



Management commitment to safety vs. employee perceived safety training and association with future injury

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 22 June 2011

Received in revised form 14 October 2011

Accepted 5 December 2011

Keywords:

Management commitment to safety

Employee perceived safety training

Future injury

Restaurant workers

ABSTRACT

Objectives: The purpose of this study is to explore and examine, specific to the restaurant industry, two important constructs emerging from the safety climate literature: *employee perceptions of safety training* and *management commitment to safety*. Are these two separate constructs? Are there both individual- and shared group-level safety perceptions for these two constructs? What are the relationships between these two constructs and future injury outcomes?

Methods: A total of 419 employees from 34 limited-service restaurants participated in a prospective cohort study. Employees' perceptions of *management commitment to safety* and *safety training* and demographic variables were collected at the baseline. The survey questions were made available in three languages: English, Spanish, and Portuguese. For the following 12 weeks, participants reported their injury experience and weekly work hours. A multivariate negative binomial generalized estimating equation model with compound symmetry covariance structure was used to assess the association between the rate of self-reported injuries and measures of safety perceptions.

Results: Even though results showed that the correlation between employees' *perceived safety training* and *management commitment to safety* was high, confirmatory factor analysis of measurement models showed that two separate factors fit the model better than as two dimensions of a single factor. Homogeneity tests showed that there was a shared perception of the factor of *management commitment to safety* for the restaurant workers but there was no consistent perception among them for the factor of *perceived safety training*. Both individual employees' *perceived management commitment to safety* and *perceptions of safety training* can predict employees' subsequent injuries above and beyond demographic variables. However, there was no significant relationship between future injury and employees' shared perception of *management commitment to safety*. Further, our results suggest that the variable of employees' *perceived safety training* could be a proximal predictor of future injury outcome which mediated the relationship between employees' *perceived management commitment to safety* (a distal predictor) and injury outcome. We propose that when employees perceive their management as having a high level of commitment to safety, they will also perceive that the safety training of the organization is good, which will then further predict future injury experience of the employees.

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1. Introduction

Restaurants employ about 6.4% of the total U.S. workforce, approximately 9.7 million workers, according to the 2007

occupational employment statistics provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007). BLS projects that this will increase by 396,000 workers over the 10-year period from 2008 to 2018, the fourth largest increase among occupational categories (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007). In addition, the restaurant industry is ranked third in the total count of injuries and illnesses for industries with 100,000 or more nonfatal cases (after schools and hospitals) (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008). Since restaurant workers are at risk of injury and restaurants represent a large proportion of the total workforce, there is a continuing need to identify

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