Respondents toward the Implementation of the Current Safe Workplace Practices

Implementation Variable	Weighted Mean	Qualitative Equivalent
Facilities, Buildings, and Operations	3.38	Strongly Agree
Tracking and Tracing	3.33	Strongly Agree
Physical Distancing	3.39	Strongly Agree
Wearing of Face Masks and Shields	3.48	Strongly Agree
Scheduled Sanitation and Disinfection	3.34	Strongly Agree
Government Policies and Guidelines	3.40	Strongly Agree
Administrative Support	3.34	Strongly Agree
Grand Mean	<b>3.38</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

Table 2 shows the overall mean of every given variable under the Perception of Respondents toward the different Implementation of the current Safe Workplace Practices as such Facilities, Buildings and Operations, (3.38), Tracking and Tracing, (3.33), Physical Distancing, (3.39), Wearing Face Masks and Shields, (3.48), Scheduled Sanitation and Disinfection, (3.34), Government Policies and Guidelines, (3.40) and Administrative Support, (3.34). The qualitative interpretation of the variables is "Strongly Agreed" by the respondents.

According to Sangkham (2020) in his case study titled "Face mask and medical waste disposal during the novel COVID-19 pandemic in Asia," millions of contaminated face masks, gloves and materials worn during these crises are

undergoing the irreversible process of becoming infectious waste. This, in turn, will cause environmental and health problems if these will not dispose properly. Amidst COVID-19 pandemic, a wide range of intervention have been proposed to control it, including contact tracing (Juneau, 2020). World Health Organizations (WHO) guidelines for contact tracing state that “At least 80% of new cases [should] have their close contacts traced and in quarantine within 72 hours of case confirmation” (WHO, 2020). Physical distancing interventions were associated with reductions in the incidence of COVID-19 globally (BMJ, 2020). The major goal of physical separation is to prevent COVID-19 from spreading more quickly and to provide public health and healthcare services more time to prepare for disease prevention and management. Prem K et al., et al., et al (2020). According to Howard, Huang and Li (2021) states that public mask wearing is most effective at reducing spread of the virus when compliance is high. Individual, object and space sanitation are needed to contain the spread of COVID-19 (Khan and Yadav, 2020). The purpose of any sanitization procedure is to eliminate the virus and render it inactive. In addition, observing individual disinfection guidelines such as regular hand washing and use of disinfectants show a significant effect on the COVID-19 inactivation (De Gruyter, 2020). In the COVID-19 crisis, the Philippine government and its public has immediately recognized the importance of the role of government policies in every aspect like in tourism, travels, and even office policies (Vallejo and Ong, 2020). Employees should also need to embrace the use of advancement technologies in attending duties in the office during this new normal (Mohalik 2020).

TABLE III. Summary of Responses towards Perception of Respondents toward the Challenges in the Implementation of the Current Safe Workplace

Challenges Variable	Overall Weighted Mean	Qualitative Interpretation
Facilities, Buildings, and Operations	2.22	Disagree
Tracking and Tracing	2.36	Disagree
Physical Distancing	2.08	Disagree
Wearing of Face Masks and Shields	2.08	Disagree
Scheduled Sanitation and Disinfection	2.04	Disagree
Grand Mean	<b>2.16</b>	Disagree

Table 3 shows the overall mean of every given variable under the Perception of Respondents toward the different Challenges in the Implementation of the current Safe Workplace as such Facilities, Buildings and Operations, (2.22), Tracking and Tracing, (2.36), Physical Distancing, (2.08), Wearing Face Masks and Shields, (2.08), Scheduled Sanitation and Disinfection, (2.04). The overall weighted mean is 2.16, with the qualitative interpretation of “Disagree.”

During the COVID-19 pandemic, office building employers, owners and managers, and operations specialist can take the following steps to create a safe and healthy workplace for workers and clients: [1] Before resuming business operations, check the building to see if it’s ready for occupancy, [2] Identify where and how workers might be exposed to COVID-19 at work and [3] Develop hazard controls to reduce transmission of COVID-19 (CDCP, 2021.) According to Girum, Lentiro and Sisay (2020) states the

substantial impact and benefits of quarantine, contact tracing, screening, and isolation in different settings as preventive measures to contain the spread of coronavirus.

To contain widespread infection and to reduce morbidity and mortality among workers and employees and others in contact with potentially infected people, optimum use of facemasks and the observance of physical or social distancing are integral. In an article published by Frontiers In (2021) states that wearing face masks and face shield is recommended as part of personal protective equipment (PPE) as a public health measure to prevent the spread of corona virus. In the preview of sanitation and disinfection, the virus that causes COVID-19 can land on surfaces and it’s possible for people to become infected if they touch those surfaces and then touch their nose, mouth, or eyes (CDCP, 2021) that’s why infection control strategies are highly recommended which involves environmental cleaning and workspace disinfections.

TABLE IV. Summary of Responses of Significant Difference on the Perception of Respondents toward the Implementation of the Current Safe Workplace Practices when group according to Profile variables.

