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THE IMPACT OF OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY ON PRODUCTIVITY IN NESTLE NIGERIA PLC. LAGOS

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of occupational safety practices on productivity levels within Nestlé Nigeria Plc, Lagos. The major objectives of the study are to assess the implementation and effectiveness of occupational safety practices within Nestlé Nigeria Plc and to examine the association between occupational safety measures and productivity outcomes among employees of Nestlé Nigeria Plc. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, data was collected through questionnaire administered to 400 employees across various departments. The study adopted Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, proposed by Bakker and Demerouti (2007). Results reveal a generally positive perception of safety measures, with most employees expressing satisfaction with their implementation. Concerns were also raised regarding the consistency of safety protocol enforcement and the adequacy of training programs. Despite these challenges, a significant correlation between occupational safety measures and productivity levels was observed, highlighting the importance of prioritizing safety initiatives to enhance overall organizational performance. Furthermore, employees identified areas for improvement, including the need for enhanced training programs and better communication channels for reporting safety concerns. Based on these findings, the study recommends the implementation of targeted interventions to address identified gaps in safety practices. Additionally, fostering a culture of safety awareness and providing ongoing training and support can further enhance employee engagement and contribute to a safer and more productive work environment.

Keywords: *employee engagement, occupational safety, organizational performance, productivity*

Introduction

1.1. Background to the study

Over the years the food processing sector has become essential to the growth of Nigeria's economy. Nigeria has witnessed the rise of companies like Nestlé Nigeria Plc, shaping not only the culinary landscape but also contributing significantly to the country's socio-economic development (Bakare, & Rahim, 2023).

Nestle Nigeria Plc, a prominent player in the Nigerian food and beverage industry, represents a compelling narrative of resilience, innovation, and commitment to quality. Headquartered in Lagos, it stands as a testament to the global interconnectedness of businesses, being

predominantly owned by a Swiss-based holding company while maintaining ties with the esteemed Tolaram Group (Bakare, & Rahim, 2023). Established in 1961 as Nestle Products Nigeria Limited, the company commenced its journey as a trading entity before evolving into a manufacturing power house.

Situated in the vibrant Agbara Industrial Estate of Ogun State, Nestle Nigeria Plc boasts a diverse portfolio of products, ranging from breakfast cereals to baby food items and food seasonings. Its illustrious history is marked by a series of strategic milestones, each contributing to its enduring legacy (Bakare, & Rahim, 2023). In 1971, recognizing the burgeoning demand for its Maggi seasoning, the company established a packaging plant in Lagos, laying the foundation for its foray into localized production (Bakare, & Rahim, 2023). The pivotal moment arrived in 1978 when Nestle Nigeria Plc secured land at the newly developed Agbara Estate, heralding a new chapter in its manufacturing journey. Three years later, the company commenced production of its flagship Maggi and Milo products, signaling a shift towards greater self-sufficiency and localization (Bakare, & Rahim, 2023). The subsequent years witnessed a flurry of innovation, with the introduction of Cerelac and other baby-weaning products enriched with locally sourced ingredients.

Embracing the ethos of sustainability and community engagement, Nestle Nigeria Plc embarked on initiatives to address societal needs. In 2011, the opening of a Maggi factory in Flowergate, Ogun State, underscored its commitment to expanding production capacity while creating employment opportunities in the region. Additionally, the establishment of a community water facility in the Magedari suburb area of Abuja by Nestle Waters Nigeria exemplifies its dedication to promoting safe and healthy hydration practices, thereby nurturing communities and fostering well-being.

Through decades of evolution and adaptation, Nestle Nigeria Plc has remained steadfast in its mission to enrich lives through the provision of high-quality, nutritious food and beverage products. As it continues to navigate the dynamic landscape of the Nigerian market, the company stands as a beacon of excellence, embodying the spirit of innovation and resilience in pursuit of sustainable growth and societal impact. Yet, behind the scenes of this culinary symphony lies a crucial aspect often overlooked - the safety and well-being of those who toil tirelessly to bring these delights to our tables. Occupational safety, a cornerstone of responsible business practices, is not merely a regulatory obligation but a moral imperative. It encompasses a myriad of measures aimed at safeguarding workers from harm, ensuring their physical and mental well-being amidst the rigors of industrial production.

Moreover, the nexus between occupational safety and productivity unveils a symbiotic relationship that transcends conventional wisdom. For within the confines of a safe and secure work environment, productivity flourishes, unfettered by the spectre of accidents and ailments that beset the unwary. Thus, through the lens of rigorous inquiry and scholarly discourse, we seek to illuminate the path toward a future where occupational safety and productivity converge harmoniously, empowering workers and fortifying industries against the vagaries of fate. This study therefore underscored the impact of occupational safety on productivity of Nestle Nigeria Plc.

1.2.Statement of the Problem

The food processing sector in Nigeria, epitomized by companies like Nestlé Nigeria Plc, plays a pivotal role in the nation's economic growth and development. However, amidst the

narrative of success and innovation, there exists a critical concern that often lurks in the shadows – the safety and well-being of the workers within these industrial settings.

Occupational safety stands as a cornerstone of responsible business practices, serving not only as a regulatory obligation but also as a moral imperative to ensure the physical and mental well-being of employees engaged in industrial production (Amos, Ariguzo, Egwakhe, & Abiodun, 2020). Despite the recognition of its importance, there remains a dearth of comprehensive research elucidating the intricate relationship between occupational safety practices and productivity levels within the Nigerian food processing industry, particularly within the context of Nestlé Nigeria Plc.

The nexus between occupational safety and productivity unveils a symbiotic relationship that transcends conventional wisdom (Atuma, 2022). A safe and secure work environment fosters a conducive atmosphere for increased productivity, enabling workers to operate without the looming threat of accidents and health hazards (Ohwo, 2020). However, the extent to which occupational safety measures are implemented and their impact on productivity within Nestlé Nigeria Plc remains shrouded in ambiguity.

