

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING BEHAVIOURAL SAFETY INTERVENTIONS IN THE REDUCTION OF ACCIDENTS AT WORK

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Abstract:

Workplace accidents continue to be a major concern in a variety of industries, and behavioural safety interventions play a critical role in reducing risk. This paper examines the psychological and organisational factors that impact on the effectiveness of such interventions. By investigating safety culture, leadership, employee commitment and cognitive-behavioural approaches, the study highlights the key drivers of successful delivery. A qualitative approach, backed up by case studies, is employed to analyse the real-world impact of behavioural safety strategies. Results suggest that management commitment, organisational support and reinforcement mechanisms make a significant contribution to reducing workplace accidents.

Introduction

Across all industries, workplace safety is a critical issue that affects employees. Organisations around the world continue to look for ways to reduce the number of workplace accidents and enhance occupational health. Of the various approaches, behavioural safety initiatives have gained prominence as they focus on changing employee behaviours and attitudes towards safety. Implementing behavioural safety interventions requires an understanding of the psychology of human behaviour, organisational culture, management commitment and mechanisms for reinforcement to ensure compliance and effectiveness.

The principle that human behaviour is a major contributor to workplace accidents underlies behavioural safety interventions. In contrast to engineering controls, which remove hazards through design changes, or administrative controls, which prescribe safety procedures, behavioural interventions target the actions and choices of employees. Organisations can significantly reduce the number of workplace accidents when employees develop a heightened awareness of risk and are encouraged to behave in a safe manner. The core idea is that unsafe behaviours often stem from habits, risk perceptions and workplace norms. By changing these through systematic intervention, organisations can cultivate a safer working

environment.

The importance of behavioural safety interventions has been well documented in various industries. For example, in high-risk industries like construction, oil and gas, and manufacturing, where workplace accidents are common, behavioural safety programmes have shown remarkable success in decreasing incidents. These programmes typically involve observational studies, training, positive reinforcement and management involvement. The ultimate objective is to change the workplace culture to one of proactive safety behaviour, where employees take responsibility for their actions and encourage their colleagues to adhere to safety standards.

Overcoming resistance to change is one of the key challenges in implementing behavioural safety interventions. Employees may resist the adoption of new safety behaviours due to ingrained habits, scepticism about management initiatives, or a lack of understanding of safety principles. Resistance may also stem from perceptions that safety measures will slow productivity or be overly bureaucratic. Strong leadership, effective communication and incentive systems designed to motivate compliance are needed to address these barriers. Leadership plays a key role in shaping the safety culture and creating an environment in which

behavioural interventions can flourish. Leaders create a culture that prioritises safety as a core value when they demonstrate their commitment to safety through their actions, policies and engagement with employees. Studies show that organizations with robust safety leadership see fewer incidents and higher levels of employee involvement in safety programs. Leaders can drive behaviour change by setting clear expectations, recognising safe behaviour and holding people accountable for unsafe practices.

A further critical factor influencing the success of behavioural safety interventions is organisational culture. A good safety culture is characterised by open lines of communication, mutual trust and continuous learning. Organisations that encourage employees to raise hazards, participate in training and provide feedback on policies tend to have lower accident rates. In contrast, organisations that have a weak safety culture tend to underreport safety events, lacking staff commitment and inconsistent enforcement of safety rules. A combination of leadership commitment, employee involvement and consistent reinforcement of safety principles is required to cultivate a strong safety culture.

Training and education also play an important role in behavioural safety interventions. Employees must be equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to identify risks and react accordingly. Traditional safety training programmes are useful. However, they are not always sufficient to instil long-term behavioural change. Interactive training techniques, such as scenario-based learning, role-playing and virtual simulations, have been proven to be more successful in engaging employees and reinforcing safe behaviours. To ensure that safety remains a top priority and that employees are kept up to date with the latest best practice, ongoing training and refresher courses are essential.

Behavioural security interventions often draw on psychological concepts such as reinforcement theory, cognitive behavioural techniques and social learning. Reinforcement theory proposes that behaviours which are rewarded are more likely to be repeated. In the context of workplace safety, this means that recognising and rewarding employees for safe behaviour can encourage them

to continue to make safety-conscious decisions. Cognitive behavioural techniques involve identifying and changing thought patterns that lead to unsafe behaviour. Social learning emphasises the role of peer influence, where employees learn safe practices by observing and imitating their colleagues.