Variable	Null Hypothesis according to Profile Variables
Facilities, Buildings, and Operations	Accepted
Tracking and Tracing	Accepted
Physical Distancing	Accepted
Wearing of Face Masks and Shields	Accepted, except sex profile variables
Scheduled Sanitation and Disinfection	Accepted
Government Policies and Guidelines	Accepted, except for position of employment
Administrative Support	Accepted

Table 4 shows the significant difference of the perception of respondents in the implementation of a safe workplace. There is no significant difference on the perception of respondents in the implementation of a safe workplace as to Facilities, Buildings and Operations, Tracking and Tracing, Physical Distancing, Scheduled Sanitation and Disinfection and Administrative Support when grouped according to given profile variables, therefore the Null Hypothesis is Accepted.

The variable on Wearing Face masks and shield, the Null Hypothesis is Accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference on the perception of respondents in the implementation of a safe workplace as to wearing of facemasks and shields when grouped according to given profile variables except sex profile variables. However, the computed significant value of sex profile variable (0.03) is lower than (<) 0.05 Alpha Level of Significance, therefore the Null Hypothesis is rejected. Thus, without a vaccine in distribution, masks are one of the few control measures available for protection against the virus because they serve as a physical barrier between people (Greenhalgh, 2020). Not only do masks protect the wearer from droplets and some smaller airborne particles, but they also provide source control, stopping particles coming from a wearer. Study of the filtration efficiency of different fabrics has shown that even cotton weaves and blends can block viral transmission (Chu, 2020), so masks can be made virtually cost-free with

household materials.

Another variable as such, Government Policies and Guidelines, the Null Hypothesis is Accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference on the perception of respondents in the implementation of a safe workplace as to government policies and guidelines when grouped according to given profile variables except position of employment. However, the computed significant value of position of employment profile variable (0.005) are lower than (<) 0.05 Alpha Level of Significance, therefore the Null Hypothesis is rejected. In spite of the numerous policy instruments, guidelines and standards for Occupational Health and Safety (OHS), gaps and issues identified relate to the lack of awareness among rights-holders on the provision of 'just and humane terms and conditions of work'; and among duty-bearers, unclear scope of policies in implementing OHS system elements (i.e., governance, information systems, financing, products and technologies, health service delivery, and human resources) (OSH, 2020).

TABLE V. Pearson Product Moment of Correlation Coefficient to Test Significant Relationship between Respondent's Perception on the Implementation of the Current Safe Workplace Practices and the Perceived Challenges in the Implementation of the Current Safe Workplace

Perception on the Implementation of the Current Safe Workplace Practices		Grade	Decision	Interpretation
Perceived Challenges in the Implementation of the Current Safe Workplace	Pearson Correlation	0.25	<b>Reject H<sub>0</sub></b> (Significant)	Low or Slight Correlation
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.011		
	N	100		

Table 5 shows the Pearson-r or the Pearson Product Moment of Correlation Coefficient to test significant relationship between respondent's perception on the implementation of the current safe workplace practices and the perceived challenges in the implementation of the current safe workplace. The computed Pearson-r value between the between respondent's perception on the implementation of the current safe workplace practices and the perceived challenges in the implementation of the current safe workplace was (0.20) which denotes low or slight positive correlation. The computed significant value of (0.011) which is lower than (<) 0.05 Alpha Level of Significance, therefore the Null Hypothesis is rejected, hence there is significant relationship.

OSHA reported supervisor-identified obstacles to making safety changes in the workplace (Roughton & Mercurio, 2002). Supervisors stated that there seems to be no funding for needed changes, risk in spending money for safety, fear of responsibility, and competing priorities with production. It is stated supervisors were overwhelmed with workload, high employee turnover, double standards for productivity and safety, problems with lack of communication, and perceived lack of trust in the organization. When asked about making safety changes in the workplace, workers' comments included fear and lack of trust of management, communication difficulties, competing priorities with production, problems with responsibility, lack of consistency, lack of follow-through, and a feeling of "them versus us."

## VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions and recommendations are drawn:

1. The employees are generally female and aged 39.32 years old with bachelor's degree holder and have had 1-5 years in service, a regular/permanent status commonly working as an Admin Aide position.
2. The respondents perceived they "Strongly Agree" that there is an implementation of safe workplace practices in all given variables for which the "Tracking and Tracing" is the lowest among all variables that has 3.33 weighted mean.
3. The respondents perceived they "Disagree" that there is a different challenge in the implementation of safe workplace practices.
4. The office must adopt desks and table's floor plan in accordance with the health protocols issued by the IATF.
5. The office must embrace innovations or new systems of tracking and tracing COVID-19 patients.
6. The department should ensure that workplace support measures are available to all, and that all workers know, understand, and are comfortable with them.
7. To maintain physical distancing, the office must still adopt alternative work arrangement.
8. The office must strictly follow the guidelines in wearing masks and shield in the office.
9. The department should provide series of virtual trainings/ psychosocial support to maintain work motivation despite of COVID-19 pandemic.
10. Follow health protocols set by the IATF in crafting work policies.
11. Conduct a follow-up and intensive study so as to validate the findings of the study.

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