Therefore, the fundamental problem investigated and addressed by this study was the current state of occupational safety practices within Nestlé Nigeria Plc and their consequential effects on productivity levels. By delving into this multifaceted issue, we bridged the existing gap in scholarly literature and provided empirical insights that not only enriched academic discourse but also informed practical interventions that would enhance occupational safety standards and foster a culture of productivity and well-being within the Nigerian food processing industry.

1.3. Research questions

- i. What is the current state of occupational safety practices within Nestlé Nigeria Plc?
- ii. What is the relationship between occupational safety measures and productivity levels among employees of Nestlé Nigeria Plc?

1.4. Research Objectives:

- i. To assess the implementation of occupational safety practices within Nestlé Nigeria Plc.
- ii. To examine the association between occupational safety measures and productivity outcomes among employees of Nestlé Nigeria Plc.

Literature Review

2.1. Conceptual Review

2.1.1. Occupational safety.

Occupational safety, as a concept, encompasses principles, policies, and practices aimed at safeguarding the health, well-being, and lives of workers in the workplace (Friend, Friend, Kohn, & Kohn, 2023). It involves identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks and hazards associated with work environments and activities to prevent accidents, injuries, illnesses, and fatalities ((Friend, Friend, Kohn, & Kohn, 2023). Occupational safety is crucial across all industries, from manufacturing and construction to healthcare and office environments, as it directly impacts the physical and psychological welfare of employees.

Key components of occupational safety identified by (Friend, Friend, Kohn, & Kohn, 2023) include

Risk Assessment: Occupational safety begins with identifying potential hazards in the workplace through comprehensive risk assessments. This involves evaluating factors such as machinery, equipment, chemicals, ergonomics, and environmental conditions that may pose risks to workers' health and safety. **Hazard Control:** Once hazards are identified, measures are implemented to control or eliminate them. This may include engineering controls (e.g., installing machine guards), administrative controls (e.g., implementing safety procedures), and personal protective equipment (e.g., providing safety goggles or helmets).

Training and Education: Proper training and education are essential components of occupational safety programs. Employees need to be aware of workplace hazards, safety procedures, emergency protocols, and the proper use of protective equipment to mitigate risks effectively.

Compliance with Regulations: Occupational safety is governed by a myriad of laws, regulations, and standards set forth by government agencies such as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) in the United States and similar agencies worldwide. Compliance with these regulations is essential to ensure workplaces adhere to minimum safety requirements.

Safety Culture: Establishing a strong safety culture within an organization is vital for promoting occupational safety. This involves fostering a work environment where safety is prioritized, communication about safety concerns is encouraged, and employees are empowered to report hazards or near misses without fear of reprisal.

Continuous Improvement: Occupational safety is an ongoing process that requires regular monitoring, evaluation, and improvement. Organizations should conduct regular safety inspections, incident investigations, and safety audits to identify areas for enhancement and implement corrective actions as necessary.

Occupational safety is fundamental to promoting a healthy and productive workforce while reducing the human and financial costs associated with workplace accidents and injuries. By prioritizing the well-being of employees, organizations can create safer, more resilient workplaces conducive to sustainable growth and success.

2.1.2. Productivity

Productivity, within the context of the current study focusing on Nestlé Nigeria Plc and its occupational safety practices, refers to the efficiency and effectiveness with which resources, including labour, capital, and technology, are utilized to produce goods and services. Productivity is a critical metric for assessing organizational performance and competitiveness, as it directly impacts profitability, growth, and sustainability (Moda, Nwadike, Danjin, Fatoye, Mbada, Smail, & Doka, 2021). In the specific context of Nestlé Nigeria Plc and the food processing industry, productivity can be evaluated through various measures, including output per Worker: This metric assesses the quantity of goods produced or services delivered per employee within a specific timeframe. Higher output per worker indicates greater efficiency and productivity.

Production Efficiency: Production efficiency measures the ratio of inputs (e.g., raw materials, energy) to outputs (e.g., finished products) in the manufacturing process. Improvements in production efficiency result in higher output levels with the same or fewer resources, thereby enhancing productivity.

Quality of Output: Productivity is not solely about producing more goods but also about maintaining or improving the quality of products. Ensuring high-quality output reduces waste, rework, and customer complaints, contributing to overall productivity gains.

Time Utilization: Time utilization refers to how effectively employees use their time to perform tasks and achieve production targets. Minimizing downtime, idle time, and delays in the production process enhances productivity levels. **Innovation and Technology Adoption:** Embracing innovative technologies and processes can significantly enhance productivity by streamlining operations, reducing manual labor, and improving product quality. Investments in automation, digitization, and advanced manufacturing techniques can drive productivity gains in the long term.

Employee Engagement and Motivation: Engaged and motivated employees are more likely to contribute positively to productivity levels. Providing training, recognition, and opportunities for advancement can boost employee morale and performance, thereby enhancing overall productivity.

Productivity serves as a key dependent variable, influenced by various factors, including occupational safety practices (Akinwale, & George, 2020). By examining the relationship between occupational safety measures and productivity outcomes within Nestlé Nigeria Plc, the study aims to uncover insights into how investments in safety can positively impact organizational productivity. Understanding this relationship is essential for informing strategic decision-making and resource allocation aimed at optimizing both safety and productivity within the organization. Ultimately, enhancing productivity while maintaining a safe work environment is crucial for achieving sustainable growth and competitive advantage in the Nigerian food processing industry.

2.1.3. Food processing industry.

The concept of food processing industries encompasses a wide range of activities involved in transforming raw agricultural products into processed food products suitable for consumption (Chaudhary, Kajla, Lather, Chaudhary, Dangi, Singh, & Pandiselvam, 2024). It involves various stages such as cleaning, sorting, grading, cooking, packaging, and preservation, aimed at adding value to raw materials and extending their shelf life (Chaudhary, Kajla, Lather, Chaudhary, Dangi, Singh, & Pandiselvam, 2024).

