

# Safety Leadership, Employee Practices, And Occupational Health And Safety Compliance in Western Visayas

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**Abstract:** The research aimed to examine the safety leadership, employee practices, and occupational health and safety compliance in Western Visayas. Employing a descriptive correlational research design, data were collected from 390 respondents, comprising safety officers, HR personnel, and employees, using a four-point Likert scale.

The findings reveal that safety leadership is generally effective, particularly in the area of training, although motivation among leaders requires further improvement. Employee workplace safety practices are moderately observed; while there is high compliance in the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), participation in safety programs and hazard reporting remains limited. OHS compliance is strong, especially in emergency preparedness and hazard control, though workplace health and wellness programs need more emphasis. A statistically significant difference in safety perceptions based on socio-demographic profiles was noted. Moreover, safety leadership shows a strong positive correlation with both employee practices and OHS compliance, accounting for 67% of the variance in workplace safety.

Despite some safety challenges, they do not significantly impact overall compliance. The study recommends customized safety training, improved motivational strategies, greater employee involvement, expanded health and wellness initiatives, and focused leadership development. Continuous monitoring and systematic implementation of safety culture initiatives are essential for building a resilient, safety-conscious workforce.

*Keywords:* safety leadership, employee practices, occupational health and safety compliance, workplace safety

## 1. Introduction

Workplace safety is a critical concern in the 21st century, with the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2023) reporting over 2.78 million work-related deaths and 374 million non-fatal accidents annually. In the Philippines, Republic Act No. 11058 (2018) mandates employers to provide safe working conditions; however, implementation remains inconsistent, especially in high-risk sectors like construction and manufacturing (DOLE, 2022). In Western Visayas, particularly in Iloilo City, recurring safety violations and weak compliance highlight the need for improved safety practices (Iloilo City Labor Office, 2023). While some firms demonstrate strong leadership and engagement, others struggle to operationalize safety policies. Studies by Del Rosario and Santos (2021) and Mendoza (2020) stress the role of safety leadership—particularly in communication, commitment, and feedback—in shaping employee behavior and reducing risks. Yet, localized research in Western Visayas remains limited. This study was prompted by observed inconsistencies in leadership communication and employee adherence to protocols in various firms. Guided by Zohar's (1980) Safety Leadership Theory, Bass and Avolio's (1994) Transformational Leadership Theory, and Geller's (2001) Behavior-Based Safety Model, the research investigates the interplay among safety leadership, employee practices, and occupational health and safety compliance. These frameworks provide a comprehensive basis for understanding the structural and behavioral elements influencing workplace safety in the region.

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Research Design

The descriptive-correlational research design was employed in this study to systematically examine the relationship between safety leadership, employee workplace practices, and occupational health and safety compliance across industries in Western Visayas. This design is appropriate because it allows the researcher to describe the existing conditions of workplace

safety and to explore possible associations among the key variables without manipulating them. As stated by Fraenkel (2010), descriptive research involves gathering and analyzing data about current conditions and interpreting them meaningfully. The correlational aspect enables the identification of whether and how strongly variables such as leadership behaviors and employee safety practices are related. By using this approach, the study provides valuable insights into how safety leadership influences employee behavior and compliance, forming a solid basis for enhancing safety culture across different organizational settings.

## 2.2 Respondents of the Study

This study involved a total of 390 respondents, composed of safety officers, human resource personnel, and employees from various industries in Iloilo City. The table below shows the distribution of respondents.

Table 1. Respondents of the Study

Industry Sector	Safety Officers	HR Personnel	Employees	Total
Manufacturing	20	15	100	135
Construction	10	10	100	120
Services	10	10	55	75
Healthcare	5	10	45	60
Total	45	45	300	390

## 2.3 Statistical Treatment of Data

To analyze the data, various statistical tools were employed to ensure accurate and meaningful interpretation. Frequency count and percentage were used to determine the number and proportion of respondents in each category. The mean and weighted mean were applied to measure the average responses and the degree to which safety leadership, employee workplace practices, and occupational health and safety compliance were implemented or observed. These were rated using a four-point Likert scale with verbal interpretations for different levels: “Fully Implemented” to “Not Implemented” for safety leadership, “Highly Practiced” to “Not Practiced” for workplace practices, “Highly Compliant” to “Not Compliant” for OHS compliance, and “Often Encountered” to “Never Encountered” for issues and concerns. To assess relationships between variables, Pearson’s correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) was used to measure the strength and direction of associations among safety leadership, employee practices, and OHS compliance. Additionally, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test for significant differences in responses across various industries. All hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 significance level, with the rule that the null hypothesis would be rejected if the  $p$ -value was less than or equal to 0.05, indicating a statistically significant result.