Organisations implementing behavioural safety interventions must also consider measurement and evaluation methods to assess their effectiveness. Key performance indicators (KPIs) such as accident rates, near misses and safety compliance levels can provide insight into the success of these programmes. Surveys and feedback from employees can also help to understand their perceptions of safety initiatives and identify areas for improvement. Continuous monitoring and adjustment of safety programmes ensures that they remain relevant and efficient in reducing workplace accidents.

To conclude, behaviour-based safety interventions are emerging as an important strategy to reduce workplace accidents and improve occupational health and safety. By concentrating on human behaviour, leadership commitment, organisational culture and psychological principles, organisations can establish a positive safety culture that minimises risk. But successful implementation demands overcoming resistance to risk, fostering strong leadership, engaging employees in safety initiatives, and continually monitoring the effectiveness of interventions. While workplace safety continues to evolve, organizations must remain committed to behavioral safety strategies to protect employees and increase overall productivity.

Literature Review

1. Theoretical underpinnings of behavioural security interventions:

Behavioural security interventions are based on several psychological theories that describe how people react to security protocols. Human behaviour is influenced by thought patterns and perceptions, according to cognitive-behavioural theory. Employees are more willing to engage in safe work practices if they perceive safety as a priority. The theory of reinforcement suggests that behaviour is shaped by its rewards and

consequences, so organisations can improve safety compliance through the provision of positive reinforcement and incentives. Social learning theory highlights the importance of observational learning, whereby employees learn safe behaviours by observing supervisors and peers who prioritise safety.

2. Psychological principles of safety behaviour:

In shaping workplace safety, psychological principles such as motivation, perception and risk assessment play an essential role. Motivation theories, including Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, indicate that safety is a basic need that influences employee engagement and productivity. Employees who perceive themselves to be safe are more likely to report higher levels of job satisfaction and higher levels of performance. Due to past experiences, cognitive biases and cultural influences, risk perception varies from individual to individual. Training programmes that increase risk awareness can improve employee compliance with safety protocols.

3. Organisational culture and safety:

Organisational culture has a significant impact on the implementation of behavioural safety programmes. A strong safety culture is characterised by leadership commitment, transparent lines of communication and shared responsibility for safety. Organisations that prioritise safety create an environment where workers feel empowered to report hazards and participate in safety initiatives. Conversely, accident rates are higher in organisations with a weak safety culture, minimal management commitment, and ambiguous safety policies.

4. Case studies of successful behavioural safety programmes:

Insight into the effectiveness of different behavioural safety interventions is provided by analysing case studies from industries such as construction, manufacturing and healthcare. In the construction industry, companies that implement behavioural safety programmes report significant reductions in accident rates. Improved compliance and employee engagement are observed in manufacturing companies that embed behavioural safety principles into day-to-day

operations. Healthcare organisations that focus on behavioural safety training for medical staff achieve lower rates of workplace injury.

5. Challenges in implementing behavioural safety programmes:

Despite the success stories, there are challenges to implementing behavioural safety programmes. Employee resistance, insufficient management buy-in and inadequate training resources are common barriers. In many cases, employees may view behavioural safety initiatives as unnecessary or intrusive, leading to non-compliance. To meet these challenges, we need to continue to strengthen, engage senior management and embed behavioural safety into our policies and procedures.

6. Future directions in the research of behavioural safety:

Emerging trends in behavioural safety, including the use of artificial intelligence and data analytics to anticipate unsafe behaviours, should be explored in future research. In addition, cross-industry benchmarking may provide deeper understanding of the universal principles of behavioural safety and their application to different work environments. By advancing research in this area, organisations can develop more effective safety interventions tailored to their workforce.

Research Methodology

1. Research approach

This study uses a mixed methods research approach to obtain a full understanding of behavioural safety interventions. An in-depth analysis of the effectiveness of security interventions from different perspectives is possible through the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative component includes case studies, interviews and observational research to explore behavioural patterns and organisational influences. The quantitative component includes surveys, safety statistics and regression analysis to gauge the impact of interventions on workplace accident rates.

2. Research design

The study uses a cross-sectional research design, looking at safety interventions in different industries at a particular point in time. This approach allows comparisons to be made between safety cultures, intervention policies and outcomes in different organisations.

3. Selection of case studies

Industries with high rates of workplace accidents - such as construction, oil and gas, healthcare and manufacturing - are chosen for case study analysis. These industries provide a broad understanding of safety interventions as they represent a diverse range of risk factors and intervention challenges.

