




Factores psicosociales que afectan a los trabajadores en una empresa procesadora de alimentos de Cuenca

Psychosocial factors that affect workers in a food processing company of Cuenca

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Palabras

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Psychosocial factors; Workers; Health; Company; Risks.

Resumen

Introducción. Los factores psicosociales existentes dentro del ámbito laboral son diversos y están conformados por aquellos aspectos como el ambiente físico, estructura institucional y las relaciones interpersonales en las organizaciones. **Objetivo.** identificar los factores psicosociales que afectan a los empleados en una empresa procesadora de alimentos de la ciudad de Cuenca, en las áreas de administración, almacenamiento y entrega. **Metodología.** Se realizó un estudio transversal, cuantitativo, descriptivo, mediante la aplicación del cuestionario CoPsoQ-istas21 versión 2; el número de encuestados (44) se determinó mediante el formulario de muestreo (Krejcie y Morgan). Se utilizaron variables laborales como horario, salud, cargo, reconocimiento salarial y demográfico como el sexo y la edad. Los datos se recolectaron a través de hojas de cálculo y se analizaron a través del programa estadístico SPSS versión 26. **Resultados.** La satisfacción laboral es más alta entre los mayores de 45 años, con un 43.75% muy satisfechos. En general, hay una tendencia positiva hacia la satisfacción laboral en todos los grupos de edad. **Conclusión.** En resumen, los datos sugieren que la satisfacción laboral tiende a aumentar con la edad, siendo más pronunciada entre aquellos mayores de 45 años. Sin embargo, en general, la mayoría de los encuestados, independientemente de su edad, se encuentran satisfechos o muy satisfechos con su trabajo, lo que indica un nivel generalizado de satisfacción laboral en la muestra estudiada. **Área de estudio general:** Medicina del trabajo. **Área de estudio específica:** Salud ocupacional

Abstract

Introduction. The psychosocial factors existing within the work environment are diverse and are made up of aspects such as the physical environment, institutional structure and interpersonal relationships in organizations. **objective.** to identify the psychosocial factors that affect employees in a food processing company in the city of Cuenca, in the areas of administration, storage and delivery. **Methodology.** A cross-sectional, quantitative, descriptive study was carried out by applying the CoPsoQ-istas21 version 2 questionnaire; the number of respondents (44) was determined by means of the sampling form (Krejcie and Morgan). **Work variables such as**

working hours, health, position, salary recognition and demographics such as sex and age were used. Data were collected through spreadsheets and analyzed through the SPSS version 26 statistical software. Results. Job satisfaction is highest among those over 45 years of age, with 43.75% very satisfied. In general, there is a positive trend toward job satisfaction in all age groups. Conclusion. In summary, the data suggest that job satisfaction tends to increase with age, being more pronounced among those over 45 years of age. However, in general, the majority of respondents, regardless of age, are satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs, indicating a generalized level of job satisfaction.

Introduction

Psychosocial factors at work have a crucial impact on the well-being of the individual. Defined as the psychological sensations or experiences derived from work interaction, these factors, according to Vázquez et al. (2021) and European Occupational Safety and Ministry of Health (2023), include job satisfaction, working conditions and the relationship with managers. These aspects directly influence the work performance and mental health of workers, highlighting the importance of managing them properly to foster a positive and productive work environment.

It is important that organizations have a correct development of psychosocial factors, the latter being understood as those situations that affect the correct development of work. Exposure to psychosocial risks generates great deterioration in key areas of human life, such as health and satisfaction; while the imbalance of these can have a direct impact on the cognitive, behavioral, psychological, emotional and social functions of employees, potentially triggering disorders that can affect the work aspect (Cabalcanti, 2019); (WHO, 2020).

Psychosocial risks at work, according to DOF (2018), arise from a variety of conditions. Excessive workload and negative relationships between colleagues generate stress and a harmful work environment. Balancing family and work life, along with workplace aggression, affects mental health. Lack of control over work and inadequate leadership also contribute to employee demotivation and vulnerability. Addressing these risks is crucial to ensure a healthy work environment and protect workers' well-being.

The World Health Organization (WHO) identifies work-related stress as a prevalent psychosocial risk among workers. This stress can arise from a variety of situations, such

as inadequate skills, inappropriate employment, lack of staff, poor physical working conditions, an organizational culture that tolerates negative behaviors, and low wages, among other factors. These conditions can place a significant emotional and mental burden on employees, affecting their health and well-being. Addressing these issues through workplace stress prevention and management strategies is crucial to protect mental health and promote a healthy and productive work environment. Studies by Albán et al. (2019), Vázquez et al. (2021), and WHO recommendations (2022) support the importance of addressing this problem globally.