## 3. Results

The Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Age, Sex, Civil Status, Highest Educational Attainment, Employment Status, and Length of Service

The socio-demographic profile of the respondents reveals that the majority belong to the 26-30 age group (30.51%) and are female (53.33%). In terms of civil status, nearly half of the respondents are single (49.23%). Regarding educational attainment, most hold a bachelor’s degree (36.41%), reflecting a well-educated workforce. The majority of respondents are permanent employees (45.90%), indicating job stability within the organization. In terms of length of service, most employees have been working for 1–5 years (36.15%) and 6–10 years (35.13%), suggesting that a significant portion of the workforce is in the early to mid-stages of their careers.

Level of Implementation of Safety Leadership in Terms of Safety Commitment, Safety Communication, Safety Motivation, Safety Training, Safety Monitoring and Feedback

The level of implementation of safety leadership across various aspects—including safety commitment, communication, motivation, training, and monitoring & feedback—was consistently rated as "Implemented." Safety commitment received a categorical mean of 2.9, indicating strong adherence to leadership-driven safety initiatives. Safety communication followed closely with a mean of 2.89, reflecting effective dissemination of safety-related information. Safety motivation scored slightly lower at 2.82, suggesting room for improvement in encouraging employee engagement in safety practices. Safety training received the highest rating, with a categorical mean of 3.14, highlighting its effective implementation. Lastly, safety monitoring and feedback were also rated as implemented, with a mean of 2.95, emphasizing the presence of evaluation mechanisms to ensure compliance. These findings suggest a well-established safety leadership framework, with training being the most effectively implemented aspect.

#### The Level of Employees' Workplace Practices in Terms of Compliance with Safety Procedures, Hazard Identification and Reporting, Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), Participation in Safety Programs, and Risk Management

The level of employees' workplace practices in various safety aspects—compliance with safety procedures, hazard identification and reporting, use of personal protective equipment (PPE), participation in safety programs, and risk management—was consistently rated as "Moderately Practiced." Compliance with safety procedures had a categorical mean of 3.06, indicating a moderate level of adherence to established safety protocols. Hazard identification and reporting followed closely with a mean of 3.04, suggesting that employees recognize workplace hazards but may not consistently report them. The use of PPE received the highest rating, with a mean of 3.38, showing that employees generally comply with protective measures. However, participation in safety programs was rated the lowest at 2.97, indicating a need for stronger engagement in safety initiatives. Lastly, risk management had a mean of 3.1, reflecting a moderate level of proactive risk mitigation. These findings suggest that while employees practice safety measures to a certain extent, there is room for improvement, particularly in hazard reporting and participation in safety programs.

#### The Level of Occupational Health and Safety Compliance in Terms of Adherence to Government-Mandated Safety Standards, Workplace Hazard Control Measures, Incident and Accident Reporting Mechanisms, Emergency Preparedness and Response and Workplace Health and Wellness Programs

The level of occupational health and safety (OHS) compliance across various dimensions—adherence to government-mandated safety standards, workplace hazard control measures, incident and accident reporting mechanisms, emergency preparedness and response, and workplace health and wellness programs—was generally rated as compliant. Adherence to government-mandated safety standards received a categorical mean of 3.3, indicating that regulatory safety requirements are being met. Workplace hazard control measures were rated slightly higher, with a mean of 3.45, reflecting effective implementation of risk mitigation strategies. Similarly, incident and accident reporting mechanisms achieved a mean of 3.43, showing that safety incidents are documented and addressed. Emergency preparedness and response received the highest rating at 3.5, categorizing the organization as highly compliant, suggesting well-established protocols for crisis situations. Lastly, workplace health and wellness programs were rated at 3.17, indicating compliance but with potential areas for enhancement. These findings suggest that while the organization meets OHS standards, continuous improvement—especially in health and wellness initiatives—could further strengthen overall safety compliance.

#### Significant Difference in the Respondents' Perceptions of Safety Leadership, Workplace Practices, and OHS Compliance When Grouped According to Their Socio-Demographic Profiles

The analysis revealed a statistically significant difference in respondents' perceptions of safety leadership, workplace practices, and occupational health and safety (OHS) compliance when grouped according to their socio-demographic profiles. The computed F-value of 3.21 with a p-value of 0.032 confirms this significance at the conventional threshold of  $p < 0.05$ , indicating that perceptions vary among different demographic groups. The Between Groups sum of squares ( $SS = 2.45$ ) and mean square ( $MS = 0.82$ ) highlight differences in perceptions across groups, while the Within Groups sum of squares ( $SS = 10.25$ ) and mean square ( $MS = 0.26$ ) suggest variations within the respondent categories. These findings imply that factors such as age, sex, civil status, education, and employment status may influence how employees perceive safety-related initiatives, emphasizing the need for tailored approaches to safety leadership and compliance.