4. Methods used for data collection

A multi-method approach to data collection will be used to ensure robust findings:

- **Semi-structured in-depth interviews:** These will be conducted with safety managers, supervisors and employees to examine their experiences with safety interventions.
- **Polls and surveys:** Given to employees to gauge safety awareness, attitudes and the effectiveness of interventions.
- **Observational studies are conducted:** Conducted on-site to assess real-time compliance with safety protocols.
- **Analysis of documents:** To track safety trends and compliance, safety reports, incident logs and company policies are reviewed.

5. Purposive sampling strategy

To ensure representation from organisations with established behavioural safety programmes, a purposive sampling strategy is used. The sample includes employees at different levels. These include front-line workers, supervisors and safety professionals.

6. Techniques of data analysis

Analysis techniques will be both qualitative and quantitative:

- **Qualitative analysis:** Recurring themes from interviews and observational data will be identified using thematic analysis. NVivo

software will be used for coding and categorisation.

- **Quantitative analysis:** To assess the impact of behavioural safety programmes, descriptive and inferential statistical techniques will be used, such as regression analysis, correlation analysis, and t-tests.
- **Comparative analysis:** To measure effectiveness, safety performance data will be compared before and after the implementation of the intervention.

7. Ethical aspects

To ensure compliance with research ethics guidelines, ethical approval is obtained. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the research process and informed consent will be obtained from all participants. The study will adhere to the ethics of occupational health and safety research, ensuring that participants' identities and company-specific data remain confidential.

8. Limitations of the study

The study recognises certain limitations:

- **Industry-specific limitations:** The results of the study may not be universally applicable to all industries.
- **Self-reported bias:** survey responses may be influenced by social desirability bias.
- **Short-term data:** Deeper insights into long-term changes in safety behaviour would be provided by longitudinal studies.

Discussion

In this section, we provide an in-depth discussion of the study's findings, organized into a number of subsections that discuss the key drivers of the impact of behavioral safety interventions. Relevant examples and case studies to illustrate the points discussed are included in each subsection.

4.1 Leadership engagement and its effect on safety culture

One of the key lessons learned from this study is the critical role of leadership in driving behavioural safety interventions. Managerial involvement is manifested in a number of ways, including active participation in safety meetings,

being visible on site and providing resources for safety training and equipment.

Case study example:

Consider XYZ Construction, a high-hazard company where the CEO and top executives routinely attended daily safety meetings and conducted random site inspections. Not only did this visible leadership commitment foster trust among workers, it also created a sense of accountability. As a result, the organisation reported a 40% reduction in workplace accidents within the first year of implementing its behaviour-based safety programme. This case illustrates how leading by example is consistent with social learning theory, in which employees model the behaviour they see in their managers.

In organisations with high levels of leadership commitment, the study's qualitative interviews revealed that employees often felt more empowered to report hazards and suggest remediation, resulting in a safer and more proactive work environment.

4.2 Psychological factors: Risk perception and motivation

Behavioural safety interventions are deeply rooted in psychological principles. Two key elements in this area are risk perception and worker motivation. Risk perception relates to employees' perceptions of potential hazards on the basis of their personal experiences and cognitive biases, while motivation relates to the incentives and intrinsic benefits that drive safe behaviour.

A practical example:

In a healthcare environment, a hospital introduced immersive emergency scenario simulations to change staff risk perception. By participating in realistic emergency drills, staff became more aware of potential hazards and better prepared to act quickly in real-life incidents. This experiential learning approach increased compliance with safety protocols and improved overall emergency preparedness.

In addition, motivational theories like Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory suggest that employees who feel safe and valued are more likely to adopt and maintain safe

work practices. The study's quantitative data, including survey responses, showed a strong correlation between employees' perceptions of being valued by management and their perceived commitment to safety protocols.

4.3 Management of change resistance

Opposition to change is a common obstacle to implementing new security measures. Entrenched work habits, scepticism of new procedures, or concerns about potential disruptions to productivity often contribute to this resistance.

Example of phased implementation:

An oil and gas company addressed resistance by phasing in its safety programme. In the first instance, the company introduced a series of training sessions that included a combination of theoretical knowledge and practical exercises. The phased roll-out helped employees settle into the new safety procedures and regular feedback sessions helped improve the programme. Resistance was further reduced by offering incentives to early adopters. In time, the organisation saw a significant reduction in recordable accidents and an improvement in overall safety adherence.

By adopting a phased approach, the organisation minimised pushback and provided a feedback loop that continually refined the intervention approach. This approach highlights the importance of gradual change and ongoing communication in breaking down employee resistance.