In the context of the current study focusing on Nestlé Nigeria Plc and its occupational safety practices, understanding the food processing industry is essential. Nestlé Nigeria Plc operates within this industry, manufacturing a diverse range of food products including breakfast cereals, baby food items, food seasonings, and hydrolyzed plant protein mix (Akubor, Akubor, & Awoyera, 2024). As such, it serves as a pertinent case study for examining the interplay between occupational safety and productivity within the Nigerian food processing sector.

Food processing industries play a crucial role in the global economy, contributing to food security, employment generation, and economic growth. In Nigeria, the food processing sector holds particular significance due to the country's abundant agricultural resources and growing population (Akubor, Akubor, & Awoyera, 2024). Companies like Nestlé Nigeria Plc not only fulfil domestic demand but also engage in export activities, showcasing the industry's role in international trade and competitiveness.

However, operating within the food processing industry poses inherent challenges, particularly concerning occupational safety. The nature of food processing activities involves various risks and hazards, including exposure to machinery, chemicals, high temperatures,

and ergonomic strains, which can lead to accidents, injuries, and health complications for workers if not managed effectively (Akubor, Akubor, & Awoyera, 2024).

Therefore, ensuring occupational safety within food processing industries is paramount. Effective safety practices not only protect workers from harm but also contribute to maintaining product quality, preventing food contamination, and complying with regulatory standards. Furthermore, a safe and healthy work environment fosters employee morale, engagement, and productivity, thereby enhancing overall organizational performance.

By linking the concept of food processing industries with the current topic of occupational safety and productivity within Nestlé Nigeria Plc, the study aims to shed light on the importance of implementing robust safety measures in food processing operations. Through empirical research and analysis, the study seeks to identify best practices, challenges, and opportunities for improving safety standards and enhancing productivity within the Nigerian food processing industry. Ultimately, the findings of this study have implications not only for Nestlé Nigeria Plc but also for other stakeholders within the industry, contributing to the advancement of occupational safety practices and the overall sustainability of food processing operations in Nigeria.

2.2. Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Occupational Safety Practices

The study conducted by Afolabi, de Beer, and Haafkens (2021) sheds light on the perception of informal automobile artisans in Nigeria regarding the preventability of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) problems. While the focus of the study is on the informal automobile sector, its findings hold relevance for other informal industries in Nigeria, including the food processing industry.

Informal workers in developing countries, including Nigeria, face significant risks of OSH problems due to various factors such as lack of access to proper safety equipment, inadequate training, and economic insecurity. The findings of the study reveal that only a third of the participants perceived OSH problems as preventable, indicating a prevalent perception among informal workers that these issues are inevitable or beyond their control.

The study highlights the influence of perception regarding the causes of OSH problems and cost considerations on the perceived preventability of such issues. Similarly, in the context of the food processing industry, workers may perceive certain safety hazards as unavoidable due to factors such as limited resources for implementing safety measures, lack of awareness about preventive measures, and economic constraints.

Moreover, the identified barrier to prevention, namely economic insecurity leading to the non-availability of modern equipment, resonates with the challenges faced by workers in the food processing industry. Inadequate infrastructure, lack of access to modern technology, and financial constraints may hinder the implementation of robust safety measures in food processing facilities, thereby exacerbating OSH problems.

The study's conclusion regarding the potential solutions to address OSH problems in the informal sector, such as providing accessible loans and regular training, holds implications for improving occupational safety in the food processing industry as well. Initiatives aimed at enhancing access to financing for small-scale food processors and providing comprehensive training on safety practices can help mitigate OSH risks and promote a safer working environment.

In summary, while the study by Afolabi, de Beer, and Haafkens (2021) focuses on informal automobile artisans, its findings offer valuable insights into the perception of OSH problems

and barriers to prevention that apply to other informal sectors, including the food processing industry in Nigeria. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts from stakeholders, including policymakers, employers, and relevant agencies, to prioritize occupational safety and improve the well-being of workers across all informal industries.

The work by Ndudi et al. (2024) provides a comprehensive overview of traditional fermented foods in Nigeria, focusing on their microbiological safety and potential health benefits. This review underscores the significant role that traditional fermentation methods play in preserving food, enriching its nutritional content, and contributing to the overall health and well-being of consumers in Nigeria.

Traditional fermented foods have long been integral to Nigerian cuisine, serving as staples in the diets of various ethnic groups across the country. These foods, such as *ogi*, *garri*, *fufu*, and *iru*, undergo fermentation processes that not only enhance their flavor and texture but also confer numerous health benefits. Fermentation serves as a natural means of food preservation, extending the shelf life of perishable ingredients and reducing the risk of foodborne illnesses.

The microbiological safety of traditional fermented foods is a key focus of the study. While fermentation is generally considered a safe method of food preservation, concerns may arise regarding the presence of harmful microorganisms or toxins in certain fermented products. Understanding the microbial composition of these foods is essential for assessing their safety and mitigating potential risks to consumers.

Recent advancements in DNA sequencing technology have enabled researchers to explore the intricate microbial communities present in Nigerian fermented foods with unprecedented precision. These studies have revealed the diverse array of bacteria, yeasts, and fungi involved in the fermentation process, highlighting the complexity and richness of the food microbiome.

Importantly, the review highlights the potential health benefits associated with the consumption of traditional fermented foods. These foods are not only rich in essential nutrients but also contain beneficial microorganisms that contribute to gut health and immune function. Moreover, the fermentation process can enhance the bioavailability of certain nutrients, such as vitamins and minerals, making them more readily absorbed by the body.