#### Significant Relationship Between Safety Leadership and Employee Workplace Practices, Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Compliance

The analysis reveals that Safety Leadership (SL) has a strong positive correlation with Employee Workplace Practices ( $r = 0.72$ ) and OHS Compliance ( $r = 0.78$ ), indicating that effective leadership enhances safety practices and compliance. Regression analysis further confirms that Safety Leadership significantly predicts Employee Workplace Practices and OHS Compliance, with 67% of workplace practice variations explained by leadership ( $R^2 = 0.67$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). These findings emphasize the crucial role of safety leadership in promoting a culture of compliance and workplace safety.

#### Issues and Concerns Encountered in the Implementation of Safety Leadership Practices and OHS Compliance in Workplaces

The analysis of issues and concerns in implementing Safety Leadership Practices and OHS Compliance reveals a categorical mean of 2.61, indicating that these challenges are rarely encountered. While some difficulties, such as communication gaps, inconsistent enforcement, and lack of updated safety equipment, exist, they do not significantly disrupt workplace safety initiatives. This suggests that safety leadership and OHS compliance are generally well-managed, with only occasional barriers to full implementation.

#### Proposed Safety Culture Enhancement Program

The Proposed Safety Culture Enhancement Program aims to strengthen Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Compliance in Iloilo City by fostering a proactive and safety-conscious work environment. The initiative focuses on enhancing employee awareness, improving adherence to safety protocols, and ensuring the consistent enforcement of government-mandated OHS regulations. By reinforcing this program, organizations can effectively mitigate workplace risks, promote a culture of accountability, and improve overall employee well-being, ultimately leading to a safer and more productive workforce.

### 4. Discussion

The socio-demographic profile of the respondents reveals a well-educated and stable workforce, with the majority being permanent employees holding a bachelor's degree. A significant number are in the early to mid-stages of their careers, indicating a dynamic and developing labor pool. The implementation of safety leadership practices across industries is generally strong, with safety training emerging as the most effectively executed component. However, safety motivation scored comparatively lower, highlighting a need to strengthen employee engagement initiatives.

In terms of employee workplace safety practices, compliance is moderately observed. The highest adherence is seen in the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), while participation in safety programs and hazard reporting remain areas requiring improvement. Occupational health and safety (OHS) compliance is likewise strong, especially in emergency preparedness and hazard control. Nonetheless, workplace health and wellness programs show potential for further enhancement.

A statistically significant difference was observed in perceptions of safety leadership, employee practices, and OHS compliance when analyzed according to socio-demographic profiles. This finding suggests that safety perceptions vary based on factors such as age, sex, civil status, education, and employment status. Furthermore, safety leadership exhibits a strong positive correlation with both employee workplace practices and OHS compliance. Regression analysis confirms that 67% of the variance in workplace safety can be attributed to effective leadership.

While some issues and concerns in implementing safety leadership and OHS compliance were identified, they are rarely encountered and do not significantly hinder safety efforts. Finally, the implementation of a Safety Culture Enhancement Program is vital in improving workplace safety and ensuring compliance with OHS regulations. Such a program can foster greater employee participation, minimize hazards, and promote a culture of accountability and awareness—ultimately leading to a more resilient and safety-conscious workforce.

### 5. Recommendations

To enhance workplace safety and promote a culture of compliance, organizations are encouraged to implement several key strategies. First, safety programs and training should be tailored to the varying levels of employee experience, ensuring that both new hires and seasoned workers receive relevant, engaging education. Management should also enhance motivational strategies by incorporating incentives, recognition programs, and leadership involvement to foster a proactive safety culture. Active employee participation in safety programs can be strengthened through interactive training, rewards, and increased management engagement in safety-related discussions.

In addition, employers are encouraged to invest in comprehensive workplace health and wellness initiatives. These may include mental health support services, ergonomic improvements, and routine health assessments to ensure overall employee well-being. Safety policies and communication strategies should also be adapted to the diverse needs of the workforce, promoting inclusive and effective safety leadership across demographic groups.

To support long-term success, organizations should prioritize leadership development programs that focus on safety management, enabling leaders to cultivate a culture of accountability and proactive safety behavior. Regular monitoring and evaluation must be conducted to address emerging safety challenges and to maintain high levels of OHS compliance. Finally, a structured approach to integrating safety culture initiatives into daily operations—through frequent training sessions, awareness campaigns, and strict enforcement of government-mandated regulations—ensures that safety practices remain effective, measurable, and sustainable.

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