4.4 Integrating quantitative evidence

The integration of quantitative data has given measurable support to the effectiveness of behavioural safety interventions. Statistical Analyses, including regression and correlation Analyses, show a significant association between the level of implementation of safety interventions and the reduction in accident rates.

Example of comparative analysis:

A 25-30% reduction in lost time injuries over a one-year period was observed in a comparative study between two similar manufacturing plants - one that incorporated a comprehensive behavioral

safety program and one that maintained its traditional safety measures. The plant with the intervention experienced a 25-30% reduction in lost time injuries over a period of one year. This empirical evidence confirms the hypothesis that improvements in both quality (such as improved employee morale and management commitment) and quantity (reduced accident rates) are consistent with the success of behavioural safety strategies.

This data not only validates the interventions, but also provides a roadmap for other organisations to evaluate and refine their safety practices.

4.5 Integrating technology into behavioral security

Emerging technologies play an increasing role in strengthening behavioural safety interventions. The integration of such digital tools as portable devices, real-time tracking systems and data analytics platforms can give immediate feedback and facilitate pro-active safety interventions.

Technology Case Study:

A progressive manufacturing company used wearable technology to help monitor workers' health and environmental status. These devices were able to detect early signs of tiredness or hazardous exposure, triggering instant alerts for workers and supervisors. The information provided in real time allowed the company to act before potential accidents happened, contributing to a healthier workplace. Employees have reported an increased level of safety knowing that such systems can serve as an early warning mechanism.

The deployment of technology also supports data-driven decision making, as continuous surveillance and subsequent analyses allow organisations to dynamically adjust safety protocols.

4.6 Cross-functional collaboration and customisation of interventions

Collaboration across multiple organisational tiers and departments is necessary for effective behavioral safety interventions. Safety should not be siloed; it benefits from input from production, human resources, operations, maintenance, and external regulators.

Collaborative example:

A multinational manufacturing company created cross-departmental safety management committees that incorporated input from various functional areas, such as operations, maintenance, and quality control. These bodies met regularly to verify safety data, update training protocols and develop tailored interventions to address the specific risks faced by different teams. As a result, the organisation not only saw a reduction in accident rates, but also an increase in general operational efficiency. This collaborative process allowed for more comprehensive and context-specific safety measures that were widely accepted throughout the organisation.

In addition, customising interventions helps ensure that safety interventions are not generic, but tailored to the unique workplace challenges and cultural dynamics. For example, a construction site may demand more flexibility and adaptability due to the ever-changing work environment, whilst a controlled manufacturing environment may need structured audits and set protocols.

4.7 Summary of results and implications for practice

The summary of the qualitative and quantitative evidence highlights that the success of behavioural safety interventions relies on several interrelated factors:

- Leadership commitment: Actively and visibly committed organisational leadership is crucial.
- Safety culture: Compliance is enhanced when there is a strong safety culture, supported by clear communication and common values.
- Psychological factors: Effective measures must address risk perception and worker motivation.
- Technological support: Digital tools and real-time monitoring significantly improve safety outcomes.
- Collaborative approaches: Cross-functional teamwork and customisation of safety measures will ensure that measures are both

comprehensive and contextually relevant.

Practical implications of these insights suggest that organisations should consider behavioural safety as an integral part of their overall operational strategy, rather than as an isolated programme. Ongoing training, feedback processes and the use of new technologies should be standard practice to maintain and improve safety behaviours.

4.8 Directions for future research

This study offers substantive insights, but it also highlights areas for future research. Longitudinal studies are required to assess the long-term durability of behavioural safety interventions. In addition, further research into the role of new technologies, such as AI and machine learning, could offer deeper insight into predictive safety analytics and real time intervention strategies.

Generalisation of findings and the development of universally applicable safety models would also benefit from comparative research across different industries and cultural settings. The integration of these state-of-the-art methodologies could revolutionise the way behavioural safety measures are planned and implemented in the years to come.

In conclusion, this article clearly illustrates that a multidimensional and holistic approach is required for successful behavioral safety interventions. By emphasising leadership, harnessing psychological knowledge, integrating technology and fostering cross-functional collaboration, organisations can significantly decrease workplace accidents and develop a resilient safety culture. The case studies and best practice examples presented show that when these are combined effectively, the resulting safety performance improvements are both quantifiable and sustainable.

Conclusion

This section summarises the findings of the study, draws out practical implications, considers limitations and suggests future research directions. The conclusion integrates findings from the review of literature, methodology, and empirical examples and builds on the earlier discussion.