In the context of the food processing industry in Nigeria, traditional fermented foods hold immense cultural, nutritional, and economic significance. As consumer preferences shift towards healthier and more natural food options, there is growing interest in traditional fermented foods and their potential health-promoting properties. Food processors and manufacturers can leverage this trend by incorporating traditional fermentation techniques into their production processes or developing new products inspired by traditional recipes. Furthermore, the microbial communities associated with fermented foods offer opportunities for innovation in food safety and quality assurance. Harnessing the beneficial properties of these microorganisms could lead to the development of novel food preservation methods, probiotic supplements, or functional foods with enhanced nutritional value.

Overall, the study by Ndudi et al. underscores the importance of traditional fermented foods in Nigeria's culinary heritage and their potential to contribute to improved food safety, nutritional well-being, and overall health. By recognizing and harnessing the value of these foods and their associated bacteria, the food processing industry in Nigeria can embrace innovation and meet the evolving needs and preferences of consumers.

The study conducted by Raimi et al. (2020) addresses the critical issue of safety practices and farmers' behaviors when handling pesticides in rural Kano State, Nigeria. While the primary

focus of the study is on agricultural practices, the findings hold implications for the broader food processing industry in Nigeria, particularly regarding chemical safety and environmental sustainability.

In Nigeria, as in many other developing countries, agriculture serves as a significant economic driver and primary source of livelihood for rural communities (Raimi et al. 2020). However, the widespread use of agrochemicals, including pesticides, presents significant risks to human health, environmental integrity, and food safety. The study highlights the urgent need to assess and improve safety practices among farmers to mitigate these risks and ensure consumer chemical safety.

The findings reveal several concerning behaviors and practices among farmers when handling pesticides. For example, less than half of the farmers surveyed reported using protective gear such as masks, boots, or impermeable clothing when applying pesticides, indicating a lack of awareness or adherence to safety protocols. Additionally, improper storage and disposal of pesticide containers were prevalent, with a significant proportion of respondents storing pesticides inside their homes or disposing of containers in open fields.

These findings have implications for the food processing industry in Nigeria, as agricultural products treated with pesticides may eventually enter the food supply chain. Improper handling and application of pesticides by farmers can lead to pesticide residues contaminating crops, posing risks to consumers' health and safety. Furthermore, inadequate safety practices among farmers may contribute to environmental pollution and ecosystem degradation, affecting soil quality, water resources, and biodiversity.

To address these challenges, collaborative efforts are needed among researchers, policymakers, agricultural extension services, and other stakeholders. First and foremost, there is a need for education and training programs to raise awareness about the safe handling and use of pesticides among farmers. Training initiatives should emphasize the importance of using protective gear, following recommended application practices, and properly storing and disposing of pesticide containers.

Furthermore, stringent enforcement of pesticide regulations is essential to ensure compliance with safety standards and protect public health and the environment (Raimi et al. 2020). Regulatory agencies should strengthen monitoring and enforcement mechanisms to deter unsafe practices and hold violators accountable. Additionally, promoting the adoption of integrated pest management (IPM) strategies and organic farming practices can reduce reliance on chemical pesticides and promote sustainable agriculture.

In conclusion, the study by Raimi et al. underscores the importance of assessing safety practices and behaviors related to pesticide use in agricultural settings. By addressing gaps in knowledge and promoting safer agricultural practices, stakeholders can work towards enhancing food safety, environmental sustainability, and public health in Nigeria's food processing industry and beyond.

The study conducted by Ijaola et al. (2021) delves into the perceived implications of non-compliance with safety practices in construction projects, focusing on the awareness level among construction professionals. While the primary focus of the study is on the construction industry, the findings hold relevance for other sectors, including the food processing industry in Nigeria, where safety practices are also paramount.

In both the construction and food processing industries, non-compliance with safety practices can have severe consequences, including physical injuries, fatalities, financial losses, and damage to reputation. However, despite the known implications, there are reports of low

levels of compliance with safety rules in both sectors. Therefore, understanding the awareness level of professionals regarding these implications is crucial for promoting a culture of safety and improving compliance.

The findings of the study reveal that construction professionals have a high awareness level of the implications of non-compliance with safety practices. This suggests that professionals in the construction industry are cognizant of the potential risks and costs associated with safety violations, including physical injuries, workmen's compensation, liability insurance premiums, low morale among workers, costs of delay, and time of cost.

Similarly, in the food processing industry, stakeholders, including employers, managers, and workers, must be aware of the implications of non-compliance with safety practices. This includes understanding the risks of food contamination, occupational injuries, regulatory penalties, and damage to brand reputation. By increasing awareness among professionals in the food processing industry, stakeholders can better prioritize safety measures and implement appropriate protocols to mitigate risks and ensure compliance with safety regulations.

The study's conclusion regarding the impact of professional background on awareness levels underscores the importance of tailored training and education programs for different groups of professionals. Similarly, in the food processing industry, customized training initiatives can target specific roles and responsibilities within the sector, such as production workers, quality control personnel, and managerial staff. By addressing gaps in awareness and knowledge, organizations can empower employees to recognize and address safety hazards proactively.

Moreover, the recommendation to adopt group discussions as a means of sensitization aligns with best practices in safety training and communication. In the food processing industry, group discussions, workshops, and safety meetings can facilitate dialogue, knowledge sharing, and problem-solving among employees. This collaborative approach fosters a culture of safety and encourages collective responsibility for maintaining a safe working environment.

Overall, the study by Ijaola et al. highlights the importance of awareness and education in promoting compliance with safety practices in the construction industry. Similarly, in the food processing industry, raising awareness among professionals about the implications of non-compliance with safety practices is essential for enhancing safety culture and mitigating risks. By prioritizing safety awareness and education, organizations can create safer work environments and protect the well-being of employees in both industries.