Stress can cause various pathologies in workers, it is accompanied by anxiety, irritability, depression, anguish and despair; emotional reactions that go hand in hand with obvious symptoms such as physical exhaustion, poor performance, low job performance and poor human relations (Reyes et al., 2020); (Vázquez et al., 2021). This can cause absenteeism, increased accidents, temporary or permanent disability, job rotation, low creativity, poor performance, as well as deficiencies in the quality of life and well-being (2020). Another frequent risk is depression, which is characterized by the presence of sadness, lack of self-esteem, loss of pleasure in the execution of activities, feelings of guilt, eating disorders, excessive sleep, fatigue and difficulty in achieving concentration (WHO, 2020).

Furthermore, job frustration can trigger symptoms of depression, such as lack of energy, loss of interest in work, and decreased work performance. It is therefore critical for companies to actively address the sources of job frustration, promoting a work environment that fosters personal development, autonomy, and the achievement of realistic goals for their employees. This not only benefits the mental health and well-being of workers, but also contributes to a more productive and positive work environment overall. The importance of this relationship between job frustration, stress, and depression is supported by research, as mentioned by Espacio RRHH (2021).

Methodology

The study was conducted as a descriptive research of quantitative and non-experimental nature. The target population consisted of 50 employees of a specific organization, while the sample was selected in a non-probabilistic manner, using the method proposed by Krejcie and Morgan, and comprised 44 workers of the company. The CoPsoQ-istas21 Version 2 questionnaire was used to collect data, which were analyzed using the statistical software SPSS version 26. All employees of the food processing company who voluntarily expressed their interest in participating in the survey were included in the study. Exclusion criteria were applied only to those employees who chose not to answer the survey.

Results

Table 1

Relationship between age and sex

		Age							
		Under 31 years old		Between 31 and 45 years old		More than 45 years		total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sex	Man	19	48.72	17	43.59	3	7.69	39	88.64
	Women	1	20,00	2	40,00	2	40,00	5	11.36
	total	20	45,46	19	43.18	5	11.36	44	100,00

Source: CoPsoQ-istas21 questionnaire

As can be seen in Table 1, 88.64% of the participants were men and 11.36% were women; 45.46% were under 31 years old, while 43.18% were between 31 and 45 years old.

Table 2

Relationship between age and emotions

		Age							
		Under 31 years old		Between 31 and 45 years old		More than 45 years		Total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Emotional exhaustion	TO A LARGE EXTENT	6	13.64	3	6.82	2	4.55	11	25,00
	TO A LARGE EXTENT	1	2.27	0	0.00	1	2.27	2	4.55
	TO A CERTAIN EXTENT	2	4.55	6	13.64	0	0.00	8	18,18
	TO SOME EXTENT	3	6.82	4	9.09	1	2.27	8	18,18
	IN NO WAY	8	18,18	6	13.64	1	2.27	15	34.09
Total		20	45.45	19	43.18	5	11.36	44	100,00

Table 2

Relationship between age and emotions (continued)

		Age							
		Under 31 years old		Between 31 and 45 years old		More than 45 years		Total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Expression of emotions and opinions	TO A LARGE EXTENT	7	15.91	4	9.09	3	6.82	14	31.82
	TO A LARGE EXTENT	4	9.09	3	6.82	1	2.27	8	18,18
	TO A CERTAIN EXTENT	4	9.09	6	13.64	0	0.00	10	22.73
	TO SOME EXTENT	1	2.27	3	6.82	0	0.00	4	9.09
	IN NO WAY	4	9.09	3	6.82	1	2.27	8	18,18
Total		20	45.45	19	43.18	5	11.36	44	100,00

Source: CoPsoQ-istas21 questionnaire

Regarding emotional exhaustion, the majority of participants responded to no extent (under 31 years old and between 31 and 45 years old), while regarding the expression of emotions and opinions, those under 31 responded to a large extent (15.91%) and to a certain extent (13.64%) of participants between 31 and 45 years old.

Table 3

Relationship between age and behavior.