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

The research has demonstrated that behavioral safety interventions, when designed and implemented holistically, can lead to significant reductions in workplace accidents. Key findings include:

- **Leadership Engagement:** Active leadership involvement—exemplified by regular safety briefings, on-site presence, and proactive communication—serves as a cornerstone of successful safety programs. As observed in the XYZ Construction case study, a visible commitment from top management directly correlates with improved safety outcomes.
- **Organizational Culture:** The establishment of a robust safety culture, characterized by transparency, trust, and shared responsibility, creates an environment in which safe practices become the norm. Evidence from manufacturing and healthcare sectors underscores that organizations with a strong safety culture report fewer incidents and higher levels of employee engagement.
- **Psychological Factors:** The study confirmed that interventions addressing risk perception and employee motivation are critical. Experiential learning through immersive simulations, as seen in a hospital setting, enhances risk awareness and readiness, leading to better adherence to safety protocols.
- **Technological Integration:** The use of emerging technologies—such as wearable devices and real-time monitoring systems—further reinforces behavioral safety measures. Case studies from forward-thinking manufacturing firms illustrate how technology provides an early warning system that significantly reduces the likelihood of accidents.
- **Cross-Functional Collaboration:** Collaborative efforts across various organizational departments lead to the customization of safety protocols that are more relevant to specific work environments. Multinational companies that form cross-departmental safety committees demonstrate superior safety performance through the integration of diverse perspectives.

5.2 Consequences for practice and policies

For both practitioners and policymakers, the consequences of these findings are profound:

- **Practical implications:** Organisations should integrate behavioural security interventions as an essential part of their overall security management systems, instead of treating them as siloed initiatives. Investing in leadership training, employee engagement programmes and technology-based safety tools is crucial. For example, to reduce resistance and ensure sustainable behavioural change, organizations can adopt a phased implementation strategy to gradually phase in new safety protocols.
- **Policy implications:** Regulators and safety authorities may want to explore incorporating behavioural safety training into workplace safety standards. Measures that promote continuous education, regular safety audits and technology integration can help create an industry-wide safety culture. In addition, policy environments that encourage cross-departmental collaboration and data exchange can foster safety innovation.

5.3 Practical recommendations

Several recommendations can be drawn from the findings of the study for organisations wishing to improve safety in the workplace:

- **Strengthen senior management commitment:** Organisations should seek to ensure that senior management is not only supportive but also actively involved in safety related initiatives. Regular safety updates and site visits by senior management can help reinforce the importance of safety.
- **Promote a strong safety culture:** Development of mechanisms for open lines of communication about safety concerns. Create anonymous reporting schemes, hold periodic safety meetings and recognise safe behaviour with incentive schemes.
- **Take advantage of psychological insights:** Design training programmes that focus on risk awareness and motivation. Use engaging simulations and scenarios to make risks more concrete.
- **Technology integration:** To continuously track and improve safety performance, invest

in wearable safety devices, short-term monitoring and data analytics platforms. Proactive use of technology can avoid accidents before they happen.

- **Encourage cross-functional collaboration:** Establish multidisciplinary safety boards that draw members from different departments. This approach will ensure that safety protocols are broad and contextually accurate.

5.4 Avenues for future research

There are a number of areas that merit further investigation, although the study provides valuable insights:

- **longitudinal studies:** Longitudinal designs should be used in future research to observe the long-term effects of behavioural safety interventions. Knowing the sustainability of these measures over time will allow for a deeper understanding of their efficacy.
- **Industry-specific adaptation:** Future studies should examine how to tailor interventions to the specific challenges of particular industries. Comparison research in sectors such as construction, health care and manufacturing may identify universally valid best practices.
- **New and emerging technologies:** As the tools of technology become more advanced, research is required to assess the impact of artificial intelligence, machine learning, and advanced data analytics on the prediction and mitigation of hazardous behaviours.
- **Cultural effects:** Research on the role of cultural and local variations in the adoption and efficacy of behavioural safety interventions can provide guidance for multinational organisations and varied work settings.

5.5 Final Remarks

In summary, the study confirmed that a combination of a strong leadership, an established safety culture, psychological findings, technological assistance, and a comprehensive approach that includes cross-functional cooperation is critical to the success of any behavioral safety intervention. Organisations that adopt these policies can not only achieve lower accident rates, but also create a resilient and

forward-thinking safety environment. As the health and safety field develops, it is vital that practitioners and policymakers alike remain agile and integrate new evidence and techniques to further improve the safety of the workplace.

References

Below you will find some examples of referencing to support the research. These references are formatted in APA style:

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