The study by Anyogu, Olukorede, Anumudu, Onyeaka, Areo, and Adewale, (2021) provides a comprehensive examination of microorganisms and food safety risks associated with indigenous fermented foods (IFFs) from Africa, with implications for the food processing industry in Nigeria. Indigenous fermented foods have deep-rooted cultural significance in Africa and play a crucial role in local diets, contributing to food security and supporting livelihoods. However, the production of IFFs at small or household scale using indigenous processing technologies can pose challenges to food safety, as limited knowledge of good manufacturing and handling practices may result in unhygienic conditions and variability in quality and safety attributes.

The study highlights the presence of spoilage and pathogenic bacteria in IFFs, emphasizing the potential health risks to consumers. These foodborne pathogens and antibiotic-resistant bacteria can be introduced at any stage of the value chain, from production to consumption. The review underscores the importance of understanding the microbial composition of IFFs

and the associated food safety hazards, as well as the need for practical solutions to improve their safety.

In the context of the food processing industry in Nigeria, the findings of this study have several implications. First, it emphasizes the importance of adopting and implementing good manufacturing practices (GMPs) and hygiene standards in food processing facilities. By adhering to strict hygiene protocols, food processors can minimize the risk of microbial contamination and ensure the safety of their products.

Second, the study underscores the need for ongoing research and collaboration among stakeholders to address gaps in knowledge and data regarding the microbiological safety of IFFs. Researchers, producers, governmental regulatory bodies, and consumers must work together to develop and implement strategies for mitigating food safety risks associated with indigenous fermented foods.

Furthermore, the study highlights the potential for African IFFs to harbor valuable microbial strains with beneficial technical characteristics. This presents an opportunity for innovation in the food processing industry, as researchers explore the potential applications of these microbial strains in food production and preservation.

Overall, the study by Anyogu et al. underscores the importance of addressing food safety risks associated with indigenous fermented foods from Africa, with implications for the food processing industry in Nigeria. By prioritizing hygiene practices, fostering collaboration among stakeholders, and harnessing the potential of indigenous microbial strains, the industry can enhance the safety and quality of its products while preserving the cultural heritage of indigenous fermented foods.

2.2.2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework guiding this research is the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, proposed by Bakker and Demerouti (2007). The JD-R Model assumes that job characteristics can be categorized into two main domains: job demands and job resources (Bakker, Demerouti, & Sanz-Vergel, 2023). Job demands refer to the physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of a job that require sustained physical or psychological effort and are associated with physiological and psychological costs (Bakker, Demerouti, & Sanz-Vergel, 2023). In contrast, job resources are the physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of a job that help individuals achieve work goals, reduce job demands, and stimulate personal growth and development.

In the context of this study, job demands encompass factors related to occupational safety practices within Nestlé Nigeria PLC, including exposure to physical hazards, workload, and job stress resulting from safety-related concerns. These demands are expected to have a direct impact on employee well-being, as evidenced by increased levels of stress, decreased job satisfaction, and heightened perceptions of job strain (Bakker, Demerouti, & Sanz-Vergel, 2023). Additionally, job demands may indirectly influence productivity outcomes through mechanisms such as absenteeism, turnover intentions, and reduced engagement in work tasks. Conversely, job resources refer to the supportive elements within the work environment that facilitate effective coping with job demands and promote employee well-being and performance (Bakker, Demerouti, & Sanz-Vergel, 2023). In the context of occupational safety practices, job resources may include access to safety training programs, availability of safety equipment and protective gear, supportive leadership and management practices that prioritize safety, and a positive safety climate characterized by open communication, trust,

and employee involvement in safety-related decision-making processes. These resources are anticipated to mitigate the adverse effects of job demands on employee well-being and enhance productivity by fostering a safe, supportive, and conducive work environment.

Adopting the JD-R Model as the theoretical framework for this research, it enables a nuanced examination of how various aspects of occupational safety practices within Nestlé Nigeria PLC's food processing industry operations influence both job demands (e.g., safety hazards, workload) and job resources (e.g., safety training, equipment), and their subsequent impact on employee well-being and productivity outcomes. This theoretical perspective provides a structured framework for investigating the complex interplay between occupational safety factors and productivity outcomes, offering valuable insights to inform organizational policies, practices, and interventions aimed at optimizing safety practices and enhancing productivity in the food processing industry.

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted a quantitative research approach. This approach is suitable for investigating the relationship between occupational safety practices and productivity levels among employees of Nestlé Nigeria Plc, as it allows for the administration of questionnaire for data generation.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises all employees working at Nestlé Nigeria Plc's Lagos branch. As of the time of the study, the total population of employees in the Lagos branch is 2,201.

The study focuses on Nestlé Nigeria Plc, specifically its branch located in Lagos, Nigeria. Nestlé Nigeria Plc is a leading food and beverage manufacturing company with operations in Lagos, producing a wide range of products for the Nigerian market.

Sample Size

From the sample frame of the communities studied, the researcher derived a sample size using the Taro Yamane formula in determining Sample Size, (Obasi, 1999). This is because it will be clearer to use a representative sampling technique hence the researcher will not work with or study the whole group.

The researcher will adopt the Taro Yamane formula as shown below:

$$N = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n= expected sample size

N= Total Population

e= error limit (0.05)

1 = a constant figure

$$N = \frac{2,201}{1 + 2,176,947(0.5)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{2,201}{1 + 2,176,947(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{2,201}{55443.3675}$$

$$n = 1 + 5442.3675$$

$$n = \frac{2,201}{55443.3675}$$

$$n = 399.92652$$

$$n = 399.92652$$

$$n = 399.92652$$

n= 400 respondents

Sampling Technique

The study utilized a stratified random sampling technique to select participants from different departments and hierarchical levels within Nestlé Nigeria Plc. This approach ensured representation from various segments of the organization, including production, administration, and management. The rationale for selecting participants was to capture diverse perspectives and experiences related to occupational safety practices and productivity.