		Age							
		Under 31 years old		Between 31 and 45 years old		More than 45 years		Total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Fair treatment	TO A LARGE EXTENT	9	20.45	5	11.36	4	9.09	18	40.91
	TO A LARGE EXTENT	2	4.55	9	20.45	1	2.27	12	27,27

TO A CERTAIN EXTENT	3	6.82	2	4.55	0	0.00	5	11.36
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Table 3

Relationship between age and behavior (continued)

	Age							
	Under 31 years old		Between 31 and 45 years old		More than 45 years		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
TO SOME EXTENT	2	4.55	2	4.55	0	0.00	4	9.09
IN NO WAY	4	9.09	1	2.27	0	0.00	5	11.36
Total	20	45.45	19	43.18	5	11.36	44	100,00
TO A LARGE EXTENT	6	13.64	8	18,18	5	11.36	19	43.18
TO A LARGE EXTENT	5	11.36	4	9.09	0	0.00	9	20.45
TO A CERTAIN EXTENT	4	9.09	2	4.55	0	0.00	6	13.64
TO SOME EXTENT	3	6.82	4	9.09	0	0.00	7	15.91
IN NO WAY	2	4.55	1	2.27	0	0.00	3	6.82
Total	20	45.45	19	43.18	5	11.36	44	100,00

Source: CoPsoQ-istas21 questionnaire

Regarding fair treatment, we observed that the three age ranges largely agree in their responses (40.91%); while, in conflict resolution by the boss, all ages largely agree in their responses, with a total of 43.18%.

Table 4

Relationship between age and stress.

		Age							
		Under 31 years old		Between 31 and 45 years old		More than 45 years		Total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Trouble relaxing	ALWAYS	1	2.27	0	0.00	1	2.27	2	4.55
	MANY TIMES	3	6.82	3	6.82	0	0.00	6	13.64
	SOMETIMES	3	6.82	5	11.36	0	0.00	8	18,18
	ONLY SOMETIMES	5	11.36	6	13.64	0	0.00	11	25,00
	NEVER	8	18,18	5	11.36	4	9.09	17	38.64
	Total	20	45.45	19	43.18	5	11.36	44	100,00
	ALWAYS	4	9.09	1	2.27	1	2.27	6	13.64
Stress	MANY TIMES	1	2.27	4	9.09	1	2.27	6	13.64
	SOMETIMES	4	9.09	6	13.64	0	0.00	10	22.73
	ONLY SOMETIMES	4	9.09	3	6.82	1	2.27	8	18,18
	NEVER	7	15.91	5	11.36	2	4.55	14	31.82
	Total	20	45.45	19	43.18	5	11.36	44	100,00
	ALWAYS	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	2.27	1	2.27
	MANY TIMES	1	2.27	2	4.55	0	0.00	3	6.82
Sadness and discouragement	SOMETIMES	7	15.91	2	4.55	0	0.00	9	20.45
	ONLY SOMETIMES	6	13.64	8	18,18	1	2.27	15	34.09
	NEVER	6	13.64	7	15.91	3	6.82	16	36,36
	Total	20	45.45	19	43.18	5	11.36	44	100,00

Source: CoPsoQ-istas21 questionnaire

In the questions related to problems relaxing, stress, sadness and discouragement, the option never prevailed at a value close to 40%, followed by sometimes in a range of 18-22%.

Table 5

Relationship between age and job satisfaction.

		Age							
		Under 31 years old		Between 31 and 45 years old		More than 45 years		total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Job satisfaction	Very satisfied	6	37.50	7	43.75	3	18.75	16	36,36
	Satisfied	13	50,00	11	42.31	2	7.69	26	59.09
	Dissatisfied	1	50,00	1	50,00	0	0.00	2	4.55
total		20	45.45	19	43.18	5	11.36	44	100,00

Source: CoPsoQ-istas21 questionnaire

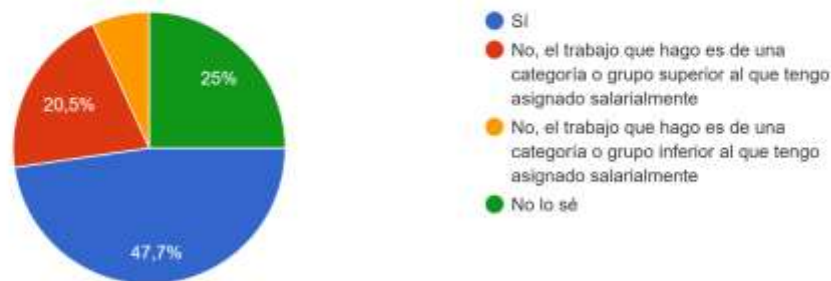
Regarding job satisfaction, there is a high percentage of very satisfied and satisfied responses, where only 4.55% responded that they are dissatisfied.

Figure 1

Relationship of the professional group with salary recognition.

7. ¿El trabajo que realizas se corresponde con la categoría o grupo profesional que tienes reconocida salarialmente?