Methods of Data Collection: The primary data collection methods included surveys and structured questionnaires distributed to employees and management personnel. These questionnaires were designed to gather information on employees' perceptions of safety practices, job satisfaction, productivity levels, and other relevant factors. Secondary data was obtained through a comprehensive review of company reports, industry publications, and academic literature.

Method of data Analysis:

The study adopted descriptive statistics such as simple percentage and mean will be used to summarize and describe the data to enhance a better understanding of their characteristics, similarities, variation, proportions and trends; and inferential statistical tools such as Chi-Square will be used to test hypotheses and make a prediction on the entire population. The data will be presented and analyzed from the field questionnaire in line with the stated objectives of the study. Data will be summarized, coded, tabulated in percentages, and interpreted for a clearer understanding.

Validity of Study: To ensure the validity of the study, rigorous measures were taken to design valid and reliable survey instruments, including pilot testing, expert review, and validation processes. Additionally, efforts were made to minimize bias and ensure that the survey questions accurately captured the intended constructs.

Reliability of the Study: The study employed established measurement scales and standardized survey instruments to enhance the reliability of the data collection process. Additionally, reliability tests, such as Cronbach's alpha coefficient, were conducted to assess the internal consistency and reliability of the survey items. These measures were taken to ensure that the study findings were consistent and replicable.

Analysis and Discussion of Findings

A total number of four hundred (400) questionnaire were distributed to the respondents at Nestle Nigeria Plc. Luckily none of these was missing. All were returned. It is therefore on the basis of the four hundred respondents that the analysis and discussion of data is done.

Section A: Demographic Information

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

1	Gender	F	%
	Male	212	53
	Female	188	47

	Total	400	100
2	Age		
	Between 18 and 24yrss	20	5
	Between 25 and 34 yrs	208	52
	Between 35 and 44 yrs	78	19.5
	Between 45 and above	94	23.5
	Total	400	100
3	Educational Qualification		
	First school leaving certificate (FSLC)	51	12.75
	WAEC	152	38
	OND/NCE	98	24.5
	HND/BSC	69	17.25
	Others	30	7.5
	Total	400	100

The provided data in Table 1 presents a breakdown of responses by sex, with 53% of respondents representing male and 47% as female, totaling 400 respondents. This distribution indicates a slight male majority within the sample. Such demographic information is crucial for understanding the composition of the surveyed group and can inform subsequent analyses and interpretations.

In statistical terms, the dataset illustrates a categorical distribution, where sex acts as the categorical variable with two levels: male and female. The frequencies associated with each level provide insights into the relative representation of each sex within the sample.

Moreover, the percentages alongside the frequencies offer a standardized view of the distribution, facilitating comparison and interpretation across different datasets or subgroups. In this case, the percentages show the proportion of males and females within the total sample, highlighting the gender distribution in the surveyed population. Understanding the sex distribution is fundamental for various research endeavours, particularly in quantitative research where gender dynamics play a significant role in shaping behaviours, attitudes, and outcomes. The findings derived from this data can serve as a basis for further exploration into gender-related phenomena and their implications in the context of the study.

In this same table, the data provided offers a breakdown of responses by age groups, with 400 respondents surveyed. The age groups are categorized as 18-24 years, 25-34 years, 35-44 years, and 45 and above. Each age group is associated with a frequency count and its respective percentage within the total sample.

The data shows a diverse distribution across age groups, with the highest frequency observed in the 25-34 years category, constituting 52% of the sample. This suggests that the majority of respondents fall within the mid-range of young adulthood, a common demographic trend in many surveys due to the accessibility of this age group.

Furthermore, the data illustrates a clear gradient in participation across age categories, with decreasing frequencies as the age increases. While the 25-34 years group represents the largest segment, the 18-24 years group constitutes a smaller proportion at 5%. The 35-44 years and 45 and above groups each account for approximately 19.5% and 23.5% of the total sample, respectively. Understanding the distribution of respondents across age groups is crucial for contextualizing findings and drawing meaningful conclusions from the data. Age often correlates with various factors such as experiences, preferences, and behaviours, which can significantly influence research outcomes and interpretations. Therefore, analyzing

demographic information such as age composition enables researchers to identify potential patterns, trends, and disparities within the studied population, thus enriching the depth and validity of their analyses.

Finally, the provided data in this table presents a breakdown of responses by qualification level, with 400 individuals surveyed. Qualifications are categorized into five groups: FSLC (First School Leaving Certificate), WAEC (West African Examination Council), OND/NCE (Ordinary National Diploma/National Certificate of Education), HND/BSc (Higher National Diploma/Bachelor of Science), and others. Each qualification category is associated with a frequency count and its respective percentage within the total sample.

The data highlights a diverse distribution of qualifications among the respondents. The most common qualification level among the surveyed population is WAEC, representing 38% of the total sample. This suggests a significant portion of respondents have completed secondary education, as WAEC is typically obtained upon completion of secondary school.

Furthermore, the data indicates considerable representation across other qualification levels. OND/NCE (24.5%) and HND/BSc (17.25%) follow WAEC in frequency, indicating a notable presence of individuals with vocational or higher educational qualifications within the sample.

The FSLC category represents 12.75% of the sample, indicating a smaller proportion of respondents with primary-level education. The "Others" category, comprising 7.5% of the total, likely includes individuals with miscellaneous or unclassified qualifications, adding to the diversity of educational backgrounds within the sample.

Understanding the distribution of qualifications among respondents is crucial for contextualizing findings and drawing meaningful conclusions from the data. Educational qualifications often correlate with various socioeconomic factors, skill sets, and opportunities, which can significantly influence research outcomes and interpretations. Therefore, analyzing demographic information such as educational qualification composition enables researchers to identify potential patterns, trends, and disparities within the studied population, thus enhancing the depth and validity of their analyses.

Section B

This section presents and analyses items in response to the research questions.

Implementation of Occupational Safety Practices.