44 respuestas



Source: Own elaboration

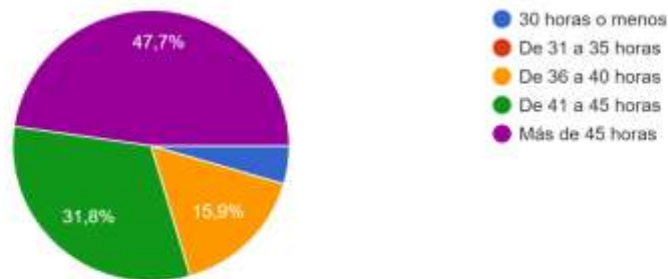
47.7% of all workers state that the work they do corresponds to the professional category or group they have as salary recognition, however, 20.5% state that the work they do is of a higher category, while 25% are unaware of their work skills and the categories that apply to them.

Figure 2

Workload

18. Habitualmente ¿Cuántas horas trabajas a la semana para la empresa?

44 respuestas



Source: Own elaboration

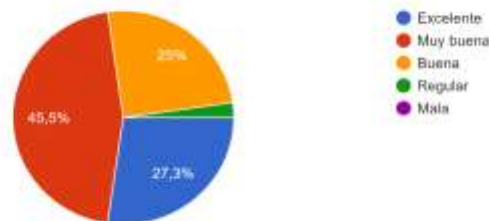
47.7% of staff say they work more hours than required, and there is a great deal of irregularity in working hours among employees.

Figure 3

Health status of workers.

30. En general ¿dirías que tu salud es?

44 respuestas



Source: Own elaboration

45.5% of employees say their health condition is very good.

Figure 4

Mood and emotional health.



Source: Own elaboration

Most employees say they have not experienced episodes of nervousness and have never felt low morale. They also say they feel calm and collected most of the time.

Discussion

The Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS, 2020) mentions that one of the most frequent and worrying psychosocial risks to workers' health is stress, which originates and has a higher incidence in the workplace. Exposure to negative events such as lack of control over work, long hours, inadequate remuneration, among others, predispose employees to various types of risks.

The results of our study determined that there was a low rate of psychosocial risks in the food processing company in the city of Cuenca.

Similar results were obtained by Babativa et al., (2019) in the relationship between intra-occupational psychosocial risk factors and stress in meat industry workers, where the majority of employees obtained low intra-occupational psychosocial risk scores. Similarly, Aguilera et al., (2019) found that most of the risk factors evaluated in their study showed a level below 50%; however, although it was not necessary to apply immediate actions, long-term preventive measures were taken into account to avoid negative effects of psychosocial risk factors in the future.

Soliz found different results in the evaluation of stress in workers, where the majority presented a high level of stress, triggered by the low remuneration they received (2022). Duque in his research determined that a large part of workers presented stress and anxiety

due to the various functions they performed (Duque A, 2018); while Beltrán mentions that work stress and psychosocial risk factors are a relevant problem with a significant economic and social cost (Beltrán, 2021). Uribe found in his study that workers presented emotional exhaustion, headache, musculoskeletal disorders, sleep disorders and anxiety (2020). Finally, Hernández and Carrión found that there is a high association between psychosocial risk factors present in the work environment and workers' stress responses (2022).

Vargas et al. observed in their research that 12.73% of workers needed mental health care due to severe emotional changes, including anxiety, somatic symptoms, and depression, while 2.3% of workers were at risk of suicide (2021).

It is important to highlight that employees feel motivated when there is good remuneration, regardless of the work functions they perform, which shows the resilience of workers to withstand adversities as long as they feel adequately remunerated (Vázquez P, 2019).

Our results suggest that the job performance, physical and mental health of employees are not being harmed in the company chosen for the study, due to the good working environment, fair treatment and constant support from management, unlike most existing studies, which show that workers are subject to high levels of risk.

Conclusions

- The study revealed a low presence of psychosocial factors affecting company employees, suggesting a relatively low level of work stress, workplace bullying, depression and job frustration among participants. Although these findings might indicate a positive situation in terms of workplace well-being, it is crucial to recognize the importance of intervening in a timely manner to prevent possible negative consequences on workers' health in the future. Even though workplace stress was identified at low levels, it is essential to implement proactive measures to address any signs of psychological distress and ensure a work environment that promotes employees' mental health and well-being in the long term.
- It is essential to have a full understanding of the psychosocial risks to which workers are exposed and to be prepared to intervene accordingly. This involves not only identifying and addressing risk factors, but also regularly assessing the level of employee satisfaction. Safeguarding the safety and emotional, physical and mental stability of employees must be a constant priority for organizations. Implementing workplace wellness policies and programs, as well as promoting an organizational culture that encourages open communication and mutual support, are key measures to ensure a healthy and productive work environment in the long term.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest in relation to the submitted article.

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