Information were gathered on the implementation of occupational safety practices in Nestle Nigeria Plc. See table 2 for details

Table 2: The implementation of occupational safety practices in Nestle Nigeria PLC.

S/NO	ITEMS	CERTIFIED	DID NOT CERTIFY
1	Occupational safety measures provided in Nestle Nig. PLC are implemented	256 (64%)	144 (36%)
2	The occupational safety measures provided by Nestle Nig. PLC are highly ranked/satisfactory to workers	318 (79.5%)	82 (20.5%)
3	Workers are well trained to handle occupational safety procedures in Nestle Nig .PLC	203 (50.8)	197 (49.2)

4	Workers are equipped with proper occupational safety guidelines in Nestle Nig. Plc.	258 (64.5%)	142 (35.5%)
5	Nestle Nig. Plc. prioritizes employee safety.	238 (59.5%)	162 (40.5%)
6	Workers have experienced safety incidents or accidents in their work place.	268 (67%)	132 (33%)
7	Safety protocols are consistently enforced in the various departments at Nestle Nig. Plc.	318 (79.5%)	82 (20.5%)
8	Workers at Nestle Nig. Plc. Feel comfortable raising safety concerns to their superiors or management.	205 (51.25%)	195 (48.75%)
9	Safety training programmes provided by Nestle Nig. Plc. are rated by workers as effective.	388 (97%)	12 (3%)

Table 2 presents the respondents' views regarding the implementation of occupational safety practices within Nestle Nigeria PLC. Out of the 400 respondents that participated in the survey, majority of them representing 64% certified that occupational safety measures provided by Nestle Nigeria PLC are implemented. Conversely 36% of the respondents did not certify the implementation, indicating a significant portion of respondents with reservation or concerns regarding implementation of the safety practices. Overall, these results suggest a mixed perception of the implementation of occupational safety in Nestle Nigeria Plc. While majority of the respondents certified in agreement, a notable proportion of them did not. Further analysis and investigation into the specific concerns and areas for improvement identified by respondents would be valuable for enhancing occupational safety practices within the organization.

The table also reveals that 79.5% of the respondents rated highly/satisfactory the occupational safety measures provided by Nestle Nigeria plc, while a smaller percentage of them 20.5% did not. This suggests a high level of satisfaction among the majority regarding the safety measures implemented by Nestle Nigeria Plc. However, it is noteworthy that there is a proportion of respondents who expressed dissatisfaction, albeit relatively small. Further qualitative exploration into the specific aspects of safety measures contributing to satisfaction or dissatisfaction would provide valuable insight for enhancing safety practices within the organization.

Workers views on whether they were well trained to handle occupational safety procedures or not were sought. 50.8% of the 400 respondents as revealed from this table said they were well trained in that respect while 49.2% said they were not, suggesting a lack of confidence in their training. These findings highlight a notable discrepancy in respondents' perceptions of their training adequacy for handling occupational safety procedures. While a majority of them expressed confidence in their training, a significant number indicated otherwise, suggesting potential gaps in the training programme provided by Nestle Nigeria Plc. Further investigation into the specific areas of training that require improvement would be beneficial for enhancing employees' competency and confidence in handling occupational safety procedures effectively.

The table also reveals that out of the 400 respondents, 64.5% were of the view that they were equipped with proper occupational safety guidelines in Nestle Nigeria Plc. while 35.5% said

they were not. The responses here suggest a generally positive perception of the issue of being equipped with proper occupational safety guidelines. However, a noteworthy proportion of the respondents constituting 35.5% did not certify that they were equipped with proper occupational safety guidelines. These findings suggest a mixed perception among employees regarding this issue and therefore highlights the importance of further evaluation and potential to the programme of equipping the employees with proper occupational safety guidelines to ensure that all of them are so equipped.

On whether the workers in Nestle Nigeria plc see the organization as prioritizing employees' safety or not, 59.5% of those studied certified that the organization prioritized employees' safety while 40.5% said it did not. This is indicative of the fact that majority of the respondents perceive the company as giving priority to employee safety. However, the percentage of those who opposed that notion is also noteworthy, representing a mixed perception among employees regarding the prioritization of employee safety at Nestle Nigeria Plc. This highlights the importance of addressing any perceived shortcomings and implementing measures to strengthen the company's commitment to employee safety, thereby fostering a safer and healthier work environment.

It has also been revealed from this table that 67% of the 400 employees studied had experienced safety incidents or accidents in their work place while only 33% had not. This shows that more employees had encountered safety incidents or accidents than those that had not. But the percentage that had not experienced it cannot be ignored. This underscores the importance of continually assessing and improving safety measures to mitigate the occurrence of incidents and ensure the well-being of employees. Additionally, the data could inform targeted interventions aimed at enhancing safety protocols and fostering a safer work environment for all workers.

The table further reveals that majority of the respondents representing 79.5% confirmed the view that safety protocols are consistently enforced in the various departments at Nestle Nigeria Plc. while a minority representing 20.5% of them did not confirm it. It is stating the obvious that a majority perceive safety protocols to be consistently enforced in their departments at Nestle Nigeria Plc. However, the presence of dissenting opinions indicates the potential existence of gaps or inconsistencies across different departments. Addressing these discrepancies and ensuring uniform adherence to safety protocols can contribute to fostering a safer work environment and mitigating occupational hazards.

On whether workers at Nestle Nigeria Plc. feel comfortable raising safety concerns to their supervisors/management or not, the table reveals that 51.25% of those studies were of the view that they felt comfortable doing so while 48.75% expressed discomfort or hesitancy in discussing safety concerns with their supervisors or management. The results suggest a mixed perception among the respondents regarding the comfort level in raising safety concerns to their supervisors or management. While a simple majority of the respondents feel comfortable doing so, a significant proportion also expressed discomfort with the statement. Addressing factors contributing to employees' reluctance in voicing safety concerns can facilitate a more open and transparent safety culture within the organization, thereby enhancing overall safety outcomes.

Finally, results from this table have also revealed workers rating of the effectiveness or otherwise of the safety training programmes provided by Nestle Nigeria Plc. 97% of the respondents described the programmes as effective while only a negligible 3% saw the

programmes as ineffective. The results highlight a predominantly positive perception of the effectiveness of safety training programmes provided by Nestle Nigeria Plc. among the respondents. This means that the organization’s commitment to delivering impactful safety training initiatives appears to be well-received by the workforce, with a vast majority acknowledging the value and benefits derived from these programmes.

Table 3: The impact of occupational safety measures on productivity in nestle Nigeria plc.

S/NO	ITEMS	CONFIRMED	DID NOT CONFIRM
1	Workers believe that adherence to occupational safety measures positively impacts productivity at Nestle Nigeria Plc	270 (67.5%)	130 (32.5%)
2	Workers have noticed a positive correlation between safety practices and productivity levels among their colleagues	256 (64%)	144 (36%)
3	Workers at Nestle Nigeria Plc think that improvements could be made to enhance the effectiveness of occupational safety practices in the organization.	318 (79.5%)	82 (20.5%)

Table 3 presents workers views on whether they believe that adherence to occupational safety measures positively impacts productivity or not. 67.5% of the 400 respondents affirmed their belief that adherence to occupational measures positively impacts productivity. Conversely, a minority of the respondents representing 32.5% expressed a negative belief regarding the relationship between adherence to safety measures and productivity. Although these figures represent a smaller percentage of the total respondents, they indicate the presence of some skepticism or disagreement among a portion of the workforce regarding the perceived impact of safety measures on productivity. Overall, the results suggest a prevailing belief among the majority of participants that adherence to occupational safety measures has a positive influence on productivity. However, it is important to acknowledge the existence of dissenting opinions within the workforce, underscoring the need for further exploration and communication to address any discrepancies in perceptions regarding the relationship between safety measures and productivity.

This table also reveals that majority of the respondents representing 64% reported noticing a correlation between safety practices and productivity levels among their colleagues. A minority representing 36% did not observe a correlation between safety practices and productivity among their colleagues. These results suggest that a majority of the participants have observed a positive correlation between safety practices and productivity levels among their colleagues. Nevertheless, it is essential to acknowledge the existence of divergent views within the workforce, highlighting the need for further investigation and communication to address any discrepancies in perceptions regarding the correlation between safety practices and productivity levels.

From this same table also, respondents’ views on whether they thought that improvements could be made to enhance the effectiveness of occupational safety practices at Nestle Niger Plc. or not, were revealed. Majority of them comprising 79.5% expressed the need for improvements to enhance the effectiveness of occupational safety practices at Nestle Nigeria Plc. Conversely, a smaller proportion of the respondents representing 20.5% did not certify the need for such improvements. Although these figures represent a minority of the total respondents, they indicate the presence of dissenting opinions within the workforce regarding

the perceived need for improvement in occupational safety practices. Overall, the results suggest that a majority of the respondents acknowledged the importance of enhancing the effectiveness of occupational safety practices at Nestlé Nigeria Plc. However, it is pertinent to consider and address the concerns of dissenting individuals to ensure a comprehensive approach to improving safety measures within the organization. Further qualitative research or open-ended survey questions may provide insights into specific areas for improvement as perceived by some employees.

Discussion of findings

The study delved into comprehensively examining the perceptions of employees regarding the implementation and effectiveness of occupational safety practices within Nestlé Nigeria Plc. A holistic understanding emerged concerning various facets of safety practices within the organization.

The findings suggest an overall positive perception among employees regarding the implementation and effectiveness of safety practices at Nestlé Nigeria Plc. The majority of respondents expressed their views positively on aspects such as the implementation of safety protocols, satisfaction with safety measures, adequacy of safety training, and the presence of safety protocols in the workplace. Additionally, employees generally perceived a positive impact of safety training programs provided by the company.

However, some areas for improvement were highlighted. While employees generally felt adequately trained to handle safety procedures, a significant proportion felt otherwise as they failed to confirm the view on the provision of proper orientation regarding safety guidelines. Furthermore, while the majority felt comfortable raising safety concerns to their supervisors or management, a notable percentage were of the view that they did not feel comfortable doing so. Employees also provided suggestions for improvement to enhance the effectiveness of safety practices at Nestlé Nigeria Plc, indicating areas where interventions may be required to bolster safety measure.

In line with the second objective, the study investigated the potential association between occupational safety measures and productivity outcomes among employees of Nestlé Nigeria Plc. Findings provided crucial insights into employees' beliefs and observations regarding this association.

The analysis revealed that a substantial proportion of employees believed in the positive impact of safety measures on productivity. Additionally, many employees noticed a correlation between safety practices and productivity levels among their colleagues. These findings imply a perceived association between the implementation of occupational safety measures and productivity outcomes within the organization.

Integrating both objectives, the study highlights the significance of robust safety practices not only in ensuring the well-being of employees but also in potentially enhancing productivity levels within Nestlé Nigeria Plc. By addressing areas for improvement identified through employee perceptions and acknowledging the perceived association between safety measures and productivity, the organization can strategize and implement interventions to foster a safer and more productive work environment.

Conclusion

The analysis revealed a generally positive perception among employees regarding the implementation and effectiveness of safety practices at Nestlé Nigeria Plc. While many employees expressed satisfaction with safety measures and believed in their positive impact

on productivity, some areas for improvement were identified. These included the provision of proper orientation on safety guidelines, the need for more robust channels for raising safety concerns, and enhancing safety training programs.

Additionally, employees highlighted the importance of safety protocols in enhancing productivity levels, as evidenced by their beliefs and observations. This underscores the significance of prioritizing occupational safety within the organization to not only ensure employee well-being but also to optimize productivity outcomes.

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